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How the Old Woman Got Home

M. P. Shiel

A Mystery Novel



COLLIER BOOKS

The incredible and uproarious
tale of Hazlitt and the
strange people who kidnaped
his old mother



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OLD WOMAN
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COLLIER BOOKS
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The cat began to kill the rat, the rat began to gnaw the rope, the rope began to hang the butcher . . . and so the old woman got home that night.

Chapter 1

Rowton House

AS HAZLITT'S mother had a horror of "relief"—"outdoor" or "indoor"—and as he shared the old woman's prejudice in this, his hope now was in "the Labour Exchange."

But *queues* at "the Exchanges" in those days! "unemployment!" in the *queues* one witnessed faintings, despairs . . . and daily Hazlitt, having run southward down to "the Exchange" at Ludgate Circus—he being a runner—would run back up Farringdon Street, northward, past coster-barrows at Smithfield and "street-market" streaming, on to "Rowton House," to pass through a turn-pike at the entrance, where the ticket-clerk in a little "office" knew his face now.

Over thirty years old, and no fund of money!—contemptuous of the Age's scrimmage perhaps, or fonder of today than of tomorrow. Anyway, there he was, but thought it rather a lark, or *had* thought it, and still was happy, being highly healthy; and flushed he arrived, rich in life-blood.

He kept his tin-can concealed in an old stove in the eating-room, and thence now got it—a Tuesday afternoon in April—his movements unnoticed by the multitudinous roomful of eaters, each intent on his own stomach's welfare, many wayfaring like ants variously preoccupied, bearing platefuls from a restaurant-bar, from a kitchener in the next room, or prowling about to pounce upon a spoon, or fork, or salt, and then, having achieved, sitting content to eat; and now, tin-can in hand, Hazlitt went out afresh to a "general-shop" close by, soon to come back with an embarrassment of bread, margarine, milk—ten pennyworth of breakfast—with which he now made his way to the kitchener, a mass of old iron tormented in everlasting fire of coke, this fire making red-hot two cover-discs atop, round which two crowds of pans and cans containing foods jostled for the hottest spots, while the room sweltered.

After going ferreting to get a cup and spoon, Hazlitt tipped his sugar and penny-packet of cocoa into his can of milk, then went to conquer for the can a place amid the

hell-mob of hectic chops and sausages spitting hisses; and now, when the milk had boiled, was about to drop his two eggs into it, to cook them, when a voice said near his ear: "I say, mate, you been up to anything?"

Glancing aside, he saw the grimy rag round the throat of a carter whose face he knew; and said he: "How do you mean—'up to anything'?"

"You done anything? Been pinching anything?" the carter asked.

"Ha, ha, no, not been pinching anything."

"Well, 'ere—look 'ere," the other privily said, "I thought I'd give you the tip—they're after you for something. Your name's Hazlitt, ain't it? Well, in passing in, I see a bloke—detective sort of a blighter—drove up in a taxi, he did—head-to-head with that office lot: so I hear the ticket-clerk say to him, 'Hazlitt,' he says, 'aye, I know the man'; and the tec he said: 'What's he look like?' then I passed on in"—my report of his words omitting a certain adjective which dropped out of his mouth as periodically as a dripping of water—unconsciously probably! since the adjective, a present-participle, had by repetition lost all emphasis or sense, and it is impossible to believe that any human being could be so feeble as to keep on using it—if he *knew* that he was using it. He winked anew at Hazlitt, and there now stood Hazlitt, meditating dumbly upon the other with eyes that blinked twice, until he said: "Well, I don't understand—thanks though, thanks"; and though this did not keep him from eating with his hedonist relish for pleasures his afternoon-breakfast that was to sustain him till the next afternoon, this news now occupied his thoughts: for who could be thus asking after him surpassed his wit to conjecture, the thing affecting him with a strange depression somehow, a foreboding, as when the Banshee warns. . . . And yet possibly he was in luck's way—someone thinking of "employing" him! whereupon, hey, he would spread wing out of that morass of dreads and miseries . . . to marry his Jessie? . . . Dreams. . . .

Chapter 2

"Wealth Is Life"

THE MEAL finished, he pinched some tobacco-dust out of his pouch, to let it drizzle into his pipe, and was now about

to light it, when a little old man in a bush of hair, with a dome of brow over bright eyes, a collar still white in parts, presented him a match-box containing tobacco, saying: "You are welcome, sir."

"Well—thanks!" cried Hazlitt, but then was embarrassed, seeing that the tobacco was cigarette-tobacco, got from "fag-ends" picked up in the streets—its differing browns told that—and Hazlitt had a constant consciousness of the reality of microbes; but, rather than give offence, he decided to take a little, while the old man, with fire in his eyes, remarked: "We are hardly allowed to smoke now! The Tobacco Trust demands of us a shilling for a sixpennyworth of tobacco. . . . And these men aren't hanged! We let them live!" He raised his eyes in dismay.

"Oh, well"—from Hazlitt—"they don't kill: it is the others, 'the land-owners,' or these *as* 'land-owners,' who kill, and should be killed. Put these into prison——"

"Well, I am astonished"—the old man eyed at him with reproach—"isn't it a fact, sir, that *wealth is life*?"

"Let me see: the statement is new to me. . . . Well, perhaps it is a true statement."

"Oh, no sir, come," the old man answered, "there's no 'perhaps' about it. *Wealth is life*—that's not a metaphor. Money, of course, is not wealth—money represents wealth: wealth is cocoa, the fire in coal, the wild eyes in wine; and if you want to be quite sure that wealth is life, go without wealth for a week, and see how your life begins to feel then; or leave a little wealth, a little meat or meal, in a saucer for a week, and then see if it isn't swarming with lives; and since all forms of wealth can be exchanged for these staple forms, all forms are essentially life. The life in you is equal to the life in a certain amount of wine, meat, meal, and when that amount of wealth is robbed from you your life is taken."

"Still, I do seem to have remained alive," Hazlitt remarked; on which the old man slapped the table with "True! you're alive—in Rowton House; but, meantime, with every sixpennyworth of wealth that that Trust robs you of, you're being robbed of sixpennyworth of life-force: sixpennyworth of wealth robbed from each of ten million men means the taking of the entire life-force of twenty men, if my calculation is correct, though no one man may actually die of it today or tomorrow. Aye, a steady toll of some ten lives a day tapped from the community's sum of life-force, to cram a few vampires' gruesome guts—isn't that

massacre, sir? But, if you stab a vampire, that's murder—mustn't do that, sir—murder's naughty—for murder you're raised to the gallows, though for massacre you're raised to the peerage—thoughtful law-makers, sir! moral law-makers! And do you say, sir, that you would not hang these takers of life? The nation in its offended majesty—if it had any majesty—if it was anything like a nation—would first strangle these blackguards, then gag their gullets with fag-ends, then burn, then scatter their ashes, that the earth might forget that ever her belly gave birth to such raw offspring.”

Hazlitt sat a little embarrassed, saying: “Yes: one can see. . . . Still, *I* shouldn't hang them, I think; vivisect them, yes, perhaps—that would repay Society for their piracies; but hanging's ugly—tongue sticks out. After all, they are more wronged than wronging, can't help being 'raw'—not educated—only educated people, I think, can think straight and behave beneficially—or harmlessly!—not even they in an ill-educated reign of ideas. . . . Phew! this room is hot”—he sprang up—“Well, thanks, sir, good luck”—he was off into “the” smoking-room, where he stood at one of two fireplaces, looking under his eyes into a mirror, seeing without seeing in it that forehead of his standing four-square as between plumb-lines at the temples, the eyes peering at truth as at a sun, his hair dark, a finger or two of it sticking out at random, as if the winds, which he loved with passion, loved him, and lingered a little in his hair: a face strong, yet gay, fraternal with the world; he now thinking of other things than the abstract Tobacco Trust, thinking of “what next?” of his mother's bread and rent, the question of his own next-night's bed, the riddle of the ominous man who, according to the carter, had been asking after him at the “office.” . . .

Chapter 3

The Old Woman Wild

ROUGH WEATHER in this latitude for him! Some of that crowd playing draughts at the tables, reading “racing gossip,” or just sitting, existing, were “well off” compared with him, less care-cankered: of his ex-service eight shillings

two only left; "dole" lapsed; the mother, who did some "charring" on Mondays at a German woman's in Percy Street, had not charred this Monday. . . . Why? The asthma? the cough? May-be! Or may-be an attack of the spree-spirit. . . . Not much steadiness of gait in *her*. . . . Many a mother has to check and admonish a wild son, but here was a steady son embarrassed with a wild mother; while, as to a father, he had hardly known one, knowingly only from the mother that "heart-trouble" had taken away the being with a beard whom he could barely remember.

Yet he had never once "known want," till now—a greater credit this to the mother than he had ever stopped to reflect on and realize! He had been through Dorking High School, the Battersea Training College—she had managed that somehow: else he might not have acquired his educated hand and eye, and that eye of his mind; and thought it had been by "a scholarship" that he had got into the High School, even that was through *her* really, she had scraped and contrived, and kept him trim, fed, decent.

Then from the Training College, as he saw the vision of it in the mirror, he had gone out to Montreal to his mother's brother, had been in a machine-shop there, had been sent out to Jamaica to set up an engine in a "boiling-house," then, on going back, had become secretary to his Trade Union, and, pressed to become a candidate for Parliament, had stumped and speechified. But he had a prose style hardly suited to the hustings, limpid as Homer, simple as an infant's syllables, yet informed with a nerve of song, burning with a verve of prophecy—not suited to the hustings! had a bitter lip, too, for dull people, for slovenliness of intellect: and had been well beaten by some common man.

Meantime, he had been making, with vast thoughts of world-power, the model of an air-boat all steel, to ascend vertically, having no resemblance to helicopter or aeroplane; but, because he had been balked in the financing of it, had cast it aside—too impulsively—his interest in it intellectual, and dying when the model was once a success.

Then back to England in charge of a cargo of war-horses, to be caught in all the war-squall—willingly, for he eyed with dislike that spirit which had arisen insurgently in Germany—to be drafted into a sapper Telegraph Division operating in that Marne volcano; and later to the Italian front.

Afterwards, through the friendship of a captain who was

a viscount, he had got a "place" as P.O. staff-lineman at the Acton Telephone Exchange—not much pay, but good "place." But, then, one Saturday afternoon a rumpus had broken out: for the mother had looked in at the Exchange power-room to tell him something; he had been away somewhere on a telephone-pole; and he had hardly leapt off his bicycle on getting back, when his inspector-engineer had said to him: "Hazlitt, I wish you wouldn't have your mother coming here the worse for liquor"; whereupon Hazlitt, turning turkey-red, had answered: "Well, Fife, you need not lie about it": two minutes after which they were fighting, and in three Fife was down and done.

As to which Mr. Chief Engineer, and then "the Treasurer," had had their say; and, gazing into the glass, Hazlitt now stood meditating it: not very elevated! relics of gorilla-ecstasies! hardly in harmony with his aim to "behave harmlessly": and now he found himself in Rowton House with that crowd. . . .

Down at Acton he and the mother had had two quite nice rooms, but then had had to move up this way, where one Josh Giddins, a King's Cross native, an old acquaintance of the old woman, had procured her a roomlet. . . .

But now his abstraction was broken in upon by one of two cats in the room crying wildly aloud in a crisis of love-remonstrance, rousing to interest the whole smoking-room; and when at this lacerating outcry he spun round he found with him one of the chess-champions of "the House" come to challenge him to a game; but he, after glancing at the clock, answered that he must be going out, it being now the hour for his Jessie to be at home; so now he descended into the underground regions to wash-and-brush up, paying a precious penny in "the" shoemaker's-room down there to obtain brushes; then, brushed, he went up and out through the turn-pike past the "office," where he did not fail to observe that the ticket-clerk eyed him a little oddly; and so out and on northward toward King's Cross. . . .

Turning west, he passed into Acton Street, where "Apartments" appeared within windows, and voices of brats at play noised like echoes under a sky now broader and bright, all in the world now being a sense of curtains tossed wide, of the novelty and publicity of Spring throwing off the cosy wont and coat of Winter; and in this Acton Street he stopped at a house-door which, though it was "locked," just a push opened, to pass-in to the end of a passage, and up a stair darkish as night-time, where microbes like to transact their

tribal lives, and the ambulances of the Asylums Board come to take away typhoid cases: a stair which was a Jacob's-ladder of cats and brats ascending, descending, with a "sink" in the murk of the third landing; and thence another flight of it up to a little old door atop.

But, hearing a sound like prayer taking place inside, he did not enter, went back down a little to linger on the stair—a lingering that rendered his mood still more morose and hungry than before; and there he lingered in the dark, until a "district-visitor" issued out above to descend; whereupon he went up, entered, and "Hallo, mum," he muttered, "been 'praying' again?"

"Well, yes"—from the old woman—"Miss Kidd, the deaconess——"

"Aye, I saw her. . . . Well, of course, you aren't really so 'religious,' as they call it: you only keep in with them for what you can get out of them."

"Oh, well, Caxton, if you like to be contankerous——"

"Ho, 'contankerous,' bad luck again," he muttered pacing the little floor-space—a floor uneven, but scrubbed to scrupulousness, everything here being as clean and neat as the instinct of woman could make it, the furniture such as was certainly not to be found in any other room of that house—a bedstead of fumed oak, its bed-clothes snowy, a tasty window-curtain, a cushion in the arm-chair, on which the old woman sat beside a glint of fire in the little grate; and now she asked: "Anything turned up yet, Caxton? Had some dinner, boy?"

"Dear me!" Hazlitt exclaimed just then with sudden fretfulness: "why persist in keeping a cat in this den?"—catching sight of a little she-cat presiding as by established right at the fire, anon deciding to dab a single lick, not without a dignity of neck, at some itch which checked her meditating.

"Oh, well, I like a cat, and I am going to have one—ain't I, Min? ain't I, Widdle's Babe?"—on which she went off into song: "A boat, a boat, haste to the ferry, let's all go over and be merry"—a voice that had the wings of the lark! an upspringing soprano that could certainly have turned her into a public singer, if ever it had been trained; but she had come of "the dregs" of the people, Hoxton-born, having costermonger-cousins, her husband, who had been of the "black-coated" tribe, having "married beneath him," because of her face perhaps, for it could still be conjectured that she must have been lovely when young—what there was of her, she being just a little thin thing, looking incapable of having ever

evacuated her Caxton. Still, she must have been a sugar, though now at sixty her face was rather a wreck of skin, a condition perhaps due to the coalescing of the sutures of the cranium-bones, till at last they form one solid, the bone-structure thus shrinking and leaving the skin wrinkly, a child at three being more wrinkled than at two, its "soft-spot" having coalesced—a process which only ceases at seventy, when the coccyx-bones coalesce; and though for this there are remedies already known, as in the depths of the ocean of Nature there is a remedy for every moan, *she* did not know of them. Yet she did not give-in to these processes without a struggle—short-skirted, "drops" in her ears, her face powdered white against hair brown-red (dyed with henna) and done-up with a rough-sea coquetry, one fluff of it hovering saucily across her forehead—nice! innocent! gentle! for, though always poverty-struck, always she had had within her a spring of distinction, an ambition toward "gentlemen" and "gentlefolks," toward long *chic* words, and never had been hail-fellow-well-met with everybody.

And said Hazlitt, as her flying voice flung off "we'll laugh, and chaff, and quaff old sherry": "Pity you're so flipper, mum—as you call it."

"What do *you* call it, pray?" she asked.

"Flippant—not flipper."

"Oh, well, thank your stars that you are educated, Caxton—though you had no father."

"Well, but there's no *need* for any cat!" Hazlitt peevishly said: "as it is, this place is a regular death-trap, teeming with millions of microbes——"

"Oh, well, I don't hold with all that about my-crows," she sharply interrupted: "there didn't use to be all that when I was young, and I don't consider it right, it was never meant that men should be doing these things—let them go on, see if the world doesn't blow up some day, and put a stop to their fagárias. All these motor-cars rushing about—good gracious, if I got into one of those things, I should drop dead! And those things humming up in the air—what next, I wonder? And now all this talk about 'listening-in'—it was never *meant*, it is all so morbish——"

"Ho, 'morbish' "—chucking his chin—"I remember, twice before, telling you that it is morbid; but you've started calling it 'morbish,' and you mean to stick to it. . . . You're so stiff and fixed, mum, so——"

"Oh, well, Caxton . . ."

This she uttered in such a tone as shut-up Hazlitt, who

strolled silent a little, until he asked: "So what did you get out of the district-visitor? How are you off for grub?"

Saying which, he made toward the cupboard to look, she starting up a little as to stop him, but then sat again, humming something, while he opened the cupboard-door by the fireplace.

And the instant he glanced in, his eye flashed with anger, catching sight of a can of liquor. . . .

"Dear me!" he cried out, "here we are half-starving, and you still finding money to buy beer! Would anyone believe it? How you must *love* it to your heart! That's why I am 'out of work' today—here's where the disease lurks—*beer!*" And now, grumbling to himself, "No, I won't have it," he rushed to the window, and chucked the liquor away.

Silence now: only, the old woman hummed "Love, I am lonely," while Hazlitt, standing against the bed-foot, looked out across the space that separates those back-windows from the back-windows of Swinton Street northward.

"So much for that," Hazlitt remarked.

No answer. The old woman hummed.

"You should know better, mum," he muttered.

"Caxton," the old woman now said, "I didn't 'buy' it—not that pint. Josh Giddins gave me."

"Oh, is that it?"

"Lately Josh Giddins brings me a pint of bitter——"

"Well, he should know better."

"You don't think it good of him, Caxton?"

"I suppose it is good of him; but you know that you are fond of it, so keep clear of it."

"Caxton, beer is food."

"Yes, poisoned food: *that* beer."

Silence.

Then Hazlitt: "I see you have a nice parallelopiped of cheese."

"Yes, Mary Semper brought it, and the oranges, and the dates."

"Very good of her"—grudging gratitude—"rather historical the dates—age of the mummies."

"Now, Caxton, 'good' isn't the word: scarcely a day passes that she doesn't bring me something. When it isn't Mary Semper it is Josh Giddins."

"Very good of them."

"But, Caxton, tell me—nothing turned up?"

"No. No go yet at the Exchange . . . no go at Marconi House. . . . As to the tools, the pawn-shops don't want them,

and I've got this letter about them"—he handed and she read it across obstacles of spelling, stoppages to lip quick the letters to herself: "There is such a slump in tools in the present c, o, n, d, condition of the market, that we are unable at the moment to e, n, t, entertain your——" Now she had a fit of coughing; then stared into the grate; then: "But, Caxton, how are you going to manage?"

"That will be as God's winds blow."

"Well, let us trust in God. It says 'Are not five sparrows sold for a penny'—pre-war, of course, that was—and yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them'; and it's strange, too, how every living thing—nearly—does find nourishment. . . . Caxton, I have this half-a-crown——"

"Aye, you generally manage to have an odd half-a-crown tucked away."

"You take it, Caxton."

"Oh, nonsense."

"Caxton, *take* it, I can spare it"—she stood up to him, on which he went testy, saying: "I told you no! Don't infest me!"

Now again she began to cough, just managing to get out "it's the window!"—for Hazlitt, to dash out the beer, had flung up the sash, and, as he now ran to slap it down, she collapsed into her chair in distress for breath, her hand on her heart, which had become so affected "by asthma," that in some weathers the climbing of the stair was to her a task like miles of fighting and like panting through fire, and at the top she would drop, conquering, conquered.

Several minutes that battle for breath continued, while Hazlitt on his knees, his arm round her, was muttering at her "Mum," and "soon be over now," until the paroxysm passed, when, touching her forehead with a kiss, and muttering "see you tomorrow," he was off, covertly depositing two of his shillings on the chest-of-drawers.

It was now so dusk, that, in going out below, he stumbled against a step which divided the passageway into a higher and lower level, and thence passed out between two slatterns at the door, who stopped their gossip to unload upon him their grievance against his mother's zeal for "washing," which monopolized too much of "the wash-house"; then, prying within the public-house next door, he spied that it was after seven, lights now arising everywhere; and now with pressing steps he was off for Jessie Page's in Swinton Street near.

But he was stopped at the corner of it by Josh Giddins

loitering there—the British workman loitering through his worthless off-hours, as unconscious of the value of time as the old woman's cat watching the fire. "Hallo, Hazlitt, there you are, then"—a carle of fifty to sixty, with eye-slits like the crescent-moon lying on an (upper) arc of a circle, contemplating the world with his head held sideways, his cloth-cap tossed back from a bald forehead, shirt bagging at paunch, easy-going, free-handed—a drayman—content, tamed—as stale an item of that place and Time-spirit as those trams transacting their droning there down Gray's Inn Road, or as that effusion of stewed fat fuming from the fried-fish-shop hard by, or as the brown of liquorice-slobber round the mouths of the street-brat crowds who shopped at the wee sweetshop opposite.

Hazlitt said: "Look, now, Giddins, don't be giving the old woman beer, there's a good man: bad for the asthma."

And Giddins: "Why, get along with you! Beer bad for asthma? First I've heard of it, then! Why, that's the stuff to give 'em, man—— Oh, in moderation, mind you, in moderation: but if your head hurts you, take a glass of beer; if your foot hurts you, take a glass of beer."

"Ha, ha. Well, see you again"—Hazlitt was off, and presently was raising himself on area-railings to peer into a parlour, then passed through a doorway, opened a parlour-door, to peer-in with a leer of mischief, she unconscious of him, he conscious of her sitting at a table unlighted but by a candle and by the valve-lamp of a wireless set; and, seated near her, "listening-in" too, her mother; and with them a visitor, Ada, a married sister of Jessie, her hat on, settled, sedate, brave and stately in sables.

Chapter 4

Jessie

"HOH!" WENT Hazlitt, Jessie now jumping up from her set—made by him, those accumulators on the floor having cost not a penny, three old things from the accumulator-room at Acton, cleaned-up by him, while half the volts in the relay were from dry-cells concocted by him out of odds-and-ends; and now her hands had his, swinging his arms, the cavern of her laugh lit up with a gleam of teeth like some theatre

aglow with lustres in a night of gala, she a sprightly thing fresh-sprung, sprig of mignonette, a girl to her fingertips and her whirlie-girlie—nice! like Aphrodite rising sprightly in a posture of surprise from the froths, her eyes bright, and lively, pretty as anything, though terrestrial, defective, some hint of strabismus (or “cast”) in the left eye, that was hardly so brightly animated as the right, left side of face touched with some finger of repression, smile a little wry leftward, so that at seventy she may have hemiplegia, I think; but good big block of skull: and what a plumb-line from the forehead-corner, running straight down to the cheek—nice! unapelike! Divinely achieved! from which high corner on the right the hair sweeps down across to the left eyebrow, and frisks out over the ears, flurryflurried! harumscarum! whirlie-girlie! like skirts flicked-up flippant a little in the fandango; and “Oh, such a lot of things have happened,” she cries—“what *has* become of you?” for he had not been to see her the previous day; and presently when the mother and the staid Ada had had the good grace to take themselves away into the back room, the other two sat hugged together in the half-dark on a stale sofa whose pegamoid had cracked over relaxed springs; and now Hazlitt asked: “So what has happened? ‘Got’ some work?”

“Yes! listen to this”—she being a typist, “knowing” short-hand, too, and book-keeping: those three; yes, and she “knew” some French, too, and could say in French “my aunt is in the garden, but it is the garden of my uncle, not that of my aunt.”

And he, feasting on her “female expression”: “Well, tell . . . Boz . . . whose Boz are you?”—she being called “Boz,” and also “Wodgie,” for though now at seventeen she was slender, she had once been stout.

“Well, yesterday forenoon—I was just going down to Pitman’s—a man rapped at the door, asked Mother if a Miss Page lived here, and when I went to him, he asked if he could come in ‘for a few minutes’ chat,’ he said. Well—he looked like a gentleman—tall man with one of his boot-soles thicker than the other—but I didn’t know him, so I said I had to go down to Southampton Row at once. ‘Why,’ he said, ‘I was just going to Pitman’s myself, for I was commissioned this morning by a gentleman to send him a young lady, and you may be the very thing for him.’ So now I f-felt I must ask him in; and—what do you suppose he wanted?”

“Wanted a kiss.” . . .

“Oh, you go on, that’s all you think about. . . . Wanted to

know whether it was true that I'd be able to tell him the address of an old lady named Hazlitt."

Now Hazlitt started. . . . Someone had been asking after him, too, at Rowton House . . . and now once more that sense of the ominous, like a foretaste of death. . . .

"Dear me, that's—odd. What did he want Mam for?"

"He—wouldn't say! I asked him——"

"Odd. . . . Did you give him the address?"

"No, I didn't quite like to, thought I'd better ask you f-first"—a little hitch whenever she uttered "f," a pretty fluttering like stuttering—"so I told him I might be able to in a couple of days. He kept coaxing me, and at last he said, 'Well, she's somewhere about here, and I'll soon drop on her.' And would you believe——?"

"I can't dream——"

"But listen! He hadn't been gone ten minutes when another one came—an active little f-fat man—I was just going down the steps: he wanted to know if I was Miss Page, and could I give him the address of a Mrs. Hazlitt! And he kept walking on with me, coaxing me to tell; said in a cunning way at my ear that, as I wouldn't tell *him*, he could make it worth my while not to tell anybody else, as anybody else wouldn't be wanting her for any good, he said; so I said I'd see in a couple of days, and got into my tram."

Frowning now sat Hazlitt, all at a loss and dumb, while out of a brown-paper trumpet on a head-phone sounded the voice of one prophesying as from some rostrum on Mars, a garbled jargonizing just audibly struggling, voluble in its drowning, mouthing embroiled gospels from out the bowels and gulf of the void.

"Well, something is up," Hazlitt suddenly muttered; "but, if you are asked again, give the address. . . . And about the work the first one told you of? Did you go?"

"Yes, and got it!" cried Boz, bobbing up and down, twinkling her fingers abroad: "it is in Park Street, just near the great Park Lane—such a mansion—and, just as I got to it, what do you suppose happened? my palm started to itch; so I said 'I must be going to be rich,' and so it was. The f-foot-man—and the lovely rooms—don't mention it! His name is Mr. Farrel—great big man—with a great beard and head—black, but he has blue eyes—sad—an American he is—millionaire, I should think! and it was a case of love at f-first sight—don't be jealous—for I f-feel sorry for him somehow—must have had some sorrow in his life, he is so gentle and kind. So when he asked 'What salary do I pay you?' I

thought I'd say 'two pounds,' and then I thought no, I'd say 'fifty shillings,' so I said 'fifty shillings,' and what do you think he said? 'Very well,' he said, 'we will make it the round f-five pounds'—just f-fancy! And when I asked, 'At what hour do I come?' he answered 'Come when you please'—so there you are! I can now lend two solid quid a week to any f-friend who happens to be out of work!"

"Ha, ha, I see. . . . So you have been to him today?"

"Till four, then he said I could go! Not much to do so far—a lot of cablegrams—and some of the time I was looking at jewels which he shewed me—that's his hobby, it seems—such names as I never heard! and while dictating he likes to f-finger the jewels"—so she went on pouring out details; then: "If you had come last night I should have shewn you the house—— Why didn't you? Getting tired of me, I suppose"—cutting an eye of coquetry at him.

"What, tired of Wodgie?" says he, his cheek on hers: "haven't I loved her since she was ten?"

"Oh, that's nothing! I was madly in love at seven—used to cry at night—soft kid!"

"Whom were you in love with then?"

"Whom do you suppose? I can only love one in a lifetime: not half-a-dozen, like some."

"I say—remember that night in Regent's Park?"

"Oh, you bad thing"—she tossed a slap at his hand, cutting an eye at him.

And, musing, he muttered: "Love—dear me—strange harmony with the rage of the stars. Am I never . . . ? This is a bad society."

"Oh, there's lots and lots of money," says she, "then we'll be *married*—just f-fancy. That's why you didn't come last night—question of money, I know: when you are hard-up you keep clear of me somehow. But now we are rich! so take this ten shillings until——"

He laughed. "Ha, ha, business is not done in that way, my Boz."

"Then, don't *touch* me, if you won't"—now she turned her body into burrs and obstacles to him, and when he attempted to retake her she sprang up, and he sprang, she ran, he after, laughing, chasing her round the table; in the midst of which enter the mother with the staid and wedded Ada, who did not consider it proper that lovers should long be left solitary; and now Hazlitt went back to his Rowton House.

There he waited till the first bed-bell clattered for the first troop of early-birds, among whose trooping footsteps he

moved through an iron gate, unlocked every fifteen minutes at the stair-foot, there to present his bed-ticket to be clipped, then up and up from floor to floor, to discover the cell whose number was on his bed-ticket.

Petty enough that cell, yet not without a little window, which he half opened—since we English, lacking the wit to make French windows, can only half-open a window; and in his narrow bed he lay with a sense of well-being heightened by a sense of the morrow's night likely to be bedless, thinking of some man wanting him for something, of two fantastic men, "active" though "f-fat," wanting his mother. . . .

Chapter 5

"Mr. Lennard"

AT EIGHT A.M. another tongue of a bell that travelled brabbled, clattering reveille, soaring as it travelled, floor after floor, like the tongue of the lark that prattling soars, and now it was twittering remote, but wilfully coming, and now was tonguing close and loud; and presently poundings at doors, to rout-out the drowsy ones.

But Hazlitt, for his part, was up with that lark: for a rumour heard the night before inspired him to be early at the Ailsa Craig works that day; and as soon as he had washed among the mob of washers in the basement, he was off.

But in the entrance-hall itself he was stopped. Out of a taxi-cab drawing-up to the door sprang a man who asked him: "You Hazlitt?"

The man was "active" and "little" and "f-fat."

"That is my name. . . ."

"Thought so. . . . Want to have a talk with you, Hazlitt."

A voice of warning *again* in Hazlitt . . . strange . . . a sense of the Banshee and of the grave-ropes that grate, lowering the bier. . . .

"Come in here. . . ."

They moved into the smoking-room, empty then, save for one swathed in an apron, "doing" the room in a morning mood; and they sat at a hearth. . . .

"Now, Hazlitt: I got your name—You were at the Acton Telephone Exchange, weren't you? and I gather that you

have a good working-knowledge of electrical apparatus in general—clever man with your hands, but down on your luck. Well, Hazlitt, I am here to offer you a job—chance of your life.”

Hazlitt's heart started at this; but without showing his elation, he just muttered: “Good. What is the pay?”

“Liberal: fifteen pound a week.”

“Fifteen. . . .”

This little man was a succession of shocks. . . .

“Aye,” he said, “fifteen: chance of your lifetime, Hazlitt. You have to be ready to start for Mexico within three hours——”

“Mexico. . . .”

Pause.

“Well, what?”

“Mexico, you say. . . .”

“Yes, what about it, Hazlitt?—just next door; my God, a man like you doesn't jibe at a bit like that—fifteen pound a week. You have to be at Waterloo for Southampton before——”

“But stay—one moment”—Hazlitt scratched his frown—“What—— Who are you, sir?”

The active man actively produced a card-case, to hand a card. “That's my name—Lennard—representing Panama Canal. You have first of all to come to the Bank to sign indentures—two years' contract—then——”

But Hazlitt again interrupted. “Are you the man who approached a Miss Page two days ago to get from her my mother's address?”

On which, for one instant, Mr. Lennard shewed some shyness of the eyelids before he answered: “Well, yes, been looking you up for three days, and, to find you, tried to find your mother.”

“I see”—though feeling that he did not *quite* see; “but who was that *other* man that wanted my mother's address from Miss Page?”

A question at which Lennard started a little, asking: “So there was another?”

“Didn't you know? Didn't you tell Miss Page that any other would not be wanting my mother 'for any good?' Those were the words I heard.”

The active man shook his face intolerantly in a prickly-heat of haste, saying: “Yes, but time, Hazlitt, time!—we can talk of all that in the cab. Your ship starts at five sharp, and to catch her——”

He glanced at his watch, while Hazlitt, his forehead a crisscross of perplexities, came out with: "You are proposing an impossible thing—it can't be done!"

"Why can't——?" Suddenly Lennard shook a finger at him, with "Opportunity, Hazlitt! Never comes twice, remember!"

"Yes, but it is out of the question—three hours. I have a mother; mustn't I be buying some kind of outfit?—and to go to a Bank——"

Now the other muttered to himself: "Oh, it's no good"; then his eyes flitted in quick reflection; and now he sprang up with "Are you taking it on, Hazlitt? It's Yes or No."

"But do let us be reasonable"—from Hazlitt—"you will never get any man——"

"I'll see"—without saying any more he was away with pressing steps.

Hazlitt half stood up after him to say something, but sat again, thinking: "Fifteen pounds!"—singularly big, and still more singular that seeking him out for "three days" . . . there were other tricky electricians in England. "Something rummy about it," he reflected; and yet he felt guilty, like one who lets elixir slip through the fingers. . . .

"Oh, well"—he stood up—"a man can't fly off to Mexico like that"—and afresh he started off for the Ailsa Craig chance.

But afresh he was stopped outside by a meeting with Mary Semper just coming south with her shopping-bag from Swinton Street, and "Hello," says she flippantly, "there you are, then"—an Irish thing of twenty-five, not bad-looking, nice tall figure, black hair, grey eyes made narrow-looking by plump cheek-bones, skin dingy and coarse, a simper rather silly—not she herself!—and says Hazlitt: "Well, Mary, where are you going?"

"To Exmouth-market," she answered; and thither, fifty yards, Hazlitt walked with her, saying: "Now, Mary, I am very obliged to you for giving the old woman cheese and things; but you know you want them for yourself. Besides, how can you know——?"

"Whoy, can't I spot it at a glance when she's short? It ain't much goes past me."

"Quite so"—from Hazlitt: "I know that you are a seer with those eyes of yours."

"Nor *you* ain't too flush neither," Mary now remarked, getting his measure in one eagle glance—"looks as if a meal of food would do you good. You cleaned your boots yester-

day, but you ain't cleaned them this morning—ain't you got no brushes? Nothing? What's become of the link out of your left sleeve? Ain't you got no needle-and-thread to sew that button on your jacket? The bit of comb you combed your hair with only had four teeth—ain't you got no hair-brush?"

"Ha, ha"—from Hazlitt with lids rather abashed at this detection—"that is as it may be. But, as to my mother, I don't want you to be stinting——"

"Whoy," Mary interrupted, "who do you suppose is going to see the old soul wanting for a bit of food? Not that I've known her long, in a manner o' speaking, but anybody can't help taking a liking to her, she's so little and stuck-up"—grinning with her pretty grill of teeth—"thinks something of her little self, I tell you, more like a lady, in a manner o' speaking; and she's that clean, you could eat off her floor; and her words! like anybody reading out of a book: 'they're a bit too flipper,' she'll say—just like that; and 'that'll put a stop to their little fagáries,' she'll say—just like that: whoy, wouldn't anybody rather go short themself! Now and again me and Josh Giddins give her——"

But now Hazlitt left her, to start into running in his light style, for three miles, then to walk on, a happiness of heaven now mixing in his misery, to Chiswick—leagues of leg-wagging, which made him linger at each of the succession of "Tube-stations," for he knew that by using, not the lift, but the stair, one can travel free; but, with that "honesty" of the poor through which the dishonest are rich, he ever wended on, by Shepherd's Bush, and near noon was at Strand-on-Green, in Chiswick.

But there he got nothing but the works-foreman's tip "try again later"; and now back by Bayswater, Oxford Street, to Rowton House, weighing less now in flesh and leather.

Never was breakfast better to the sense than that which he devoured at three that afternoon; but now, though a millionaire still in atoms of copper, he had but one hermit half-penny lurking in his pocket, and now commenced to think well of fever-mosquitoes in Mexico tempered with "fifteen pound" a week.

"God help us," he muttered. . . .

But in the fate of that moment, at any rate, was a comforted stomach for him, and as to what bowels of space the earth might burst into an hour later, that was as the Eternal purpose: he lounged and digested; until he was spurred to wash shirt and collar, and now moved downward into a laundry-room, where five or six stood washing, enjoying

supplies of washing-water which washed into basins made with a bottom-hole and a stopper, and there was a machine there composed of rollers, through which, if wet clothes are squeezed by wheeling an axle, they sally out nearly dry; and quite to dry them there was a stove and hot pipes there, on which the washers' clothes vied for a place: so that quite soon he who had moved in smirched emerged sightly and smiling.

Which done, Hazlitt started out to go to his mother. . . .

Now, on the pavement outside Rowton House stood a person who seemed a workman, in "cords" that had trouser-straps, but looking so new-dressed and shaven, in such gentlemanly shoe-leather, that Hazlitt noticed him a little; and presently, happening to glance when opposite the police-station, Hazlitt again saw this man—sauntering northward also. Nothing odd in that: but when, at his mother's street-door, he anew saw the saunterer moving up Acton Street, he was struck by it. . . .

Chapter 6

"The Pictures"

BUT IN he went and up, turned his mother's door-handle. . . . The door was locked.

"Now, where can she be?" he asked himself; and there he remained, waiting for her to appear, his hat reaching nearly to a ceiling cracked and reeky, till a hag glanced out of the other door on that landing to drop a penny into the gas-slot, she saying to him: "Waiting for your mother? She's gone to the pictures."

But still he waited, bitter now, bent over the landing-banisters: ten minutes; until he was aware of a step coming up; but it stood still on a landing; and now he ran down; found her stationary there in distress for breath; and, without saying anything, caught her up, bore her to the top.

"So where have you been, Mam?" he demanded, as he put her down.

"Caxton," she answered in pants, palm on heart, "I went to the—King's Cross pic—tures to see Char—lie Chaplin."

Now, in the breath of those pantings his nose seemed to detect a something of beer, and he bent to her to say with a

secrecy of accusation: "Dear me, you do *love* 'em, don't you, the pictures. . . . Any kind of pleasure, eh?"

"Now, Caxton," she answered, "you needn't be cantankerous: it only cost sixpence. . . ."

But sixpence, compared with his ha'penny, looked much; so now he pshawed intolerantly, saying: "Oh, well, go your own way," and was gone . . . down . . . from her. . . .

"Caxton!" she called down after him: "I have some money—— Have you any?"

But on he went without answer—though at one moment something in his heart seemed to plead with him "bear with her—*go back to her*"; but on he went, not listening to that Inward One. So the leaves quiver at the winds, but little conceive what thing it is that the wind sings, nor the wistful import of its whimpers.

He had come mainly to tell her of the two men who had wanted her address—one of them "*for no good*," perhaps both; then to tell of the man who had asked after him at the Rowton House "office," of the man who had that day offered him a job in Mexico, of the labourer in gentlemanly shoe-leather who had just seemed to be shadowing him; he had come to say: "Something curious is on foot somehow—do nothing without consulting me"; but nothing said . . . Charlie Chaplin . . . that suspicion of beer . . . his jealousy was in no mood to stand that.

Below he looked about for the gentlemanly labourer, but now did not see him; then back to Rowton House. No Jessie Page today: love not going well with ha'pence and hunger.

Till ten o'clock, when the smoking-room was shut up, he played chess in it, and then, for the first time in his life, was turned out to spend the night in that *Hôtel des Etoiles*.

Chapter 7

Star Hotel

AND NOW it was with him as with men brought quite down to the bed-rock of reality, brain and breast racked with questionings as radical as can be, as to the "right" of the Creator to create lives for cravings in vain, as to what kind of thing that Creator is . . . no Father at all? nor heart's smart at all yonder in the dark among the star-dust? So

when the young lions cry for food, no eye remarks? no heart is moved? Oh, that would be awfully forlorn and orphaned, after all! But if the earth brings to birth beings with needs, and then, for whatever reason, fails to feed her breeds—does He not heed? and, if He heeds, how is it that He can help feeling piqued to kick her spinning into Hell? Is He there? *Something* is, evidently—He, or She, or It, or They . . . but . . .

Occupied with such Job-connings, common to all minds caught in plights so tight and biting, God now in all his thoughts, on he jogged or lounged about, glancing anon into the bowels of a sky without bounds that night, its blackness bespattered with fireworks-display, sky-rockets projected with a gesture of rollick profligacy by a God of pyrotechnics in some Guy Fawkes Night of Time, he gravitating always toward the Embankment, and near midnight was in Bouverie Street, peering through railings into a basement at printing-machinery which was crashing in travail with the next day's "papers," as ragingly crashing as if in travail, not with dotage and "divorce," but with news of moon-fall and doomsday; and he was seeing how the different bits of it fitted and did their business, when a man at his back demanded: "What you doing there?"

Glancing round, Hazlitt saw a bobby; and demanded of him: "What are *you* doing there?"

"Doing my business."

"I, too."

Pause.

"You without a shelter?" now asked the amiable colossus: "because I've got some bed-tickets. . . ."

Now Hazlitt patted his arm, saying: "Forgive me, I didn't understand. . . . Well, yes, yes, I should be thankful——"

"Well, better—— Yes, you go along the Embankment until you come to the railway-station, and you'll see a constable on point-duty there: tell him I sent you."

So Hazlitt was off, and, on seeing "the constable," was shewn a little house of two rooms, outside which, moving-in one by one, stood a *queue*: and in this *queue* he took his place. Pretty soon he was no more the last-comer; and within, when he had moved in, he found a crowd on benches which ran round the outer room—a little room with walls all bare, save for one notice "Smoking Strictly Prohibited"; nor was that long there, for presently some lawful soul pointed out the notice to a lad who was smoking, whereupon

this gallant fellow sprang up at the goad of an inspiration, and tore it down. So now smoking was no more prohibited—not strictly; and Hazlitt said then to himself: “Within twenty years *heaven* would be the recompense of men, if men everywhere had the scepticism and inventiveness to behave in this way.”

When a bell twittered within the inner den, one entered, then a bell, and another entered. When at last Hazlitt entered, he was asked his name and trade by a young man at a table, who wrote them in a book, and then, looking up at Hazlitt, asked: “You lousy?”

And Hazlitt: “Yes, I’m afraid we’re all in the same mess, old man: the little ‘king’ is thicker than himself with them; Lloyd-George can’t see for them; even you yourself perhaps——”

“Well, take this ticket. . . . Cross Waterloo Bridge, and keep straight on.”

A long tramp before, at one o’clock, he got to The Morning Post’s shelter, where he was given bread and tea in a big room of a nocturnal and deserted mood, he alone with one attendant, and thence was led across a courtyard up to a chamber like a hospital-ward, containing two processions of beds, men breathing in sleep on several, with none of the many windows open.

The next morning, after a breakfast of bread-and-tea, he saw hewers of wood occupied in the courtyard, but, failing to “get any work” among them, left the place to go to the Ludgate Circus “Exchange,” and had hardly walked forty yards when he started, catching sight once more of that same person, something like a workman, yet with gentlemanly shoe-leather, whom he had seen the previous evening round about Rowton House—five miles away! The man stood looking into a cookshop, all unconscious of Hazlitt apparently: but when Hazlitt had gone on, on glancing backward, he again saw the man coming his way; and now an impulse took him to dodge and see what followed, upon which he shied down a side-street, then, trotting, wandered down a lot of petty streets, and presently lost his way.

Hence the sun was high toward noon when he arrived at “the Exchange,” to be reproved by an official there, who said to him: “Is this an hour to be looking for work? What do you call yourself?” on which Hazlitt with a king’s chin said, “You are not to be insolent,” and so damaged his chances at that “Exchange.”

Then the stroll back up the old Farringdon Street toward the old Rowton House that was home now to him, he seeing overhead a heavenful of heyday and Spring-weather brisk with clouds faring, shapes of scouts, Spanish dancers flouting, embassies of cherubim blowing trumpets at their mouths, having a high time, but down below for the sons of men heaviness and dullness; and "lift not your hands to *It* for help," he let himself say—a piece of gnosticism very foreign to his ordinary agnosticism: but he was modified today by the fact that there were no eggs to cook in his chocolate, nor no chocolate to cook the eggs in: and so ugly he felt his leprosy, that he kept from going anywhere near his old woman, near his Jessie Page, keeping himself morosely to himself in the smoking-room of the House, till at ten he once more found himself outcast, roaming London.

It was when turning down into Endell Street near eleven that he murmured to himself: "Can I be going weak in the head, with hallucinations? No living soul could have a motive for following me: yet it does seem that that man yonder . . ." another one, this one, not the gentlemanly workman before observed by him, but a dapper little man this, in a dust-coat: so, to get himself convinced of sanity, Hazlitt hid within a gateway, peeping northward toward the street-corner, and presently *did* see a face peer round; whereupon he walked sharply back to confront the shadower, and have it out: but, on reaching the street-corner, could now see nobody. . . .

In strolling back south he again noticed, printed close to that gateway where he had hidden, the announcement "Charity Organization Society"; and now the notion arose in his head: "This may be a Providence!"—for in their peril of death the indigent become "sensitives," subject to jumps and superstitions, catching at a hope of luck in the black of a cat, or noting an omen in some number; but, little as was his experience in the mechanism of "Relief," he knew something of it, and soon decided that not for him was this Charity Organization Society, whose delays and investigations are like grass growing while the hungry wax haggard. "No, nothing in that," he muttered: "no, that would be a charity to organize society, but there should be no society to organize charity . . . there'd be no 'charity,' if society was not organized by lawyers and 'lords,' men who attempt the impossible job of thinking without being educated—as though one could walk or talk without learning

for years, and as though thought was easier than walking or talking. . . . May-be tomorrow something may turn up . . . I am lucky on Thursdays. . . .”

But for Wednesday night? He was disinclined to go back to that little house on the Embankment. . . . However, about midnight, yielding to weakness, he went that way. . . .

On seeing him, the little man in the inner den said to him, “What, back again, Hazlitt?” then gave him a ticket to go to “the Church-Army” in Horseferry Road not far, whither he made his way in the company of a fellow-mendicant, a lad who had tramped across England, who, so indigent, was still gladsome, and continually chatted on one subject—motor-cars—though not much of it could Hazlitt catch, for all was uttered in the Yorkshire tongue; and they two together drank bowls of soup given out from a counter, and close together slept in a low-roofed room with a score of men, and no windows.

And, still together, Hazlitt and his gladsome lad set out the next morning to tramp through Victoria, and northward through Hyde Park, the lad all the time talking of “she” and “she” and “she” (meaning some motor-car), they urging their steps in search of work toward the “Church-Army” headquarters not far from the Marble Arch: but there, too, was *queue* and a waiting for one’s turn, and, early as our two had come, they were told that they should have come *earlier*, inasmuch as early birds catch worms, but later ones are eaten by them.

So Hazlitt anew went away, with his lad’s arm about him, till, before the Marble Arch, they parted, no more to meet, Hazlitt steering on an eastern reach for Rowton House, the boy bound south on his appointed voyage.

A day exactly like the last for Hazlitt—only a day hungrier; again the starlights for his tester; and again, late in the night, he felt the devil’s drive to go to the Board’s little Embankment “night-office,” to get a bed-ticket. This night, however, the little man at the table remarked with some roughness: “What, again? Beginning to get tired of you, Hazlitt!” whereupon Hazlitt lightly laughed, “Ha, ha, that’s all right! I never allow anyone to get tired of me,” and moved away; on which the little man jumped up to him to say confidentially: “Come on, don’t be touchy, man, I’ve got to say that: it’s my business”; but Hazlitt again uttered half a laugh, muttering: “No, that’s all right! thanks, thanks”—and went away.

"They That Watch for the Morning"

WHEN "Big Ben" struck three those soles of his still strolled the streets; but presently thereupon he let himself drop upon a door-step in a street between the Law Courts and Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he dozed every few minutes, waking automatically if the boots of a "man-in-blue" tolled close, or if the midnight cold woke him, or if a Smith's motor-lorry from the Emporium close-by ran clattering past, ecstatic, bearing bales of "*the papers*" for the railway; and, counting each hour which sounded, he watched for the dawn, wan watching for wan, with those astrologer eyes of "them that watch for the morning," and now was nodding, now was walking back to the Embankment, to watch the water, and watch those homeless others there, some of them "heroes" like him, "sleeping here," he muttered, "on seats fit for heroes who cannot think deeper than little solicitors"—one of them a young woman, who stood up to approach him with tender overtures, but he chased her as from leprosy with the statement that he owned one only ha'penny. Not long after which he was walking down Oxford Street for the Park, where one may sleep; and hardly had the Marble Arch been opened when he was there in the park, looking out to find the nicest place to lie in.

But now at the foot of some railings he came upon two crusts of bread, and then—treasure-trove!—saw a lemonade-bottle, probably left there by Spring-weather picnickers: so he quickly had the crusts devoured, and now was off with the bottle to Edgeware Road, to sell it.

Within a minute he had arrived at a confectioner's on the right, and slipped in, his footsteps making no sound on the floor-matting; no one there that he could see; though he could hear someone sweeping the floor round a corner, the shop being L-shaped; and, since the sweeping went steadily on, he understood that his entrance was unknown: so, now, that store of nice things on the counter at his right was his; and quickly his ecstatic hand had seven fat chocolates in his jacket-pocket, while his lips whispered quick: "So God feeds a man. . . ."

However, the chocolates were hardly in his pocket when they were sharply back again on their glass-stand; and out now with thievish feet he stole unnoticed. . . .

Outside he stood pretty agitated, and presently panted: "No, no stealing: of no importance—but—not pretty enough somehow. No: if Power creates creatures with needs, and then can't, or won't, satisfy them, let it be so"; and from that moment Hazlitt "went on hunger-strike" as against Nature, resolving that, if a decent meal from God was given him, he would eat it, but no more crusts picked up, nor no stealing, nor borrowing, nor begging, nor would he give-in to the rope that tugged him to go to see if his mother had not some old crusts somewhere. As for the lemonade-bottle, he now tossed that off him.

If he was "out of work," that, he understood, was his own doing—had been "hasty": but a capital offence? punishable with shame and torture and death? awfully worse than murder? "Cursed," he said to himself, "is the working of some pest at present at work in the world; and well I know the name of it."

Now, however, having a fixed will, he was a free lad, and could laugh: would bear until his pains became unbearable, then . . . he had a razor. . . . But, even so, he loved the sun, and breathed "no, not that. . . ."

Chapter 9

Hazlitt Photographed

AFTER GOING again to the Park, he selected a place on the grass sufficiently far from some six others who lay scattered, stricken as on the stricken field, as he had seen Germans after a skirmish; and there he lay: but had been lying scarcely ten minutes, seeming asleep, but still thinking behind his eyelids, when—*click!*—up he started to see a kodak snapping his photograph. . . . An early photographer! early bird snapping worms of the earth! And was not this the very man, dapper, spruce, whom he had remarked inscrutably moving behind him during the night? He had that impression—with a wonderment now not untouched with apprehension, with resentment too; and he called after the man "got me?" whereupon the man smiled without reply, now passing rapidly away toward the park-exit.

Chapter 10

Hazlitt Hypnotized

HAZLITT THEN fell back to lie reflecting on it some time, with open eyes now, not now feeling cold, for now the sun beamed sultrily down, a breeze from the south blowing balmy, though boisterous, convoying a march of clouds that voyaged fast afar along the arc of their cosmic path—a sight, he felt, never meant for the eyes of such as men and kine, which never can see it a little well, sight lovelier than seraph's flush ever can shout, or profoundness of the archangel's speculation sound, wild wheel flying, He Which wields it wielding it with a high hand and with a stretched-out arm; and, inside, another one, Venus, and, outside, the clouds and skies of Mars, huge moons of Jupiter cycling, with a high hand managed, with a stretched-out arm; and, as he lay spread-out there, agaze at that gadding and parade, gradually the egg addled, frenzy of pernicious revelry tipped it, his giddied awe getting the sort of concept that the columns of all that vault and hollow hall toppled upon him, tottering, so monstrously it all went revolving, following upon itself, away: so that now his lids shut down, hypnotized with so much power of light and almightiness of size, he not without some comfort now within him, some instinct that underneath that conscious with which he suffered were the everlasting arms of that Sub-Conscious which tumbles and blusters in the suns: and now he is asleep, to dream of rumps, and tubfuls of butter.

Slept later than he had intended! so did not make for "the Exchange" that day, infected now with something of that inertia and shirking which adversity works in men; and, without purpose, he strolled back by habit toward Rowton House.

Chapter 11

Hazlitt Converted

BUT NOW, as he entered Holborn, something blessed came to bless and comfort him—a company of Territorials step-

ping, rolling drums, playing "Tramp, tramp, tramp, *the boys are marching!*", the rough power of their drums' rumbling rousing the blood, inciting a fire to the eyes and tears of jubilee and hallelujah, in that here was achievement higher than the thrummings of cave-dwellers and the hummings of the hylobates ape, as much higher as men some day will be lighter, wilder, wiser, than men today: and now he went on his way converted, scorning now out of his nerves, once for all, all turbidness of blasphemy and damning against the gait of the Eternal Worker, thinking: "These afflictions are but for a moment! and will work out, only some centuries hence perhaps, a far more exceeding weight of glory. Hard on what I call '*me*' . . . but still . . . that's all right! I give myself to Him . . . He takes whether we give or not, so we may as well give. . . ."

Chapter 12

Shadows

BUT, AS he now walked round the south corner of the House, out of Cuthbert Street into King's Cross Road, he started! for there afresh was the gentlemanly labourer stationed at the house-entrance—stationed on the look-out quite likely, for at once his eyes and Hazlitt's met. There was, moreover, just there at the corner, a cab, by which was standing a man, one of whose boot-soles was inches thick, and *his* eyes, too, met Hazlitt's. . . .

In the next moment this man dashed into the cab, which drove rapidly away southward, while the man at the house-front moved northward away: and there stood Hazlitt with a faster heart-beat, eyeing him while he sauntered off some forty yards, then darted suddenly into running, to disappear to the left into Frederick Street.

"That man!" Hazlitt muttered to himself; and then: "Something is hanging over me, as surely as death is sure. . . ."

He went in; and, on passing down into the lavatory-room to wash himself, saw there, stretched on benches which were down there in that half-light, some who, like him, had passed the night under the stars; and "blessed," he said to himself, "be the man who thought of putting

those benches there; may the man live long, enjoying his Maker."

He himself, not having slept as long as ordinary, stretched himself on a bench, in order to lay-in a stock of sleep for the impending night-tramp, and to eat in dreams.

And he was so eating, fast asleep, when, perhaps half-an-hour afterwards, someone shook his shoulder. . . . "Hazlitt! they're calling out your name in the smoking-room. . . ."

Common enough the messenger: but, starting up astare, Hazlitt understood from some ominous thumping in his bosom that this was none other than the trump of doom now summoning him. . . .

Up he hurried, and "there you are" said a servitor at the stair-head: "gentleman in the hall wants you."

"Gentleman." . . . Was it luck? Bed and bread somehow for today? With pressing step he advanced to open the packet that the coming moment held in it . . . but now stopped astonished. . . .

Again "Mr. Lennard" . . . ? that "active little f-fat man?" who had wished to ship him so quick to Mexico? It was he: and just outside the door a chariot, the richest limousine, with it a footman—silk stockings, gold braid, a ghost risen out of the grave of the eighteenth century. . . .

Lennard stepped quick to the meeting within the turnpike barrier. "Well, Hazlitt, here I am again—not that you deserve it; but down on your luck: so I've thought of you—just got a wire to send a workman in a hurry——"

"Well, I am—much—obliged. . . ."

"Don't stop for thanks, man—something wrong with 'phone—urgent. Just jump into the motor——"

"Motor. . . . But mustn't I go to get some tools?"

"Oh, I don't—— Is that necessary? There may be tools there."

"Not very likely, sir."

"Where are these tools?"

"Not far."

"Oh, very well, jump into the motor, get the tools, then on to 24 Park Lane. Look alive, now. . . ."

The active man had him by the arm, and before Hazlitt could say Ave Maria he was in the motor, the footman slamming the motor-door, while Hazlitt asked of Lennard: "You not coming, then?"

"No, I am—— Tell the footman——"

"62 Acton Street," called Hazlitt.

And as the motor moaned to move, "Goodbye, Hazlitt," Lennard said close: "you're in luck's way—only do as you're told."

And away, whirled like an earl, went Hazlitt, meshed in a dream as rum as any that he had just been dreaming down there in that wash-room. . . . So, then, it was not necessary any more for the workman to go to "look for work?" Work looked for the workman? "So, no doubt," he said to himself, "it would be in a society devised by mechanics or other kind of scientist: but devised by William the Matabele?" And what could that mean: "only do as you are told"—in the matter of mending a telephone? Anyway, one thing he was sure of now—a bed that night . . . sugar . . . ten eggs. . . . The motor drew up at 62.

"Back in a minute!" he cried out, as in he ran, and up, through the tribes of microbes; and, wringing the door-handle, was in.

But—no mother? That was odd for her to go out, and not lock the door. And the cat . . . no cat?

But no stopping to think of it: he drew from under the bed a box of tools, took screw-driver, nippers, insulated wire, spanner, ammeter, hammer, hand-drill, hack-saw, blow-lamp, wrench—but as he touched the wrench, paused, kneeling there suspended, pierced with apprehension at a thought "Suppose?" This was all so out of the common! Suppose—hard as it was to imagine—that someone had some motive to "do him in" somehow? Anyway, a wrench was not a bad weapon in the way of self-defense; he took it; then drew-on his habitual "overalls"—trousers whose waist-band reached up to his chest, trousers and braces made of the same blue drill, he now looking like Pierrot in blue; then in pencil he scribbled quick on wrapping-paper: "Mum, some money coming," and was away.

A little outcry, as down he flew, reached his ear—appealing—a mew: but he was much too preoccupied to stop to trouble.

Chapter 13

Sir Henry

DOWN AT the door he found a little crowd, women, children, watching with astonishment the motor de luxe, one of the

children calling out to him, as he jumped in, "Mrs. Jackson ain't looking after your mother's cat!"—a remark which Hazlitt hardly fathomed, nor, in fact, properly caught, for in that same second he was saying to the footman at the motor-door "To Park Lane," and an answer which the footman muttered to this was occupying his attention. . . .

Utterly puzzled at that answer sat Hazlitt, as the motor dashed away with him, and he chuckled a little, thinking: "Am I having 'delusions?' I could have sworn I heard 'Yes, Sir Henry.' If the man did not say that, then, I am in Nephelococugia. . . . My name isn't 'Henry,' my friend, nor am I yet 'knighted,' though a night-errant in my way, and a sword has struck me. . . ."

Anyway, this was good, these cushions, better than the wash-room benches; a rug was in there which gave out a glow, and was gracious and melting to the touch like sugars which melt in the mouth; so, as the motor went shooting its way through the roar of Holborn, booming a music of the jews-harp, he lay luxuriating, making himself credit that the motor was his own, and he the duke of Portland, or "Sir Henry," looking down top-loftily upon everyone, like bigwig niggers going in "buggies." He had left Hyde Park three hours before in a different style. . . .

When the motor stopped before a mansion that had two doors under a porch of columns, before the footman could open the motor-door Hazlitt jumped out with his mother's shopping-bag (into which he had popped his tools), casting one look toward the place in the Park where he had slept that forenoon, it being now about five of a bright afternoon, the sky quite a wildness of tresses and shreds stretched in dishevelment, like white hair of the Almighty flying wild in His flight through Time; and after passing over a platform of marble slabs, he ascended four steps to enter the porch.

He was still a little distance from the house-front when the door to his left opened to him, so that his approach must have been noted through a little window close to this door, and he could now see three men in there in "evening-dress," one of whom at his approach had jumped up hastily out of a large chair covered over with a hood.

And at his entrance the three stood with their necks lowered as at the coming of the King, so that he, feeling quite flattered at the grave obsequiousness of these people, thrice bowed graciously to them, one after the other.

But before he could say anything, a fourth man in "dress-clothes" came smartly forward from an inner hall, whereat

at once the other three went away inward; and to this new-comer, whom Hazlitt took to be the butler, he mentioned: "To see to the telephone."

The new-comer was then reaching aside to open a near room-door, but rather paused in this, as Hazlitt said "telephone," to say to Hazlitt with an attentive ear: "Beg pardon, Sir Henry?"

Now Hazlitt's left eyelid lowered at him. There was no question now of "hallucination"—*this* "Sir Henry" had been heard in the world of reality: and, after meditating a second on the man, Hazlitt demanded: "Whom are you getting at, my friend?"

The man now had the room-door open, holding the handle with deference, as if expecting Hazlitt to pass in; but at this question he let go the handle to face Hazlitt squarely, saying: "I'm afraid I don't quite follow you, Sir Henry."

He was a man of some mass, a mass of full-face full of colour and satisfaction, looking as though no smile had ever enticed him; honest, commonplace—though a droop of the right eyelid was not without some local mood of cunning, too; anyway, after studying the face half-a-minute, Hazlitt abandoned the notion that he was being played with; into his brain now flashing another notion, the only other which seemed reasonable, that he might be "*the double*" of this "Sir Henry!" . . . But, then, no: did Sir Henry go about in Pierrot trousers? and broken boots? carrying bags of tools?

"I say, my friend," Hazlitt suddenly asked, "do you happen to notice my clothes?"

The other meditated on that; then "Clothes?" he whispered with a little trouble of the brow; then: "Yes, Sir Henry."

Now Hazlitt commenced to feel a little that he must in truth be Sir Henry, this other intellect seemed so convinced of it; and a minute passed in silence, Hazlitt still smiling upon that impassive face, in spite of a fright now rising in him that there might be some failure as to the mending of the telephone—and the payment.

"Look here," he suddenly demanded, "is there a telephone-set that wants seeing-to—or not?"

The man looked him straight in the face to say: "Not—that I am aware of, Sir Henry."

And now a bell tolling in Hazlitt . . . no bed again, no blasted eggs. . . . His guts rumbled in him for grub . . . he had scribbled to his mother "Mum, some money coming. . . ."

“Not,” he repeated . . . somehow it was “not.” Then: “Do you happen to know a Mr. Lennard?”

“Let me see. . . . No, Sir Henry.”

And now Hazlitt, with a flush of intolerance and authority: “Don’t keep calling me Sir Henry!”

On which the other bowed, without answer.

Then again a stillness, Hazlitt wondering at the sphinx-cruelty of this slip, wondering if he was never more to eat food; until the other broke the stillness by coldly asking: “I have to ask you, Sir, whether you will be dining at home.”

Words which had the effect of turning Hazlitt pallid, a thought now born within him. . . . Here, anyway, was dinner, not of eggs, but of what made the man before him so fat and happy in his happy home. . . .

And sideways now he eyed the menial with a leer saying: “So you’re not surprised to see me in this rig-out? How is that?”

Whereat the other’s lips consented to simper a little, deprecatingly, saying: “Well, Sir Henry, it is known that you are often up to your fun.”

So that was how it was . . . Sir Henry was often up to his fun. . . .

“Well, well,” went Hazlitt, pallid, smiling; then, agitated to his heart, on pants: “Well, I will think of it—will ring presently to tell you whether—I will be dining at home.”

The other bowed in his ceremonial manner, Hazlitt now moving, not through the opened doorway to the left, but, to fly an instant quicker from the man’s sight, into another nigher on the right; whereupon that door closed upon him; and now he found himself alone in a room that had little resemblance to any room that he had before stood in and stared at, save once, in the Salle des Miroirs at Versailles.

Twice quickly he stepped its length in a twilight made vaguely chromatic by oriel glasses coloured to tones of rosy, azzurrognolo, mauve, and by wood-fires flickering within two fireplaces; then with the lively eye of the venturer he was sitting on a chair-edge alert as a bird pilfering, brisk to spring, thinking of it. . . . How could he sit to dinner in that place in that dress? the “magistrates” would charge him with blasphemy—with false pretence, anyway, or something: for at any moment the true Sir Henry might step in. And yet he felt that some recompense was owing to him for his trouble in coming. . . . *Tea!* he might venture on that: and, seated there quick and keen, his eyes fixed without sight on a picture wider than a side of his mother’s room,

he meditated on tea, tempted to ring, shrinking, until he was conscious of a rapping, and when he called challengingly "*Come in!*" a menial in "evening-dress" entered—bringing tea.

This dumb spirit, having placed the tea-tray on a dumb-waiter that had wheels, went out without having said anything; and at last now Hazlitt stood over food: pitifully little of it, though, fare *à la salade* for fairies, three whiffs of sandwiches, four bonbons; the silver one could not eat, nor the mass of the imperial tea-tray of—platinum; and even that lean fare he was not fated to eat, for at once his stare became rivetted on one of three letters on the tray—two directed to "Sir Henry Beresford," but one—a "fool-scap-envelope"—to "Sir Henry Beresford (Hazlitt)."

It was hard for Hazlitt to admit to himself that reality—his name confronting him there on that tea-tray, this seeming to him the visit of such a miracle as when one midnight Röntgen saw before him the impossible bones of his paw. . . . But, then, this was not the first of the unreadable circumstances that had recently encircled his steps . . . people asking after him . . . after his mother . . . people appearing to follow him . . . Lennard . . . Mexico . . . sent to this place to mend "the" telephone, and no telephone . . . putting all which together, all at once, with a breath of impatience, with trembling hands, he had that envelope torn open. . . .

There came out of it four £ 10 notes; then came cheque-books of two Banks, containing deposit-notes for £ 112,000 and for £ 85,000.13.6; and lastly came half-a-sheet of note-paper on which was written: "It is not wrong to enjoy that which is offered. Launch out. Entertain. Travel. Chat with kings. Spend little, and you will have little; spend much, and you will have much. Dædalus."

Chapter 14

Perplexity

THE RESULT of this for Hazlitt was rather like what is known as "sudden" hypnotism: for, sick as he was for want of victuals, it was as if "a strong man armed" had come upon him, trumpeting "yield!" and "like a man upon whom sleep seizes" so he yielded, seated there with his head hung down, fingers in hair, his attention agaze at a spot in noth-

ingness a long way down between his legs, knowing nothing as to how many minutes he so remained, only seeing that the room was markedly darker when he found himself standing with his brow on the carving of a hearth-place, whose panels had pastorals in pearwood: which carving, denting his flesh, occasioned an ache which waked him well to himself; whereupon, hunger at once again uppermost in him, he made again for the tea-tray, where, seeing now again the other two envelopes, he opened them. . . . But no information in them: just invitations—to a dance in South Audley Street—to chamber-music in Grosvenor Place—a perplexing thing, for, if no “Sir Henry” was in existence, how these invitations to Sir Henry?—unless someone had suggested to the inviters to invite a Sir Henry whom they did not know? dance-hostesses sometimes inviting mere names? But, if there was no Sir Henry, how could that butler say that Sir Henry was “often up to his fun?”—unless the butler was “in the know” of the plot? There might be a Sir Henry who had done some wrong, and, wanting to run and bury himself, wanted Hazlitt, who perhaps resembled him, to take his place . . . was that it? But no: for, in that case, why that attempt to send Hazlitt to Mexico—by that same “Lennard” who had now sent him hither? Who was Lennard? And who that other one that had wanted the old woman’s address “*for no good,*” as Lennard had told Jessie Page. Perhaps it was Lennard himself that had wanted her “*for no good.*” . . . But nothing of it comprehensible!—only this, that he was hungry, and grub going, that he was in a balloon in a typhoon, and it was well, though frenzied, to be en route among the moons for Arcturus. Some day, in some way, without doubt, he must needs pay dear; but, meanwhile—Pegasus it was, and the steeds of the gale! He was away, a monkey on the colt through the ether commotion, flushed among the spheres which breathe the zero of cold, his hair stretched between his head and the breeze. . . .

Afresh he reached out his hand to seize a sandwich, but then paused, thought no, that would spoil all, damp the passion of his appetite . . . wines, delights. . . . He rang.

It was the butler himself who entered; and, averted from him, turned toward the society of the fire that he eyed, Hazlitt, demanded: “I say, what is the time?”

“Half-past six, Sir Henry.”

“Dark. . . . Very well, I’ll—dine at home. Dinner soon. But—how about clothes?”

"Your valet arrived with the trunks at four o'clock, Sir . . . You being just back from abroad, and I having no instructions, I fancied that you might prefer the first-floor bedroom—used to be the Duchess's own—so I directed that the trunks be put there."

Hazlitt's wits were busy, picking up what bits they could; but, then, his psychology was all areel in a species of hysteria. He said: "I see"; then: "Now, tell me this—when last did you see me?"

"Well—I can't say that I remember ever seeing you before, Sir Henry."

"Not? . . . Then, how could you know that I am 'often up to my fun?'"

"I got that from the under-butler of Lady Charlotte Armitage of Wade, Sir Henry."

"I see. . . . Yes, he perhaps might know. . . . Well—take me to my room. . . . What room is this?"

"Ball-room, Sir."

"Oh, yes. Rather decent room."

"The curtains, Sir, are considered good. Cost two thousand pounds apiece."

"Quite so. Beauvais, eh?" Then, the volcano-in-action within his Sub-conscious casting up débris of quips and flippancies: "Most curtains cost seven and elevenpence three-farthings."

"Ha, ha, Sir Henry, true enough, ha, ha."

"And as to the Duchess—where is she now?"

"The Dowager is now on the way to India, Sir, together with her daughter, Lady Charlotte Armitage of Wade, to join her son, Lord Hawtrey and Hove, who is so poorly. Hence the leasing the two establishments."

With all the mathematics in his now flighty mentality Hazlitt tried to put two and two together; and "Yes," he said, "that was how it was; her son so poorly: so she let the place to me. And you—been the dowager's butler long?"

"Seven years, Sir Henry. . . I may mention that I am a married man, and sleep out when I please. The head groom-of-the-chambers is also married, and sleeps out always."

"Quite so. . . . How many of you all told?"

"Twenty-seven, Sir."

"Dear me, shall I have to pay you all? I shall be ruined."

"Ha, ha, Sir Henry—no fear of that, Sir Henry, ha, ha."

"Who are these twenty-seven people?"

"Well, the chef has a cook and four girls, sir, then the

two butlers, the two grooms-of-the-chambers, the two footmen, the page, then the housekeeper's seven girls——”

“Ah! the sun and the planets. Pretty are they, these seven?”

“Ha, ha, Sir Henry. I have arranged, Sir, for you to see us all together in the morning. As to the private secretary, I have to ask you from her whether she is to continue her duties as usual tomorrow—has been in the Duchess's service a number of years.”

“Very good: tell her yes . . . Secretary . . . I never had a secretary—before. So what is the system? How do I pay? How is the place *run*, I mean?”

An underlook of the butler dwelt on him a second in that half-dark; then: “Well, Sir, as usual, there are three heads of the household: myself, the housekeeper, and the *chef*; we each keep our separate books; and the secretary, who audits our accounts, will draw cheques for you to sign. As to the police, the Dowager had the habit of tipping them with her own hand—always, Sir.”

“Indeed? . . . Police. . . .”

“Yes, Sir, her Grace felt the importance of this tipping—always—to ensure their vigilance, Sir.”

“Ah! gold-tipped staffs. ‘Civitas venditu’—that means ‘a nation for sale.’”

“Well, you see, Sir, apart from the banked plate, the plate-closet is said to contain stuff to the value of near a million, Sir.”

“So much? . . . Lay up for yourselves treasures, eh? though thieves break through—is that the idea? You must show me. . . . Do *you* keep the key of that?”

“No, Sir—the under-butler is in charge, keeping also an inventory of what plate is in use, which plate sleeps with him——”

“Ah! a platonic concubinage. Cold his embraces, and pale his dreams, must be.”

“Ha, ha, Sir Henry—or his nightmares, Sir Henry. The under-butler's job is no sinecure, Sir. Only three nights gone the odd-man knocked him up, vowing that there were sounds in the house. Happily the alarm proved unfounded. That is the odd-man's little way.”

“I see; his oddity exceeds his manhood”—now severing his attention from the fire to pace some steps, uncomfortable, like one irked by excess of burden on one's first day in Heaven or in Venice, a riot of brightness in his brain, like borealis whiffed, or like candles in a wind; and he asked:

"So you are all old servants of the Dowager? Is that so?"

"Yes, Sir—except, of course, the valet"; and, ever pre-occupied with the mechanism of his petty cosmos, he added: "I may mention, Sir, that it is my habit on the occasion of big functions—what are vulgarly known as 'posh affairs'—to direct a valet to put on evening-dress for attendance at table—that is, if the valet's gentleman has no objections, sir."

And Hazlitt: "Quite so—no objection; I am my valet's, though he be another's. But as to dinner . . . And, by the way—cigars—any going?"

"Well, Sir"—his voice dropped to confidentialness—"I certainly am in a position to do you a good turn in that way. . . . Plenty of cigars, for that matter, but there is one special casket which the Dowager reserved for the use of the late Sir Ernest Calless whenever he called—something rather good—green-rolled *vegueras*, Sir; cost seventeen shillings each. You're welcome to them."

"Dear me, that is very decent of you—thanks, thanks. And now"—he moved toward a door, and was led through an inner hall to a stair-foot where an Apollo held a swarm of lamps, thence to an electric lift, up to the next floor, in the butler's hand hanging that singular bag of tools; and at a door of the only bedroom on this floor they separated, dinner to be at 7.15.

Chapter 15

The Valet

HAZLITT'S GAZE was some moments engaged in surveying the placid breadths of this chamber before he addressed a man standing in the centre—young, lank, sloping shoulders, long face-and-head—horse-like. . . .

"By the way, have you seen me before?"

"Not that I know of, Sir Henry."

"What is your name?"

"John Gibbs, Sir."

"So who engaged you to be my valet?"

"Mr. Cox, Sir."

"Oh, yes. And—where did you get the keys of the trunks?"

"Mr. Cox handed them to me, Sir."

"I see. . . . And the trunks: where——?"

"The trunks I got from the cloakroom at Victoria, Sir."

"Oho. And—by the way—what is Mr. Cox's address?
I don't remember——"

"I never heard Mr. Cox's address, Sir."

"No? Then—where did he engage you?"

"At the registry, Sir."

"Hm. . . . You, by the way, an American? You talk——"

"Well, Sir I *have* lived in America, I admit."

"Admit! Is it an admission?"

"No, Sir, it's not an admission."

"Then, why admit it, if it's not an admission?"

"Well, Sir——" his delicate skin pinked, he stood mute.

"How long have you been in England?"

A new blush! shown up just beneath a chandelier's flood of moonshine. "Two years, Sir."

"Been a valet in England before?"

Yet a blush! "I was valet to the young son of Lady Charlotte Armitage of Wade, Sir."

"Oho. She is gone to India. Where did *she* live?"

"Close by here, Sir—near her mother, the Dowager. The two house-backs face each other."

"Oho." Hazlitt paced, pondering it, his hands broadening the opulent pockets of his blue balloon-costume; and presently: "So what do you think of me in this get-up? Grotesque, is it not?"

"Well, Sir, you certainly do it to a T, Sir—look remarkably like a common mechanic."

Which "common" was like a match tossed upon all that naphtha of famine in Hazlitt's stomach, and, flushing, he answered: "There *are* no common mechanics, mechanics being scientists—if you know what 'scientist' means: that is why I like this masquerade, because I reverence mechanics high above all men; and you also have to."

On which John Gibbs was like one who washes his hands, saying: "Yes, Sir; I certainly see your point, Sir; I didn't mean——"

"*Common* mechanic. . . . Suppose a mechanic becomes rich—do you suppose that raises him one inch above himself? It is education that raises: and mechanics are educated."

"Well, Sir—in a manner of speaking, Sir——"

"Don't be foolish! 'manner of speaking' "—his heat increasing with the menial's meekness—"you have been

taught to imagine us gentlemen 'the educated class,' and the poor 'the uneducated': but the truth is the other way. For the training of gentlemen in general is all a training in sopiness: they go into college European boys, and come out Chinese men—a training, not in eternal things, but in conventions, local fashions—Chinese 'learning'—village stuff. And that's the drug that keeps us dull. Why, if Europe were to throw out of her the Asiatic elements that damp civilization, man would soon be stamping on the moon."

"You wouldn't say, Sir! But I didn't mean——"

"*Common mechanic*"—marching flushed about the carpet's buxom plush: "*winged mechanic, poetic mechanic, Divine mechanic, the Maker, the God-man*—'Poet' means 'Maker.' It is only scientists, i.e., experimenters, manual workers, that are educated. Not valets, you know: a gentleman's valet is scarcely more educated than a valet's gentleman; but mechanics, yes; and gentlemen would be mechanics' valets, if people were not too steeped in ignorance and happiness to give to things their true values. *Common mechanic. Uncommon.*"

"Yes, Sir"—John Gibbs, bullied, wrung his palms—"Oh, I certainly get you, Sir; I didn't mean——"

"Well, all ready? . . . You may go."

The valet passed out; and the moment Hazlitt found himself alone there, a new sense of amazement overpowered and drowned him, his stare roaming round the room. . . . "Well, my God, here I am . . . something has happened to me . . . or some dream that I am dreaming down in the wash-room." . . . That morning he had almost purloined seven chocolates . . . slept in the park . . . and now, above the park, was pacing a chamber of palatial spaces, three windows in a row. . . . How could that occur in the workaday world? And how in all this did he stand "morally?" He reread his charter: "It is not wrong to enjoy that which is offered. . . ." They could hardly clap him into prison after that; and with the art of self-defence he would win through. He had always felt himself a special quality and size of cock, offspring of the gods divinely tall, and here he was, prince outwardly now as inwardly previously—if only it was no dream to disappear with the morrow's crow of cock: for though his head was in the heavens, his feet on the earth could feel her swerve and reel under the hurrying effort of his stepping, like feet of mice twinkling with effort to climb a wheel that flits. . . . Still, if it was all cloth-of-vision, it was woven of tough-looking stuff enough: that mass of ward-

robe Louis Onze—nothing could be realer to the sense—statuettes of Doulton, Dresden figurines, crystals of Laliqué, Bavarian cushions, Levantine hues, the ceiling broken into squares having breasts of gold at the angles, hot water there on the plain of dressing-table, ready with razors and shaving-brush, a row of shoes shining beside his clothes, diamonds in his links, in his *plastron*—palpable stuff—and through a doorway the view of another room where was lukewarm water *ambrata* in a bath of augite and gold.

Chapter 16

Parson's Collar?

AFTER THE job of bathing and shaving, his next care was to toss upon the fire what of his clothes were torn or unsightly, among these being his socks; but then, when he went to dress, he saw that socks were the one thing that the valet had omitted to think of for him: so he went to a trunk to rummage; and, in rummaging for socks, came upon one stray collar buried among the clothes—an object which stirred his astonishment, a *clergyman's* collar.

“Parson's collar?” he muttered, holding up the thing, looking stupidly at it: there it was—just phenomenon—X-ray—a parson's collar, incomprehensibly there, like all the rest. . . .

Some minutes more and dinner was served, he in a dinner-jacket now finding himself in a dining-room adjacent to his bed-chamber, seated among three men-servants who hung observant on him, no expected “spread” on the table, its flush a mirror too rich to cover, mirroring the blush of a centrepiece that represented a troubadour-group rendering music of basoon, trombone, glittering guitar, viol de Gamba, a mass of gold, the room too lonesome for the men, who looked a local group going through some ceremony in the emptiness of a temple.

At those three Hazlitt could not look, was among them as in the hands of bandits, they inflicting upon him a long history and ritual of dinner, all an intricacy of fork and spoon—heavier than those spoons of pewter of Rowton House, and hence inferior (as tools), though still serving their purpose; but at burgundy with pheasant, when his

bosom burst into humming, singing a new song, his foreignness dropped off him.

Afterwards he sat a long time solitary by a fire in a drawing-room, his eyes fixed on one of three pictures on easels under three crowds of lights that showered shine over, by his side "segars" in a casket of silver rugged with sculpture, difficult to lift, from his lips pouring garden-aroma of a cigar more costly than his ordinary meals for a week: no thinking, except in fits of effort, he having drunk three kinds of wine, some rum, and having browsed on a rosary of ambrosias. There before that throne of velour in which he lay with his legs stretched out together was visible the glittering of his feet that grinned like negroes, but his nut was invisible, lost among the clouds, his conscious now all submerged in an insurgence of his subconscious, till, in a reaction, an oppression overtook him, a necessity to move, to act, to riot, he at nine o'clock ordering "the car," to be away, to take a box at "the Alhambra," which, however, he soon abandoned in the company of two "about town" with whom he chummed, they to dance at an "Old Dutch," at a "Palais de Dance," then to play at roulette-tables at a place buried in bush in St. John's Wood; and there they were at about two in the morning, all among a mob of *décoletées* and swallow-tails, when—sudden scare, a hundred blanched cheeks, breaths of haste, random fleeings, as when the day of calamity overtakes the wicked—*sssst—police!* . . . Hazlitt, with another lad of the crowd were cowering, tittering tipsy, within thicket, when a policeman came peering within *three feet* of them, and failed to see them; and it was with breakings into delicious silly titterings every three minutes that he reached home some time before four, when signs of daybreak were already in the sky.

Chapter 17

At the Bank

WHEN AT nine his eyes opened and he had discovered where he was, he lay soft and somnolent some time, until an impulse took him to see how much of his forty pounds was left, and, having snatched at his trousers, and found in it only two, he jerked a head of censure, murmuring: "Absurd of me. . . ."

Now a thought of his Jessie Page, of his old woman, flashed a moment athwart his consciousness and vanished, his thoughts now like a mob of monkeys in his skull dashing about with chatter from branch to branch, among them a thought which caused him to start: suppose his cheques were not cashed? the whole matter some hoax for a night. . . ? Everything seemed possible here where all seemed impossible. . . . He determined to go himself to a bank and make certain; so, as it was a Saturday, and early-closing, at once he rang, and, as he rang, the valet was rapping.

But he was less free than he fancied, having, immediately after breakfast, to inspect the assembled *valetaille*, and one rascal chap in an Eton jacket could not, in his hilarity at the scene, smother some spasms of giggling that seemed to make game of the master and of the scheme of things. Hazlitt shook hands with the housekeeper, as presently with the secretary, a lady whose eyes braved him from behind a fortress of horn-spectacles, she showing some hair-tufts on chin and lip; and inasmuch as three of the maids were fair to see, to these (unconsciously!) his neck specially bent itself in acknowledgement; whereupon he gave utterance to some gracious little phrases, while one giggle just slipped from out the page's gullet, the girls observing with brief underglances of appreciation that he was princely of figure, "good-looking," too, and seated with easy repose on the roses of his ethereal throne—so stooping in his aloofness, so fabulously affable, that he himself, remarking it in himself, laughed within himself, thinking: "It takes a 'gentleman' ten years to become a mechanic, and it takes a mechanic a day to become a pattern for 'gentlemen'—if he is much of a mechanic."

But even now his butler was not done with him—must needs now lead him about a house whose bigness, for a London house, progressively astounded him, from the time when he was made to pry into the white kitchen, with still-room and pantries down there, and that room where "the plate slept" with the under-butler, who slept with the plate on a folding-bed; and he saw wine-cellar and the butler's key, house-keeper's-room, servants'-hall, and on the ground-floor an alcove of the morning-room which was a plate-closet, in it twenty cases containing plate, and on his own floor music-room, book-room, billiard-room, and so on, also an "Amoor Room" (Chinese) at the back, which he at once fixed upon as his own special den: so that it was

close on noon before he could step into the motor in the midst of a little throng of footmen and "grooms" who ceremoniously "saw him off," and now, left, were left without him.

Down Piccadilly—Leicester Square: the same old "movie"-picture of clouds evolving, and morning breezes, and Cockney street-scenes, but altered, caught up for him to Mars, in whose atmosphere laughs more oxygen, they say, all the cosmos a night old, astonishing the morning eye.

But a pang of apprehension was in his breast when, in Fleet Street, he sprang from the car to enter a bank, he far from certain what was now to happen; and "Henry Beresford" not being his name, his wrist a little trembled when he presented a cheque.

A clerk looked at its front, looked at its back, looked up at Hazlitt, while Hazlitt stood there paled, suspended, thinking: "Get it over, man"; until the other decided to say: "Oh, yes, Sir Henry Beresford: er—the manager would like to see you, if you don't mind stepping this way."

"Manager." . . . Fresh apprehension for Hazlitt, as he stepped into an inner lair: to be soon reassured, however, when one came cordially forward, reflected on him, looked satisfied, and presently proved himself a merry soul, quoted from the "Bab Ballads," talked of "Master" Lloyd-George, invited Hazlitt to dine. Twice during that interview Hazlitt asked questions—indirect, tentative—the replies to which might possibly have thrown some sidelight upon that being of mystery who had put so many thousands of pounds to his credit in that bank: but the manager's replies were so discreet, that Hazlitt could not even divine how much more was known than was revealed. So, having given a specimen of his cheque-signature, he left, to be let out through a bank-door now closed; and outside stood by the motor, holding his roll of notes, to think a little. . . . To go now to see his Jessie? his old woman? . . . But what tale to tell them? How explain to their seven senses that he was dead and risen again transfigured? Little could he explain it to himself! They would think that he wholly was what he half was, an impostor; and if tomorrow they saw him stripped, as they *might*, of his robes of brightness, they would think so more. Anyway, it would be better to wait and veil himself a little, tempering his resplendence, not to strike them quite blind with excess of bright. So the impulse to dart in the car, for a lark, up into Acton Street and Swinton Street faded quickly out of him, giving place within that whirligig of his

giddied head to other spurts and gushes of purpose, as the dead in their first days of Hades can be in no hurry to return to blurt to their friends their experiences of its sceneries, being too immersed in the moods and manners of their fields of asphodel, the dalliance of their alleys, the flutes of their retreats, and the dreaminess of their new moons and full moons looming; so, having arranged to meet two men at luncheon, he shut out Jessie, being doubtful, moreover, whether at that hour she would be at home from her secretary-job in Park Street—just near him! and he thought of her awe, were she to know that in Park Lane was he. . . .

He was getting into the motor for home when he paused at a thought that prompted him to go across to The Daily Telegraph and discover if there was in existence any Sir Henry Beresford: so in the office he borrowed a Debrett, saw no Sir Henry, and drove away understanding that his rôle was to be an *incognito*, a fairy of money who had taken the name "Beresford."

And to be a fairy he was prepared—had been warned by his Lennard "do as you are told," and had been told to "launch out." . . .

Chapter 18

A Chin

THAT NIGHT he was at one of the first dances of the season, where, in a marquee, he saw a lady at whom he kept glancing through the night, and with every glance caught a corner of her eye on him—a feminine being living in a nebula of femininity; a head sleek like a deer, clean-cut; and the throw of her chin when she threw it!—an inch above the throw of oceans and the raging of the nations; looked half-Spanish—with that chin; though, in fact, she was half-Italian; and Hazlitt, watching her, thought: "How fertile the earth! rich, strange, the treasures of Her swarming womb"; but he did not speak to her—many people there—he never dreaming that it was his destiny even to *marry* her.

The next (Sunday) afternoon, after having been at a private-view, on finding himself alone, he roamed into a book-room rich in first editions, and, seeing his Thomson's "Recent Researches" seized on it, to smoke over it in the

“Amoor Room” beside a fire that blinked and stuttered like one *de trop* in the brightness of that afternoon; pretty quickly, though, he discovered that his wits just then could not stick to the wings of electricity, and within a few minutes a new impulse and random wind had him gripped, to be off for Gray’s Inn Road for the very fun of it; upon which he was away to his bed-chamber, laughing in his heart, threw on the ancient jacket and cap, ran down and out by stealth, took a taxi, and presently was there, revisiting like a spirit risen, like a flighty Christ risen—fickle, flitting, revisiting—experienced in unspeakable abysses.

Passing by Acton Street, he saw his old woman’s house-door, but without stopping, went on to the next corner (of Swinton Street), where he sprang out, bidding the cabman wait, and fifteen yards, laughing in his heart, he darted down Swinton Street, which now appeared to him profoundly dull and drowned in meanness, he pressing his steps to be at his Jessie, his She and gossip in God’s female half and smart . . . ! something like his mother somehow to him!

It was Jessie’s mother, her stays suggested through her dress, who opened the door, and, as their eyes met, she was at once conscious of something—in his smile, in his levitation—he not a visitor there, but a visitant and *revenant*, his feet experienced in the dim Kingdoms . . . and, “She’s gone to see the Pigotts in Kingsland,” said Mrs. Page, adding: “Boz is very cross with you . . . what in the world has become of you for five days? . . . Got some work, then, have you?”—for though jacket and cap were ancient, other things were stuff of Swallow Street.

“Ha, ha, ‘work’ ”—he could not help laughing!—“no, I have got some idleness. Well, yes, got something—I think I’ll go and see her at the Pigotts—See you again”—as angels visit he was away, his fingers scattering goodbye behind.

On his way back to the cab he met a slattern, to whom he stopped to say: “You know my mother, don’t you?”

“Know her, yes,” she answered . . . “What’s become of her? I ain’t seen her about lately.”

“She is there in Acton Street . . . Well, you take her these £2, or keep one for yourself, and tell her I have some money—will come to her soon”—he was gone again, to be off for the Pigotts of Kingsland, a district of streets broad and neat, staid, solitary, inhabited by specially dull people probably, specially dull on Sundays, the houses uniform, not large, having “area-railings,” bands of brass exhibited in windows: at one of which Hazlitt runs up steps to the front-

door, demands his Jessie; no Jessie: where, then, is Jessie? "gone with Alice to hear the Rev. Dr. Radlor," the family-father answered.

"Pity . . . What for?"

"P'raps you haven't heard of the Rev. Radlor: everybody is rushing to hear him—makes your flesh creep, people say."

"Which church?"

"Chapel: close by, round the corner——"

Hazlitt was off that way, with a thought of rescuing Jessie by becks from the drag of the garrulous Radlor; but he was no sooner there in front of a notice-board on which appeared "Evening. The Rev. Dr. Radlor (of America)," than he realized the hopelessness of discovering Jessie: for in the porch was still an overflow of people lingering, or going reluctant away, having failed to get seats; a tone of buzz and bustle was about the place; and presently when, on pressing back a door covered with baize, he peeped within, it was to see even the aisles quite filled with people.

He was now about to go away, but suddenly his eyes and ears were captured by the most vital being whom it had been his hap to see, and he was led to wait for Jessie until the function was done.

This Rev. Dr. Radlor was a spectacle in red that readily kidnapped and held the attention, red hair, the red beard an oblong long as a hand and half as broad, thin like drizzle; no hair growing along the jaw, which gave an impression of red stone polished, his eyelids retiring into a rut close along under the eyebrow-ridge, the eyes raw-looking in some way, white-lashed, the irises dark-red. Handsome, though: his nose fine-cut, with nostrils of the war-horse, out of which fell directly his red moustache: man of thirty, middle-sized . . .

And red things, here a bit, there a bit, he read out: in a voice raw as copperas, strong like merry-make of kettle-drums. . . .

". . . and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.

"But Adoni-Bezek fled: and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adoni-Bezek said: 'Three score and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table' . . ."

At which point some voice pressingly breathed at Hazlitt's ear: "If it had been three-score and ten *dukes*, now, without thumbs and toes, that would have made the coun-

try inventive, and eventful, and elated, like——” but “*Sh-h-h,*” Hazlitt breathed back, “let’s hear it . . .”

“And the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, a man left-handed; and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon, the King of Moab.

“And Ehud brought the present unto Eglon: and Eglon was a very fat man.

“And he was sitting in a summer-parlour; and Ehud said: ‘I have a message from God unto thee.’ And he arose out of his seat.

“And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.

“And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the haft, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly: and the dir-r-t came out.

“Then Ehud went forth and shut——”

But here, “Did you ever hear——?” breathed anew at Hazlitt the man who had breathed “threescore and ten dukes,” but “*Sh-h-h,*” went Hazlitt, “hear it through . . . the dagger’s gone . . .” upon which the other pshawed and walked away, Hazlitt now left alone in the porch.

Only for a minute, however: for now out of a motor that drove up stepped a lady, who came to peer within the door which Hazlitt held a little open, he with a grimace of mischief seeing that she was the same lady at whom he had repeatedly glanced at the dance on the Saturday, and she at him. . . .

Chapter 1

The Burning of the Hold

AND THERE at the door they two stood close, she minutely searching, musing on him, earnestly, furtively, point by point, his nose, his voice, as an expert intently eyes a colt's points before buying . . .

He had whispered to her: "I wish I could get you a seat . . . seems to be no chance . . ."

And she: "My own fault . . . I got a seat last Sunday. . . ."

"Ah! you are a *dévoté*."

"Not that . . . He is my brother. . . ."

"Ah! your brother."

"I like to hear him . . . He thrills."

". . . and Gideon had three-score and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives.

"And his concubine that was in Shechem she also bare him a son, whose name was Abimelech.

"And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah . . . And Abimelech and the company that was with him fought against the city all that day, and took the city, and slew the people, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.

"And when the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith.

"And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

"And Abimelech cut down a bough and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, 'What ye have seen me do make haste and do.'

"And all the people cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put the boughs to the hold, and set the hold on fire with them: so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women . . ."

It was this burning which was the theme of "the sermon," the preacher standing, not medially behind a kind of screen or pulpit on a platform, but standing beside the screen, so that he was fully seen . . .

And with the bludgeon now of a butcher, red right-handed, he went about his job—he not nicely attired, as parsons are in lovely frock-coats of "cloth," but in some

commoner stuff gone rumply about the tails, his trousers gone misshapen about the knees, revealing some red of sock over his shoes, the coat open, showing an uneventful plain of waistcoat from neck to loins, devoid of watch-chain . . . with the bludgeon of a butcher! and the efficiency: for crass in manner as are "Dissenting" clerics—in comparison, say, with Italian priest-orators, or even with our "Anglican" Oxford-men, "lily-fingered"—in revenge they exhibit a greater vigour or rage of expression, perhaps because, being somewhat more uncultured, they are somewhat more recklessly credulous of the sort of Asiatic, nay anon African, assertions about the cosmos which, to be earning a livelihood, they all alike pawn a white man's mouth to spout. But this Dr. Radlor far more surpassed other "Dissenters" in grossness of grain and rage of emotionalism than these surpass Italian priests. The roughness of his throat summoned like drums rolling, so that the air trembled at it, and the breasts of men vibrated, his phrases very brief and completed, each shaking his chin-beard a bit and definitely ending, then afresh a shake, his jaw having anon a sideward twist, as when a dog snaps at a fly on the wing, while he piled up an accumulation of brevities, epigrams sent out by telegram, successions of abrupt electricities, many mickles making a muckle, heap upon heap, his voice anon stuttering to bleating, crackling to battle-cry like the clarion-cry of cavalry-captains, or breaking into brittleness of thunder-crackle and trill of rifle-rumpus prattling, in some extra crisis of that electric rhetoric; and with one foot before the other he stood, both knees bent in the pose of the fencer, while his fist, like one sticking with the bayonet with an underhand motion, kept poking out and poking out, disemboweling comer after comer, steadily for half-an-hour; and there where he stood he stood on rock, "having authority," knowing what he could do, and doing it with red excess, with that royal boundlessness of boys of the royal house . . . "they catch 'em like rats in a trap: for the forest has travelled. Here are the branches. Heap 'em together. More; still more. Now we are ready. Bring the brands. Here a brand, there a brand,—ram 'em in. Now the flames are mounting. Behold! ten flames becoming one flame, ten smokes becoming one smoke. One smoke heaven-high. Sweet smell—rich smell—reaching into the nosehole of Jehovah. And at that rabble trapped in the hold he laughs. He cries ha, ha, at their calamity what time their tympanums catch the crackling of that timber. Now like rats they scamper. The men

trample down the women. Trample down the children's shrieks. They tear out the hairs of their head. They tire the eye-whites: O, Berith, rescue; O, Berith, be present to rescue. No go! All's up. Berith is not attending to prayers at present. Berith is praying. Berith is trembling. Berith is somewhat shaken. Berith has met Jehovah, terrible in battle. Yields to him. As you to me. Giving in. Magnetized. Seeing zigs, seeing zags. Mesmerized. Hypotized. Sitting thrilled. Lightnings. Dynamos. Live wires. Batteries. Thunderbolts. Battle-battle. Bang-and-blast. Wreck-and-wrack. Crackle-crackle. . . .

Chapter 2

Máhndorla

SO FOR some time he carried-on, Hazlitt's ears given to the preacher as his eyes to the preacher's sister, to whom he had yielded his post at the door-opening; and now, while "a hymn" was sung within, they two outside moved from the door and spoke . . .

"You are right: he does 'thrill.' So you come to hear him. If he 'edified,' you would not come."

"How do you know?"

"Intuition." He smiled.

"Oh, well," she said, "that is hardly his object, I think, to tell the people to be grave and good; *he* may fancy that it is, but underneath he must know that they are too grave and good already, and that that's the cause of all their slavery and sorrow. His real object, I think, is just to thrill and be thrilled back, preaching being his sensuality—or one of them. Doesn't do it for money, of course—rich. Just to splash in a chapelful of passion. Electric bath. His vice since he was nine."

"Did he preach at nine . . . ?"

"Yes. One morning he was lost—couldn't be found in the house, and then was found in his night-dress on a draper's counter, spouting to a crowd of idlers about Jonah in the whale's belly. Been at it ever since!—always from the Old Testament. I can hardly think that he believes in Christianity *au fond*—though he loves it, I know; but the Bible-tales inflamed his child's imagination, as the legends

of chivalry set Don Quixote crazy. He'll die preaching, as Mirabeau died love-making."

"Dear me, does that sometimes prove fatal?"

"Always, I gather. Only suicides fall in love. Die away by inches—I hear . . . *piccole morti* . . ."

"Now, how interesting! Forewarned is forearmed . . . !"

"No good being forewarned apparently. Vaccination may be prophylactic. But I stand my chances."

"Is that wise?"—speaking at her ear, breathing that atmosphere of voluptuousness that was evolved from her loveliness like an astral body enwrapping her, within which if one got, one's nostrils breathed the toxin of the Venusberg made more toxic by a fragrance of frangipane which she gave out like an exhalation from the factory and chemistry of her nature.

"But you—what made you come to hear my brother?" she wished to know: "surely his preaching is not known-about in Mayfair? He doesn't wish it to be—that is why he comes out to this obscure place. What made you?"

"I—did not come to hear him. Came to meet a fellow."

"Fellow-mortal? Bed-fellow? And have you spotted him among the flock? In pink, is he, or blue?"

"Blue—as to his tie."

"And as to his eyes?"

"I can swear that I never looked so deep——"

"Oh! Peter denying with oaths . . ."

"He was 'by a fire,' you see, so got heated."

And she was a fire. As it had turned chilly, she had-on some furs, out of the ambush of which the arrows of her underlook darted an archery of sarcasms and archnesses teeming with venereal meanings; but clothes she wore like some Salome more as an affectation, they not being of her, who was born naked and kicking, and the infant was so much the mother of the woman, that still each motion and gesture seemed to make her a little naked somewhere, her mouth especially (pounced with a down of hair-prickles that every ray rendered spicular, and having the shape and savour of a kiss) being essentially naked, and for the public good should have been covered with a fig-leaf. She looked some twenty-four—darkhaired—a darkness mottled with darkling flames and glosses, like mahogany . . .

"I suppose we are sure to meet"—from him, handing her into her motor: "'Miss Radlor': and the other name?"

"You could have found out last night."

"I did ask someone" (not true).

“ ‘Máhdorla,’ then.”

“Ah! the almond itself . . . But will you be anywhere in particular—soon?”

“If I tell you, do you know why?”

“My luck!”

“Because you remind me of someone—I don’t know whom; saw him somewhere when I was a child.”

“Well, that is curious: for I, too, feel that I must have seen you somewhere . . .”

Now the chapel began to ooze spue of Vesuvius-lips, and she said, hastily, stooping outward: “ ‘Sir Henry Beresford,’ s it? Well, at Feresby House on Tuesday . . . You will be nvited . . .” whereupon her car was driving off, and there, ooking under his eyes after it, he stood, muttering: “You go to the dickens! I have my own girl . . .”

A minute later his fingers were over Jessie’s eyes; and before she could get over her surprise at his apparition, he had her kidnapped into his taxi . . . “Let’s drive about . . .”

“But——!”

“Well, what? Old Boz! Wodgie! Oh, I do like her! We’ll go up in an aeroplane, shall we? We’ll fly to Rome and do as the Romans do in a room in a hotel.”

“But——!”

“Oh, no ‘buts.’ Give yourself up to me, and you’ll pretty soon find yourself in Arcturus and the Pleiades—mount up with wings as eagles——”

Steadily on him dwelt her eyes, with an expression of gentle judgment, the question for her being “Can he have been drinking?”—for there with her was a “youth renewed,” a boy of twelve “God-intoxicated,” as giddily upbuoyed on the joyance of the vigour of God as swimmers upbuoyed on all the mid-sea, or as wanton swallows upbuoyed, which weep on switchbacks to weave cloth of wind.

And she: “Well, but—why not a tram? Whatever will this cost?”

“Oh, I see! that’s what we are thinking of . . . Well, but, come, don’t let that occupy us. Costs are paid in Heaven, aren’t they? *Give us a kiss!*”—in a whisper, with a twist.

“No! not until I know——”

“Boz, I couldn’t come. You know that all my thoughts sink of Boz.”

“So what work—? I see you’ve got something——”

“*Work!*” he cried high in falsetto: “my poor dear, do get that out of your head that men are meant to work for ‘their

living.' To work, yes, to swot, to *die* of toil, in the discovery of truth . . . but not for a 'living'—don't you know?"

"Then, how are we——?"

"The earth feeds her breeds, doesn't She?—without 'work!' In the tropics, for instance: you just pick the fruits, don't you, a little? And She will be feeding the civilized far, far, more lavishly and laughingly than She feeds savages—there being enough billions of foot-pounds in a plum to do the world's work for months, when we learn to unpack Matter."

She considered that; then: "Yes, but meantime?"

And he: "But that would be next week! if, instead of a haphazard handful of 'scientists' with leisure—common minds by the Law of Chance—all of us, with fifty thousand geniuses among us and a thousand million times more luck, were set free to be 'scientists,' as we should be in a society devised by scientists. And, meantime, with our present science, men need only work an hour a day, if they were not such mugs as to let themselves be 'governed' by bumpkins who don't know platinum from platinoid."

"Well, but——"

"Oh, no buts."

"Yes, but, we *are* governed by bumpkins, meantime. So I ask——"

He whispered: "I have picked up a bagful of banknotes!"—and laughed.

"*That's* not true."

"No; but there's some money—from God. Money's from God, eh?"

"Is it?"—her gaze, levelled at him, having him at its bar before that mild tribunal of her eyes.

"Yes, and we should have it like air, but for the atheists now in power, worshippers of some absurd 'Berith'—there's a mouth for you, that red Radlor!"

Sedately she answered: "I've always understood that money is from Mammon, not God."

"Ha, ha, no, the poor Mammon hasn't got any money—has Park Lane, and some penny-farthing gold-plate; but it's God that is the scientist—changes coal into diamond, builds radium from lead——Mammon's no good, never invented anything, never, and if the bumpkins who serve him had some business gumption, they'd pretty quickly turn to God, if it's gold they want in mountains, and towns of gold in the clouds: *He* is the god for the l.s.d."

His delicious chuckle! she watching him, conscious of

“sea-change” here; and now she inclined to like him overmuch, to fear him also with boding, feeling the breeze of his rush-away with her, as one caught within the squall of a train’s raging is drawn and dizzied.

She laid her hand on his. “So you don’t want to tell me?”

“What? Whatever there is to tell you will know. Let us talk of other—— You are well-off now, that’s all: no more ‘going to work’—stop all that at once.”

“Who? Caxton, are you crazy? Whatever would mother——? Not I!”

“You must. Anyway, tomorrow we are going to Richmond, so don’t go to any work——”

“No work tomorrow, silly—bank-holiday!”

“Is it? Well, then, we’ll go——”

“Perhaps”—she looked down at her fingers—“I had better not.”

“Why?”

Now she blushed, saying: “You are different; something has happened. I’d better keep clear of Rome, and of Richmond, too, it strikes me.”

“Speaking to *me*, by chance? Why, I am your father—you are only a baby. Besides, we will be married within a month, so what matter?”

Astonishment and a sort of laugh dawned upon her. . . .
“Month.” . . .

He tipped her little nods of “yes,” while a light leapt like a lioness out of her eyes upon him, her lips quivering, her fingers. She whispered: “God help me. . . .”

“Love me?”

“Love?”—flinging up her face to him in gallantry of challenge—“O, it is too much for me . . .” whereupon, at a visit of the Spirit and of tongues of flame, they were melted in the pentecost of a kiss, though, even in the thick of it, she was aware of the click of the taximeter, as of each click she was guiltily aware; and no sooner was the love-joust over, her flush now all involved in a fight with whites and war-of-the-roses, than she was muttering with some breathlessness: “But this is sinful, this expense. . . . Do tell him to drive home now.”

“No, I am not going your way,” he answered: “I shall get out at Hyde Park, then send you home.”

“So when I get home, shall I tell mother about—the month?”

“Yes, let her know.”

"Have you told your mother? . . . But, by the way, is she with you? or not?"

"No, she is still there in Acton Street."

"Did you see her, then, today?"

"No, I will soon see and fix her up."

"Well, but—I thought that perhaps she was away somewhere, because I met a woman named Drew on Friday who told me that a woman named Mary Semper said that she'd been to your mother's, and so had a man named Josh Giddins, and your mother wasn't there, nor her cat, and her door was open. So yesterday Mother went to her to see, and she wasn't in, and the door wasn't locked."

"Really?" went Hazlitt; then in a moment, throwing it off him: "Well, but she is there all right. I will see her on—Tuesday, say. Tomorrow at Richmond, eh?"

Her forehead was on his shoulder; she answered nothing.

Chapter 3

A Storm

So, AFTER spending most of the following forenoon closeted with the secretary in his Amoor Room, seeing into the way of things, he walked to Oxford Circus to be with "Boz," shirking now the bore of the old jacket and cap, turned-out frankly perfect, she, too, turned-out a girlish sight in white, white gloves, white shoes, bridal, while the skies smiled, and char-a-bancs crammed with rabbles of fresh-faced merry-makers, singing to Whitsun, went their ways.

When he beckoned to a taxi-cab, to go to Richmond, there was afresh a little struggle, she shrinking from it as "sinful" (the expense!), but when he mocked that away with the magic wand of a fairy, and had got her in, she gave herself up to holiday mood, her mind now looking up at him in a posture of admiring, contemplating him in a new light, as one who has been taken for a mortal, but all the time was a fairy in disguise, intrinsically gifted with princeliness and powers, and now is revealed in his real colours, so that she was afresh love-struck, as with some stranger-prince from Madrid taking her out for the day: for the Woman, always acknowledging fortune, fact, acknowledging the foot which actually vaults the vortex of things, to skip out strong atop

with trophies of corn and silks, calls to such a cock, "Come on, I will reproduce your type," so that the strong lad has a packet of photographs, but the weak lad cannot get a girl, and joins the Young Men's Christian Association.

Nor was Hazlitt averse from display and parade, perhaps with purpose: just his consciousness that his name was Icarus, and on the morrow he might find himself sprawling in the mire, paying some price, caused him today to fly in butterfly colours, and be ephemerally intemperate. Arrived at the Star and Garter, he tipped his driver a pound or two as a thing of no account: and all this a silent eye saw, admired and desired.

As to how it had come about, she soon ceased to keep on asking, when he ever repeated that she would know. There it was, phenomenon to be accepted, as Thomson had to accept the cropping up of a body less in mass than atoms; and, meantime, whatsoever his heart desired she saw the world urgent to procure him. Was tea within the motor-boat his whim? brisk feet hopped to bring it about; if, in dining, he desired a wine of the year which for three nights had turned his world into Turner sunsets, it was unearthed for his luxury: some of which wine, mixed with Château Yquem and others, was speaking dear deceits to their heads, elation to their feet, when they set off on foot along the towing-path for Kew, it being now night, the blithe hours of the daylong now tending to pouting and sourness, drizzle sprinkling, and by the time they had got opposite Isleworth, it was as if something in the feast and holiday had "disagreed" with the cosmos, the good God now seeming to be undergoing qualms of bowel-trouble come on, with borborgyms, rumblings of thunder, and some lightning-digs, flying gripes in the guts, with gusts rising, spasms of flatulence puffing.

But no heed was paid to this, their feet elevated into a region of flush and recklessness, of exultance, their tongues ever working, with a certain hurry and irrelevance, nor was any heed paid by the other lover-couples seated on benches under dusk of trees, couple on couple in a very realm of Eros, as to whom Hazlitt remarked: "Ha, ha, look at them all—like replicas of the same statuary, the female leaning aside stricken, like a tree with half its roots exposed, the male bent over her, brooding on it, they not saying anything—brooding—'silence of the espousals' . . ."

To which the Puritan Jessie nastily answered: "They'd

be far safer at home, if they knew what's good for themselves."

And he in a whisper: "What do *you* know about it? you're only a little kissing, kissing kiddie. . . . Kiss. . . ."

"Oh, Caxton, no. . . . We are the worst of the lot, it strikes me. . . . Do you know that it is raining? . . . Not such a kid that I can't *see*. . . . The whole world, ha, ha, is crazy after this love, it strikes me."

And he: "Is it any wonder? What did God make you like that for? It's God that is the tempter, it's God that is love, you silly."

On which she: "I think, ha, ha, that you are half-seas-over. Listen, that's thunder, that is. If that was so, it would be right to yield to temptation."

"Well, isn't it?—so long as no one suffers! That is what Right *is*—whatever gives pleasure—whatever God, in the long run, sends more pleasure than pain upon, as when we kill oxen, as when the French killed dukes."

"Oh, yes, *I* know your palaver, ha, ha, I don't swallow all that comes along. Oh, my, it is raining. . . ."

"How do you mean, 'don't swallow?' Yes, by Jove, it *is* rai—Isn't love heavenly? Don't you feel that it——? Oh, you silly, you sweet. . . ."

"Oh, God, no, Caxton, don't. . . . I can't. . . . But it's pouring! can't you f-feel?"

Just opposite now was the Dutch view of Brentford on the yon river-brink, a congeries of little roofs among chimneys of waterworks, a wharf or two, a light or two musing, and moving up the flood-tide the ruby of a tug's port-light, she dragging a patch of barge-loads through the dark; and down now, changing from dribbling, all in a minute came the rain with a wash of vomit, flogging like Jesus, a termagant wielding "a scourge of small cords" at all the soft girls and boys, routing them out of it, shooing them fugitive, reproved, to be thinking of other things than thickness of lips and such infant addictedness to suction and nipping, while from Hazlitt came a mutter: "Oh, I say, this is more than I bargained for—let's run for it": and, holding hands, they flew.

But though Kew Bridge was in sight with cabs on it, five hundred yards were as five thousand in that downpour, so when Hazlitt spied an iron gate almost facing him in a lane to his right, he dashed to shake at it—a gate in a wall of a "tea-garden," whose front faced the river, a long structure, now a ruin, called "Swiss Châlet," though its aspect was

rather Mongol than Swiss; but its gate was locked: there, darkling and solitary, it lay, tempting, but inhospitable; so afresh they started to run; but the boundary-wall at the front was low, and Hazlitt, as he ran past, had the luck to spy three of its railing-spikes broken off, whereupon he cried: "We can get over!" and pretty quickly was up, and drawing her.

Then, running across a space where an old table or two still stood forlorn, they blundered upon three steps amid thicket, down which with an outcry they went tumbling, it being much too dim to see them; and thence, spurting on to an external stair at the house-side, they stepped two steps up it, brushing through shrubbery, then through some decrepit boarding leapt down into a big room, in whose gloom they soon lay on broken flooring, not yet very wet, and only occasionally a throe of rain-sweat pecked at them from the roof.

When lightnings set the night on fire, and worms of light squirmed within the flame-sea, they could see masses of timber-framing in the structure's upper regions stand out black and vanish blacker; when, as it were, wrecks struck, and crackling rackets of thunder broke out close, abrupt, to tumble bumping, she hid her face in him to whisper: "Oh, my!" and hear him whisper "Sweet, keep under my wing"; and ever down with a showery sound rushed the rain around, shutting them within a world-for-two which went its own wilful journey with them, up, up, amid the hosts of heaven.

But they were in there long after the thunder-storm was done, so that ten struck when they were driving home through Chiswick High Road, sobered now, come down, not uttering over-much, her brow on his shoulder, she holding fast to his arm like one drowning, a woman now with a past, the moving finger having writ on her; and, passing through Shepherd's Bush, Hazlitt remarked: "Look here, that is nonsense about getting married in a month: I don't know why I said a month, since it can be done, I think, in three days."

She answered to his arm: "Not in a church, I don't think."

"Sweet," he said, "what does it matter where?"

"Oh, I'd prefer a church. . . ."

What *she* was thinking of, chiefly, was the providing of a bridal supply of stockings without holes, chemisettes with frills: for which feminine fuss and business some time was required; but he, not divining this, replied: "Let us get it

over, Boz. Marriage should follow close upon baptism when a young lady gets caught in a shower."

"It is well for you to *laugh* . . ."

"Ha, ha, I am not laughing! That's all right! Cheer up! I only say we had better get it over—three days."

But she: "Of course I couldn't in three days. What are you talking about? Whatever would Mother and Ada think? Can't get married like cats."

"Very well, go your own way . . . Whom do you love?"

"I love *you*"—a secret.

"More than before?"

"No, not more, but——"

"Well?"

"Closer. . . . Oh, I can't tell it! You wouldn't understand."

"Sweet! . . . But I must get out now. So, Boz, will you see about it? Go to St. Pancras Church, and tell them."

"Why not you?"

"Oh, Boz, I shall be awfully occupied, I know. You do it—being near. We mayn't see much of each other, meantime——"

"Why not?"—grasping closer at his arm, gazing into his face—"What a funny thing! I know nothing about you now—not even your address——"

"You will know everything. . . . Write to the poste restante, Wimpole Street. I get out here—Dear thing, my dear love——" his face wetted with her tears, he disengaged himself from the greed of her arms, then, standing in Piccadilly, cast kisses to her kisses, until her taxi disappeared eastward.

Chapter 4

As to the Old Woman

AT HOME he found among some letters an invitation to "Feresby House," and for some moments stood musing on it beneath the amorini of an old girandole, before jerking a sage head-piece to murmur: "No, Máhdorla, I shan't go: too pretty."

The next day he meant, as he had said, to give some time to his mother, but, as a luncheon-party of four were bent

upon going to see something that was the rage at the Grafton Gallery, with them he went, and thence to Clifford Street Buck's, where Guards' sub-alterns gather and a sporting set of the "golden youth," or the leaden, say; after which he dined with some at Claridge's; and, in driving home, decided after all to go to Feresby House, since he had promised a lady.

But his trousers that night were tight, and he was dressing afresh when afresh he remembered his mother; for, in view of her absences from her room (as reported by Jessie), at the back of his brain was now half a note-of-interrogation in regard to her; so now he interrupted his dressing to run to ring, and to scribble quick: "Mum, there's money. Keep at home, and I will soon come to fix you up in a flat or something"—with which he enclosed some pounds, and, his arm about the page-boy's shoulder, said close: "Drive to this address; ask at the house-door for an old woman named Hazlitt; then drive back quick: I will wait in for you."

But he did not wait, drove to Feresby House, to encounter about Berkeley Square a host of motors parked—a reception after a dinner political in tone, a crush of four hundred; and when Voltaire men-servants in wigs and silk-hose had led to cloak-rooms the mob in which he was, and thence up to his hostess's hand, he now found himself as in the thick of a sea flickering in sunshine, a numberless chuckling of cordons, orders, stars, tiaras, everybody brilliant, or brilliant-looking—save one: for he had not been three minutes in the state-rooms, when his eye lighted on a crimson sight, the Rev. Dr. Radlor chatting on a settee with the Archbishop, and the man was like a scandal in his contrast with all that costliness, wearing the same rumply coat-tails of the Sunday, so that he was just like a king among subjects, or a man among children—his legs crossed, the upper foot continually bobbing up and up, showing some crimson sock above the shoe, and anon he chuckled with something of rictus, some stiffness of skin that wrinkled and crimsoned.

After some minutes more of seeking, Hazlitt spied his Máhndorla like Cleopatra, for, that season having a tendency to bright hues, she stood costumed like a meadow in dews, and like the sevenfold braid of the rainbow; and, as *she* had seen *him* immediately on his entrance, they were presently together in a nook of a room pink in scheme, pink ivy-leaf geranium, pink peony-buds in smilax that shaded

the lights, pink branches of rambler-rose, and Máhndorla pink apart from her lips; but red pretty quickly invaded their palm-oasis when the Rev. Radlor came like an army in, saying: "Pardon me, sir: Máhndorla, a word"; and Máhndorla, having got up to go with him, was asked: "Who is your companion?"

"Sir Henry Beresford."

"Oh. How do you—know him?"

"Met him."

"Oh. He—smitten?"

"Now! How am I to tell? *Smitten*. . . ."

"Test him. Tell him you are going to Como on Thursday. See if he goes, too. Tempt him. Test him."

"Now, how curious! Of course the man isn't going to fly off—— Have you some reason? Do you know him?"

"Heard of him. Enough to cause me to warn you. No intimacy there, young lady. No pawings and leerings in secret places. Beware! At the least suspicion of such a thing you incur my displeasure."

At which she flushed; up her chin pitched, though her lids dropped, as she muttered: "I do as I please, Harold."

And *he* flushed, flames of fire being the basis of both their natures, and puffs of flame, rich crimsons, ever flushed their faces, and failed, and flushed, with fleeing expedition, like lakes chased with whiffs. . . . "Yes, you do as you please, and you please as I please. If you have a fancy for love-affairs in Europe, let them be with kings. But stoop to tempt this fellow. Test your power. He entered these rooms looking about for you: you can enslave him."

Sly meanings from under her eyelids peeped out at him. "And if I get enslaved myself? Two mutual slaves make a freeman, and elope."

Now he frowned at her a little, standing firm-planted with a certain open-leggedness, four-square, one arm akimbo holding open his coat to reveal his plain of parson's-waist-coat, and cause him to be half as broad as he was long; and he went: "Chut, you have too much brains to be in any such danger. This fellow dwells in a great house, but I gather that he is a nobody; financially rotten; hole in his pocket."

And she, with surprised eyebrows: "What do I care about his pocket? Is not the trousers more than pocket? And the leg than trousers? See the New Testament, please, a little."

"Chut, I am talking seriously. . . . A young lady does not say 'leg.' I gather that you are making a reputation for com-

ing out with risky utterances: but don't. Remember about Como. And now present me to your companion."

To her, as to everybody, his gross strength of throat sent forth the same peremptory cablegrams, electric brevities of Morse-tappers rapping, stopping, rapping, as when he gobbled brevities from the rostrum; and she: "You wish?"—with perplexed eyebrows: "What is it about?"

"There are reasons."

"Mysterious again? Some intrigue perhaps? If there is nothing to intrigue about, you sit down and invent. You aren't American—you're an Italian of the fifteenth century who studied machination under Macchiavelli and poisons at the court of Cæsar Borgia. Cæsar's father was a parson who had never read the New Testament . . ."

"Chut, present me."

"Oh, well. . . ."

So in some minutes he was shaking hands with Hazlitt in the nook, who said to him: "Why, I heard you 'preach' on Sunday, and was duly thrilled—all about Eglon, and someone who was fat."

"It was Eglon, sir, who was fat."

"Was it Eglon? His loss of weight must have been rapid after the loss of that dagger in him."

"Ha! true, sir: cold fat good for steel, but cold steel bad for fat. So perish all they that rise up against Thee"—his eye-whites lifted a little; then: "But how came you, sir, to be there?"

"He went to meet a—fellow," Máhndorla remarked at Hazlitt with an underpeep of her peeper; and she asked him: "Did you meet him?"

On which he, with a shrug, with that crookedness of the rascal Cupid: "No, I didn't bother after"—the three now seated on large chairs gilt, damasked in pallid pink; and said Radlor: "I was just telling the Chancellor the Bible-story—Are you acquainted, sir, with the Chancellor?"

"Not actually, no," Hazlitt said.

"With the Field-marshal?"

"No."

"A young man should be. To whomever you do not know I shall be pleased to present you."

And Hazlitt: "I thought you were rather new to England, though one would hardly take you for Americans."

"In 'Borston' we talk English, you see," Máhndorla remarked; and Radlor: "We have often been in England—know everyone."

"You think everyone worth knowing?"—from Hazlitt.

"Yes, yes, a young man should. Life is a game, the world is made of men, and how shall one play without knowing who's who and who's what?"

"For me," Hazlitt remarked, "'world' means something different. My 'world' is made, not of men, but of God, of the combinations of metals and silicon with oxygen which we call 'rocks,' of waves and rays, magnetism, gravitation, *men* being but a temporary little incident in the tempest of all that. We 'Englishmen' name this mass we live-on 'England,' but the mass smiles at the successions of flies who tack transitory names to it; it won't be named 'England' long. So, for me, life is not a 'game,' but a phenomenon. The idea that it is a *game* seems to me Mediæval, Asiatic, Court of Pekin, of Richelieu."

"There!"—from Máhdorla, glancing at Radlor, whose eye was dwelling on his man, measuring him with compasses; and he said: "Yes, talk, tell me. 'The world is made of rocks, not of men' . . . There are, however, men: and a keen blade like Richelieu would have told you that, if you fail to remember it, then men will thrust you upon rocks, and crack you."

"I'd thrust 'em back upon some other rocks"—from Hazlitt: "of course, there are men; but while Africans are all preoccupied with men and men's conventions, Europeans—*real* Europeans—are thinking of things: a new idea in the world, I know——"

"Yes, and such are saplings, sir, unable to bear one's weight: the old, like oaks, perist an æon after we have said 'old'; and the birds of the air turn from withies to lodge in their branches, singing 'Safety First.' "

Hazlitt laughed. "Dear me, I didn't know that that's what they sing. Well, yes, the old does persist, still grieving the new—in fact, the whole place is full of incongruities, aeroplanes humming above donkey-carts, Marconi living next door to Mr. Asquith, the one like a god, the other like a bag. Think of a bobby on a motor-byke, a duke lolling in a motor-car—how incongruous and ridiculous a sight to anyone having half an eye! Ha, ha, the duke, of course, isn't half good enough for the car, and has no more right in it than a Chinaman in a Martian aeroplane, or a pair of negroes at the telephone grinning to recognize each other's chuckle. What a clown the duke! and what a dazzling dance of intellectuality the car! *He*, of course, should be in something congruous to him, which *he* could invent and make,

some ox-cart of his ancestors, in whose atmosphere he lives, whose mentality and acts he lives on, and claims: but a motor-car! Never into the heart of the noblest of savages, such as Euclid, say, Archimedes, Plato, did it ever enter to conceive that some day the sons of men could attain to cogitation so sage, to wit so quick and tricky, and handicraft so miraculous, as have been crammed into that car by its inventors and makers (its makers invented it mainly); and in a thing so bright and strong drives smiling along under the sun a being so thick and blinking—an age of contrasts. . . .”

Now Máhndorla, all remarking ear, all keenness of interest, looked at Radlor, whose obvious sock constantly bobbed up and up, he now saying to Hazlitt: “You talk as if all dukes were twin-brothers. I will introduce you to at least one whom you would need to get up rather early in the morning to beat in a deal: man of force and intelligence, sir.”

And Hazlitt: “Ha, ha, I shouldn’t wonder if he could beat me ‘in a deal,’ as a eunuch of the Court of Peking would beat him and me, without fail, in any deal, the motor here being emotional—not intellect—but cupidity. Nor do I need to shake hands with each of them, or with their ancestors, or with all bobbies, or with Aristotle, or Barbarossa, in order to know the tone of their souls: I know them as I know this thumb—know them better than they know themselves; and, if you think one of them ‘a man of intelligence,’ then your idea of ‘intelligence’ must differ as much from mine as your idea of ‘the world.’ Not that he wasn’t born as intelligent as other boys; but every influence upon him has been an influence tending to sopify and soften the point of his intellect, to make his eyes tiny like the feet of Chinese females——”

“Hence his name *peer*,” Máhndorla put in.

And Radlor: “Ha! belongs to the ‘Order of the Bat,’ as the French Ambassador says.”

And Hazlitt: “Quite so, Order of Night-hood: so that at twenty he can no more help having ‘lubber’ scribbled across his forehead than he can help refraining from inventing motor-cars, or anything else. ‘*East is East*’: and you cannot give a lad a Chinese training, hypnotizing him to reverence ancestors, to think a mandarin as good as a mechanic, and a lubber king the fellow-man of the inventor of the four-cycle piston, and then expect him to be a high European type. From his boyhood he has been wronged,

and robbed, and horribly deformed. He can still effect something: but the motor of his effects is ever emotional—emotions of vanity, avarice, ‘philanthropy’; he has good ‘manners’ comparable with a mandarin’s; can give off gas as a ‘Prime Minister’; can ‘do a deal,’ as some Africans who can’t count over six will hoodwink and trick explorers, while the explorer is taking notes of the sloping of the constellations— *That’s my ‘intelligence.’ . . .*”

Now Máhndorla glanced at the parson to say: “I think I agree”; and the parson: “Don’t agree. The beginning of intelligence is to be at home in the world; nor is the world a world of scientists, sir: certainly there are a few scientists—I myself am something of an architect—but men are in the Exchanges, in committees, in clubs, in ball-rooms; and a young man who withdraws himself from the normal swarm to dwell in cloudlands will never impress his power and craft upon the crowd, nor clamber on their backs to his aims. But I will see you again, sir. Will call upon you. Discuss with you how to play and win. And presently, if you seek me out, I will present you to some friends.”

He was gone; whereupon Máhndorla to Hazlitt: “You lose your Latin in presenting ideas to my brothers: *he* expects everybody to sit *sbalordito* at *his* feet. You talk, you have a mouth, but *he*——”

“Yes, and *you* have a mouth,” he secretly, suddenly, gave her to know.

“Ugly?” says she.

“Fallen, yes—infected with sin—but forgiven seventy times—winning—fallen-angels’ flesh, a cherub’s debauchery. . . .”

“Yes, it listens: let it have it. But it knows that it is not the only one.”

“Yes, really: after that was painted the impasto was lost . . . perfumery made human . . . by Jove, I should give the world just to touch it once.”

“Strange rage. . . . With your finger?”

“With mine.”

“Oh, go along, that would be what they call a kiss.”

“I don’t care what they call it. . . . ‘They’ wouldn’t know.”

“Not eventually?”—a small question which gave him pause a little, until he said: “Oh, eventually: that may be.”

Now she studied him a little, then suddenly: “Well, my mouth is going to Como after tomorrow: so you see . . .”

“Couldn’t I pursue it?” he at once blurted, as the bird hastes to the snare.

“Will you?” she quickly whispered.

“To Nagasaki!—given a promise——”

“Oh, I think you may fare better without signed contracts. . . . Our hostess is hunting me down, must go. Hotel Roma. So addio and arrivederci”—in a whisper, letting her fan’s fluff brush his hand, while she shot him from ambush with a volley of eyeings and connivances, and was gone.

After which his interest in the function failed, and, after afresh coming across Dr. Radlor, who attracted him, whom he asked to Park Lane, he went away.

Before twelve he was alone at home, where, oozing smoke on a balcony overlooking the park, he sat musing on a moon upborne among clouds, she, hitched to the pinions of Power, mounting up with wings as eagles, or running and not being weary, he musing, too, on his Máhndorla, thinking: “What a ninny I was to undertake to go to any Como! as though I couldn’t kiss her when she comes back. . . . What do I want to kiss her for? I have my own tender dear. Sometimes I act like an ass” . . . at which point his under-groom-of-the-chambers came out to him, bearing a letter.

He started in taking it off the salver!—had forgotten about it: his own letter to his mother. . . .

“I was to tell you, Sir Henry, from the boy-in-buttons that Mrs. Hazlitt is gone away.”

“‘Gone.’ . . . Where to? . . . In bed, is he?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“‘Gone’ . . . Wake him. Send him here.”

So presently Freddie, the boy, was there in a flurry, and to Hazlitt’s: “How do you know?” answered: “A woman at the front-door in Acton Street told me, Sir—name of Mrs. Jackson: she said Mrs. Hazlitt got a letter from her son telling her to go to him, and she’s gone, Sir, to her son, and left her cat with Mrs. Jackson.”

Hazlitt winced at this. “How long ago. . . ?”

“About a week ago, she said, Sir.”

“All right. Go to bed. Sleep later tomorrow.”

And there he lay in his chair, no longer conscious of the aroma of his smoke or of that soaring of the moon. . . . ‘Gone’: her son had sent for her.

Liars, then, and contrivers had her in hand. . . .

He remembered now that of two men who had wanted her address one, as the other had said, had wanted her “for no good”: so his fists were at his temples when he muttered

to himself, "That old woman's heart is weak" . . . and throughout that night-time something troubled his slumber. . . .

Chapter 5

At Mr. Farrel's

A LADY of middle-age, large-built, with some beard, seated at a bureau near a window, anon raised her head to say something to Hazlitt, who, pacing the room, gave her rather absent answers, all preoccupied with that thought of 'gone' . . . Where to? What for? The *why* of this thing . . . ? and suddenly he muttered: "Stubbs. . . . You might 'phone to Stubbs, Miss Marston; to send an agent for a private matter"; and when she was putting down the receiver, he said: "You might 'phone to Cook's; I am going abroad for some days: ask them to fix me up a passport for Italy"; and when presently she told him, "Cook's say that they must have your photo," he answered: "Well, 'phone to Baker Street to send a man with a camera."

But before the camera came he had bolted out of doors to make round by an alley into Park Street near, to look for 84, Jessie's place, to see her, to tell her, to ask if she now knew anything of the old woman's "going," and the way of it. . . .

On coming to 84, he made out that it must be the house at the back of his; so that now he was confronted with these facts: there had been a dowager and her daughter living back-to-back, who, on going together abroad, had let their houses; and in the dowager's house was he; and in the daughter's, somehow, his Jessie: a coincidence which, if just a coincidence, struck him as most rum.

The house-door was opened to him by a plump flunkey, whose round of countenance without colour was all small-pox holes, scarification and craters like the moon at its full; and Hazlitt had the notion that at sight of him this man violently started, so that they both stood eyeing one another some time before anything was said.

Then Hazlitt: "May I see Miss Page a little?"

The man still stared at him as in stupefaction, still holding the door, and standing rather before, as to bar him out;

and when in that moment another man appeared, coming from within to enter a room near the door, the door-opener, after darting a flying eye behind at the new-comer, whispered quick to Hazlitt with marked Americanism: "Miss Page isn't here"—and moved the door, as to shut him out.

But Hazlitt, wanting now to ask where, then, she was, did not move, and in a moment more the new-comer, advancing, asked him across the flunkey: "Do you want me?" whereupon Hazlitt was face to face with a man of no little mass and majesty of aspect, a cranium planned on the ample scale of cathedrals, a region of baldness atop of the forehead, whence to the beard's tip was one long line of forehead, nose, large roll of moustache, all dominated by a strong eye; and on his palm a pad of velvet on which were gems.

And Hazlitt: "Mr. Farrel, I think? I called to see your secretary, Miss Page—friend of mine—but she is not in: perhaps you can tell me——"

"Miss Page is indisposed—got wet on Monday—so I forbade her to come today. She may be here tomorrow. If you desire, I will tell——"

"Thanks, I will write to her"—for he could not give the name "Beresford" for Jessie, who did not know it, nor the name "Hazlitt" to his neighbour, who might know him as "Beresford."

But as soon as he was gone the flunkey of the moon-face offered information as to his name. "That is Sir Henry Beresford, Mr. Farrel. Lives right here in Park Lane."

"Ah?" went the master, and his forehead rather lifted, as he passed into a morning-room, he probably astonished at his secretary's "friendship" with a denizen of that quarter.

Chapter 6

"Widdle's Babe"

AT HOME Hazlitt found arrived a private agent who, on hearing as to the old woman, advised him to await, for three days, the return from Birmingham of an agent who would be the very man for "this branch of work"; but Hazlitt, though he consented to this, was too fretted to sit without action, and the evening found him in Acton Street standing

in that lonely room, where some dust had already settled on the old spick-and-span of everything, cinders grey as desolation within the grate, wet on the floor where rain had sprayed in under the raised little window—left in haste, evidently; and there he remained some time, while the dusk went somberer, eyeing with a bent head that tin-can out of which he had pitched away the beer, eyeing his scribble to her there on the table, “Mum, some money coming”—still there, so that she had already been ravished away that day when he had departed in the car for Park Lane; and, lost in thought, he muttered: “Who is it has her, after all? And *why*? She is not well. . . .” Then, not locking the door, lest she, coming back, should be locked out, he went away; and, as when he had last moved down those stairs, again out of the gloom of a landing a mew of supplication for human amity came up to him—the old woman’s cat, he imagined, though when his hand wished to pick her up, she slipped like quicksilver, and vanished.

Then by a doorway-gossip below he was directed to the “public-house” next door to discover Mrs. Jackson, and she came to his becks with half-a-glass of a dark draught aslant in her grasp, to give “the particulars” of it—how two “gentlemen” had come with a letter for the old woman, to take her to her son: she had shewn the letter to Mrs. Jackson, who, however, being no scholar, had not read—perhaps not the old woman herself had read it, who, all in a flurry and hurry, had said that she would write to Mrs. Jackson as to paying her rent for her, and as to the destiny of her “Widdle’s Babe” (the cat).

“And those two men—what were they like?” Hazlitt demanded; but when she tried to describe them he got little of a picture from her glib gossip.

“And she didn’t mention at all where she was going to?”

“No, she never said nothing: only that she would write.”

“Which way, then, did they go with her?”

“I didn’t see: I was up in my room.”

“And about the cat? You have been good to it? Tell the truth, now.”

She looked a little abashed, but answered: “I give it something; not that I am much of a one for looking after cats; it’s as much as I can do to——”

“Now, look here, if you love money, if you want to be fat and prosperous——” Hazlitt began to tell her, but in that moment up comes Mary Semper tripping, to say flippantly “Hello, there you are, then”—with her silly simper; but

then, immediately, sharply, grave of face, sharpness of light in her grey eyes of Athene, Divine intelligence: "The old woman with you?"

"No, she's not with me . . ."

And Mary: "I *thought* not! Well, that was a true word I said: I said to myself 'She ain't with him, it's some trick,' and it was a true word. So *where's* she?"

"God knows, I don't."

"*Funny* you don't know! And you let two strange men come and snap her up like that? Whoy, call yourself a son?"

"No, I don't."

"So what did those two men want with her? You don't know?"

"No, don't know."

"Surely to goodness they didn't want to elope with her, she's too old. . . . Nor she ain't done any wrong. . . . Some trick. . . . You wait, I'll get to the bottom of it. . . . But you leave her like that all by herself? So what's become of you? Nobody's seen you about. . . . My God, what nice boots and trousers. . . . Same old jacket and cap . . . but the boots . . . You got into some good work, ain't you?"

"Yes, got something."

"So what you going to do now about the old woman? As for her cat, this woman ain't looking after it, so don't think it!"

"Yes, *you* come now with your mouth, Mary Semper!"—an outcry of protest from Mrs. Jackson—"you keep your tongue off me!"

"It's the truth what I'm saying!"—Mary bent in quarrel toward her. "Whoy, I'd be ashamed of myself, if I was you. Ain't Josh Giddins seen it cadging all the way up King's Cross? It's running wild, it's only skin and bone——"

"That's a lie, then."

"It ain't! Whoy, a dumb animal——" but now, her keen eyes peering, "There it is!" she cried, pointing, and yonder, in truth, forty yards off, they saw her, looking unprosperous.

"Let's catch her, Mary!" cries out Hazlitt, and ran.

That, though, was no easy matter, even though half the youth of Acton Street were soon in the pursuit, she fleeing down area-steps, evading down by-streets, strategic, Fabian, now inaccessible on a sill, cynical, now surrounded, terror-struck, a trail of tail escaping into a doorway's luck, distrusting the look of things, distrusting Him that made her, everybody shouting, flushed in chase, keen to seize and compel her to believe in men's benevolence, until Mary

Semper said "*quick!*" to a boy, dropped bang upon her back the boy's jacket outspread, pitched quick down six steps, and picked her spitting up. Whereupon Hazlitt, after scattering some money, carried her off to his love's mother.

With something of lace round her shoulders, the poor soul having "got a chill," Jessie flew at first sight to his breast, but there rather got a fresh chill, conscious in her instinct of something preoccupied. . . . "She is gone," he said, never sitting, pacing the parlour . . . "two men took her. . . . One was tall, had a crooked nose; one was short, had a diamond ring—that is all I can get. She is gone."

"Well, but these two men—they can't want her for anything!" exclaimed Jessie's mother: "what *can* they want her for?"

And, "She'll come back," Jessie judged, "when she sees that they don't take her to you."

"If she *can*." He paced, and added: "I went today to Park Street, to tell you; saw your Mr. Farrel—dislike the man somehow. . . . You have a 'chill?'"

She, smiling with eyes which mildly chided him, whispered: "You may remember that I got wet?"—Mrs. Page having now sped out to the whistle of a witty kittle, such as whistle-out like engines, and sing of intellect.

"You were not much wet," he said.

And she to his neck: "It was the lightning got into my eyes, and then the thunder had me done for, the rain came with a rush, the wind made a f-fuss—— Oh, Jerusalem, talk of storms and tempests! Were you happy?"

"Yes."

"*How* happy? *So* happy?"—arm-long.

"Yes"—he patted her; "nearly well now?"

On which she left him offended, muttering: "Oh, you are thinking of something else . . ." and he stared at her a little, then "Can I help?" he cried with opening arms: "that old woman has asthma!"

"I don't think they die——" she began to say, but now Mrs. Page, re-entering, remarked: "So you and Boz are going to get married in a month, I understand? What work are you in, then?"

"Oh, that's all right," he petulantly replied: "something good—money about. Don't let her go any more to that Mr. Farrel's."

"Oh, I must a little," Jessie said: "do you think I'd leave him in the lurch like that? Why is it you don't like him? You don't know him, or you would."

And he: "Well, don't let it interfere—— Have you been to the church about giving the notice?"

"She's not been well," Mrs. Page said, "hasn't had time."

"Well, make her see to it."

"But sit down, can't you?"—from Jessie—"come, sit here with me. Your mother will come——"

"No, I'll go. Goodbye."

"What, already?"

"Yes. Where's the cat?"

"*We'll* keep it for you!"

"No, I will take her"—and when she had been spied hiding her apprehensions behind a sideboard, he, having pressed his Jessie in convulsive haste, went away.

At an old-clothes-shop close by, the owner of which, a dull hoarder of pennies, was the old woman's "landlord," he prepaid a year's "rent" for the room; then stepped into his cab to be away for Park Lane, she, on his lap, never having been in a cab before, poking out and poking out her neck in this direction and in that, prospective, wondering what next, what fresh convulsions and vicissitudes in the nature of things, what euthanasia and lethal experience of trance and starry nirvana in "the cats' home": now her all was on the altar of God, and all her hope was in Him.

Not in vain: for presently fresh bottom and shore rose under her foot soon after Hazlitt had handed her to his page-boy, saying: "Now she is in your charge, look after her for me"—he at the same time running his eyes over a note which, taken from a table on his entrance, he again read as he moved up the great stairway, already aglow with groups of lustres; and he read this: "England is not the only country: Stamboul, Delhi, the Lombardy Lakes. From Taormina at night one sees the smoke of Etna mixed with puffs of fire: pretty sight. Nothing can be more agreeable than the gallantry of the Sicilian girls: they fall like ninepins. The Duomo at Firenze may be considered the noblest structure yet erected (so far!). See it. A young man who has not travelled is a grub that has never spread wing. Dædalus."

Chapter 7

A Change of Agents

ON THE edge of his bed-chamber Chesterfield Hazlitt sat meditating it, till he knew every letter: "Duomo at Firenze

... noblest structure (so far!)” . . . the note-of-exclamation like a threat that something nobler was to come. . . . Anyway, here, he understood, was a command: he was to be away to “Delhi”—not to “Mexico” any more. . . .

Then his man tapped, to know whether he was at home to the Rev. Dr. Radlor, the answer to which from “No” changed to “Yes”; and presently, while they two conversed, said Radlor: “Turn me away, if you don’t want me.”

And Hazlitt: “What makes you say that?”

“I think you are bored.”

“Oh, no. You haven’t dined? Stay and dine.”

“I hoped that you would ask me. If you are not bored——”

“Oh, no. A little troubled about something.”

“I thought as much. Tell me of it.”

“Oh, you wouldn’t be interested.”

“Yes. For spiritual consolation. You see my cloth.”

“Ah, quite so. If you call it cloth.”

“Ha, true, shabby. I like the old coat. And shabbiness is an advertisement. People think, ‘he is too busy to care’; and nothing, save money, adds to a man so much importance as an air of being plunged in affairs. But, come, next Wednesday is my birthday: make me a present of a coat, and, since it comes from *you*, I undertake to wear it.”

“Very good: I must remember.”

“That is a Mispah, then, and covenant between us. Now we are chums. So now tell me of the trouble”—laying his hand on Hazlitt’s.

And Hazlitt, with a forehead all crosses: “Fact is, I have—lost my mother.”

Dr. Radlor started. “Mother dead?”

“No; mysterious thing—Two men went to her with a faked letter—carried her off somewhere . . . Unfortunately, the old woman has asthma.”

“Singular—singular. No light at all on the matter?”

“None!”

“Poor chap. Fond of her, are you?”

“Fond? Well, I suppose that I—At least—yes, I suppose so—But an old woman—not well—in *stranger’s* hands—that is rather hard——”

“Yes, ‘rather hard.’ And—*what will you do?*”

“There is a private agent coming tomorrow . . .”

“Chut, the average agent is a jackass. Stay: leave it to

me. I happen to know the very man—leave it to me. *He'll put you right.*"

Hazlitt was answering with thanks when dinner was served, and at first they ate vis-à-vis, remote, on throne-seats, peeping across rose-masses and a centre-piece intervening, till Radlor decided to be near beside Hazlitt, and so they dined, travelling from wine to wine, at the *first* quaff of which the clergyman flashed to scarlet, and at the third left off being a clergyman, to show himself quite another kind of soul, wiry, a gallant of courts, all eyes of guile, all cloak and dagger, mask and rapier, an Italian of the Camorra, a Casanova, Cagliostro, Iago, full of subtle cunning, complex plots, wine having upon his mind the instant influence of a match applied to a mass of flimsy which flashes into fire, he no more permitting Hazlitt to say anything, preaching a species of Sermon-on-the-Mount with reversed precepts, streams of "worldly-wisdom" and experience, the whole animated with a dance of glances, with ogle, and wink, and digging finger, and delicious giggle, and a hush of voice when he was being more awfully naughty; so that Hazlitt, with a mentality that was the antithesis of his, was still compelled to consider him the most entertaining of men. Anon he was witty, and though almost "learned," having certainly done tons of "study" to lay in hoards of "information," he had somehow escaped his studies, wore them like dust, and was a man for a' that.

And it was with his hand on Hazlitt's shoulder that they moved from that room, they were already such friends—he a little shorter than Hazlitt; but though not large, he had a marked manliness of aspect, his walk solid and strong, with a certain forwardness and masculinity of push, as he firmly stepped. And so—hand on shoulder!—they moved out to a room called the "Amoor Room," secluded down at the bottom of a passage at the house-back, a favourite place with Hazlitt, because of its Mongol softness and mass of glammers, for to enter it was like entering a brake of lunar rainbows—a room long and narrow, its oblong crammed with chromes and objects, with aromas of joss-stick smokes, illumined by a moonshine of the pixies, lanterns of pallid silks, cylinders blushing pink, moons sick of blueishness, or of a butter mood, profusions of cushions strewn, couches luscious like clouds of down, nothing in it which was not Mongol, a gold god Fo seated on a chair of jade, pagodas, rugs, a green "official chair," dragons, kotos,

samisens, fiery eyes of little glints and glammers glancing crimson or green from the lacquer of screen or phoenix—a den of the Thousand Nights transported many a thousand miles from Mayfair; and in the most cushioned nook of it, secretly shut-in within screens and crimson silks, sipping tinted spirits, Hazlitt and Radlor reclined deep into the night in beds of ease, Radlor with endless breath and verve turning out sermons of “world”-lore . . . “Honesty—disinterestedness—admirable ideas of the Platonists, sir; but the preachers of honesty are those paid to be more dishonest than average people. If——”

Here Hazlitt got in: “You are a preacher yourself.”

“Ha, true. Fond of preaching. A demagogue by nature, I find a delight in tossing the mob, as girls like to stir pots. But to a friend I say ‘heed no counsel, play your own hand.’ If a man comes preaching to you, your best course is to tell him that your sins have brought disaster upon you, then ask him to lend you a trifle of five thousand dollars, and he’ll be off.”

“If I were to say to you ‘lend me ten thousand’ . . .”

“Ha! I should—to *you*. But I am not preaching. True, I am a Christian, sir; I intend to get to evn in the end—if not by my piety, then by my wits. No entering there without forgiveness; and, if you are over-good, there will be nothing to forgive: so ‘be not over-righteous,’ as the Wise Man writes. That’s luck, the forgivingness of the gods!—comes easy to them, for forgiveness is forgiveness of a pain given, and the gods know no pain. In men to forgive is to forget; to forget a pain; and to forget is a failure of the brain. Never forgive, sir. Pretend to forgive, convince that you have forgiven; pile proof on proof: then when you suddenly strike in vengeance crushing is the effect. If a man harms me, he ponders and is sorry after; if he does me good, I will track him to the earth’s-end, till I return it. But rough vengeance is for the rough; the vengeance of the Master is an art, demanding tactics and strategy. I like to get him in such a way, that he himself brings about his own discomfiture: to see him stepping in the dark, touching the object of his desire, and not knowing it, with his own hand striking his loved-one, benefiting his enemy—yes, that’s pleasure. If he has harmed me without malice—little I care; if he is my father—little I care: the man has harmed me; he must mourn with me. If, on the other hand, it is you who have wronged a

man, and he comes to you with threat and resentment, the best thing you can do is to fire a blow straight into his eye—suddenly. You will find that this new wrong will so preoccupy him, that, like a counter-irritant, it will overwhelm the old; and later you can coax him to condone both the blow and the old offence; *for*——”

“Suppose he is the better-trained fighter,” Hazlitt got in, with a weighing eye on him.

And Radlor: “Oh, if he’s a pugilist, don’t do it. But, if he is not much stronger, do it: for the blow will hypnotize him into a sense of subjection, and, if he ventures to fight, he will fight with his hands tied by his fantasy. Be invariably the attacker. Especially with a woman in the case. Do not desire another man’s wife—that is a deep seed of evil—but, if you do, carry her clean off, grab her from him. Little wrongs fester: do a big wrong, if you must do a wrong: big wrongs crush and stun, and deaden the vengeance of the wronged. So, too, when it is not you who desire, but a woman who desires you boringly—attack: make love to her—pressingly; then when she in modesty pretends to draw back, you pretend to despair, and get away. When she afresh runs after you, you can have the pleasure of refusing her now, thus gashing her with a twofold regret, yourself relishing a twofold satisfaction.”

“Oh, well,” went Hazlitt, “but suppose I don’t want to gash her, poor beggar.”

“Then don’t gash her. Submit to be bored by her, since you prefer her purposes to your own. Not so I. Women are as malevolent as Schopenhauer paints them, and merit little pity. Without pity a woman will see you plead at her feet, if it pleases her caprice to resist. You groan, you threaten suicide: no go; and meantime she is deep in an intrigue with her solicitor’s slip of a clerk, and in another intrigue with the gas-company’s man who comes to read the meter. And they lie, they lie. Oh, they lie. To lie is their life. They lie lying down, and they lie standing up. Lying offends me, irks me: so much, that if a man were to compel me to lie, he would incur my lifelong enmity. For a downright untruth is the most perilous of steps, and convicts a man of unskilfulness. Tell the truth, though never the crude truth; hide, hide, do not lie. In such casual cases as when a man stops you to ask you the time, you may lie then: tell him ten minutes too early; you may thus make him miss his

train. But usually speech is for the concealment, not the contradiction, of truth. When——”

Hazlitt put in: “Concealment, too, is a cowardice.”

“Of course—its rightfulness lies just in that, since cowardice is higher than courage. Courage is a belch of the flatulence of the mob, whom we send off like bulls to the war, while we at breakfast enjoy Reuter’s news of their slaughter. The wise man is a coward, though, when it suits his hand, he will “shew” courage. But courage is low and gross—negroes being more fearless than whites, flies than birds, worms than flies. Be shy, then; hide, conceal; rear architectures of concealment, revealing just enough to mislead, taking care to appear frankest when deepest concealing: for the enemy is on the watch to rush you, and to give him true information is to give him guns against yourself. And beware of *writing* what may some day reveal you: for documents are the devil! Never leave in the hand of a friend or lover such daggers, sure to be aimed some day against you: for friendships die out like fires; and if, while they last, *you* collect proofs to use against *him*, in the day when *he* thinks to have *you*, *you*, ha, ha, will have *him*. To a lover—Ho! two o’clock. That’s good coffee, and good punch romaine, too, sir, ha, ha, eh?”

A clock had softly clashed in a jackal’s jaw of majolica, and now Hazlitt stepped downward with the parson, whose friendly hand was afresh on his shoulder, down and out to a gate where a chauffeur, trained in patience, waited, agaze at that strangeness of the constellations’ wake and funeral footstep trooping; and there, in parting, the parson remarked: “I’ve had a nice night; will come sometimes to be with you. As to your mother, that will be well: the right man for you will come tomorrow”—he was gone.

But still for some time Hazlitt did not go to bed: sat in that Amoor Room, letting his eye rest on that letter of command . . . “gallantry of the Sicilian girls” . . . “Delhi” . . . feeling a resentment rising in him against commands, and now deciding to put at once some thousands of pounds into some new bank as a nest’s-egg in case of need, in case he should feel disposed to ignore commands. Then, by a back-stair which led upward from a door of the Amoor Room, he went up to a bed-chamber into which, for its cosiness and closeness to the Amoor Room, he had lately changed, and there slept, and dreamt that he saw the red Radlor dreadfully red, having horns and a tail . . .

But when the agent sent by Radlor duly presented himself

the next afternoon, Hazlitt was pleased with his appearance, for he looked cute, a little fox with little optics that flitted, clean, neat, though, being oldish now in cunning, having lax cheeks—a touch of Yankee twang—named Mason; and “Find her quickly,” Hazlitt suggested to him—“money no object.”

“Right!” said the other; and added “It looks so far, as if this thing will require *time*: give me time——”

“Well, report to me often.”

But on the fourth night thence, when through wild weather Hazlitt drove away with bags strapped to his car, bound for Como to taste the pout of a mouth, no report had yet come from Mason; and suddenly in Leicester Square, buzzing along for Charing Cross, he cut the voyage short, the valet calling out there: “Drive back home!” and, driving back, his forehead all crosses propped upon his hand, Hazlitt said to himself: “No, she first; afterwards wines and wives and delights; but she first, that old woman . . .”

As he was believed to be away for days, he found no one there in the outer hall, when, by means of a key of his own, he walked in; but, on walking on through portières, stepping on soft weft, he saw with some wonderment, there at the stair-foot, the Rev. Radlor in talk with his butler, Radlor standing broad akimbo in his king’s-manner, the butler bending his neck in consent.

A moment more and Radlor, remarking Hazlitt, walked forward with a proffered hand to say: “I came to make a night of it! but was just being told that you had gone abroad. Not going?”

“No: changed my mind . . . Come up.”

But when, taken up in the lift, they were in the Amoor Room as before, Hazlitt did not sit, but, his hat still on, paced restlessly about, so that Radlor had to remark: “Mother still missing—I see. No good news yet from Mason?”

“None at all!”

“That may be good news. *Patience*: *he’s* your man.”

Hazlitt suddenly struck a table of tarsia with his fist, saying: “I mean to have her! if I have to ransack——”

“Yes, yes”—from Radlor soothingly—“we’ll find her—you and I—in time: I must spur Mason and set my own head to work . . . But I think I won’t stay to-night, you desire to be alone . . .”

“Well, perhaps—forgive me—come again” . . .

Chapter 8

Musings

THEN, RADLOR gone, he hammered upon a gong to command that the cat be brought to him: so on a lounge in that soft corner she idled beside him that night, now liking Park Lane better than Acton Street, having found the clouds she had so much dreaded big with mercy, so that through sounds of wind her thanksgiving could be heard three feet away, for as when the turner's leg works the treadle, urging it industriously, and murmuring goes the whole, pouring a humdrum of surges and lulls, so she purred and rolled her prose; and he, letting his eye rest on her, lay thinking within himself: "To be down on her for saying 'morbish.' To flier and sneer at her—for what? for saying 'morbish!' Dear me: enough to make a cat laugh; angrily laugh. Because she chanced to be unconscious, not of some cosmic fact, but of a penny-farthing convention like that . . . so local . . . so temporary. We 'English' of the moment have agreed that 'morbid' shall mean diseased, the 'Italians' that 'morbid' shall mean soft: so a feeble 'Italian' is inclined to smile at our 'morbid bones,' as a feeble 'Englishman' at their 'morbid velvet'—conventions so capricious, trivial, like the conventions of kiss-in-the-ring. Not even very reasonable convention. Spanish, Italian, have some charm; but the abundance of the sound 'ah' (in Italian) is laughable: one's mouth is 'spahlahncahtah' (wide) all the time, saying 'ah.' And the ill-chosen vocables: what a word 'ahb'bot'tonahturah,' meaning mere buttons. Puss-puss! Or 'purr'—absurd; 'kroko' might do, 'ronron': but where does the p come in? Or 'paw,' or 'or' . . . too much sound . . . fancy or having the same sound as awe . . . and what means or in Italian means water in French, as what means frown in English means women in German, as what means stink in English means shin in Italian, and so on endlessly, no sense to it . . . And the senselessness of phrase . . . 'I have been' . . . absurd . . . Some sense in 'I am been,' as Germans, Italians say . . . 'am, after being'; or some sense in 'I have taken—a cake,' 'have a cake, taken,' but not 'have been,' been isn't a thing . . . Queerness . . . The plural of mouse is

mice, of erf is ye . . . haphazard! fantastic! . . . yet, if I said to the common man 'it's less fantastic to say œufs, not ye, to say mouses, houses, not mice, hice,' he'd consent outwardly, but *au fond* he'd think *me* fantastic, so much does custom make what's natural look fantastic, what's fantastic look natural, nay, look solemn—'solemn' *meaning* customary, as does 'moral,' 'ethical,' eth in Greek meaning the same as sol and mor in Latin, and if I went out now dressed up as Beau Brummel, instead of the lids of reverence that he got, I'd get giggles—solemnness all gone. So in language. 'How do you do?,' and echo answers 'I do not do' . . . antic, Boer-quaint, Lapland-outlandish, to make a cat laugh—if the cat's *free*, to see. And our German way of jerking out h—tickles a Frenchman! who thinks of the sick ejecting the breath for the physician to smell, and he thinks our 'educated' as ridiculous for jerking out h as our 'educated' think our 'uneducated' ridiculous for *not* jerking out h . . . And the often absurd spelling-convention of the often absurd word-convention . . . there is no clever schoolboy who could not invent a better set of conventions in the way of language than any that has yet been gabbled by man. And to think that any mortal can be so soft in the head as to entertain any respect for fashions so passing and frothy, or to imagine that a 'knowledge' of them educates, or tends to educate, any more than a knowledge of the conventions of chuck-penny or shorthand. Useful conventions—very; but, ah heaven, not useful to *educate*, to *educate* scepticism and inventiveness: what has the *educator*, the *bringer-out* of scepticism and inventiveness, to do with them? They tend to *deaden* scepticism and inventiveness! Now, how muddle-headed, to assume that a useful thing must be useful for all ends, that because a saw is useful for sawing, therefore it must be useful as a boot-lace or a bookcase. And when 'education' is made to *consist* of this traffic with passing fashions, ah, what a lark! no wonder we still have 'lords' and lice. I think that 'purr' is spelled with two r's, 'fur' with one: and *this* is the fluff that they stuff the young with, to bring them to think, and see, and lift up their eyes to the hills—the horror of it! And the Simple Simons who 'know' about purr and fur form 'the educated,' with a middle-class point of non-view, while the poor mechanic, Edison, Faraday, who don't know about fur and err, or know with a shrug, are 'the uneducated class!' And to think that I—I—supposed to be her own—should drop pettishly upon her for saying 'morbish,' as though 'morbish' is not

as good as 'morbid'—I prefer 'morbish!' be damned to morbid. Some years hence 'morbid' will be as forgotten on the tongues of men as Chaldean is, or Old English, or Doric Greek; 'morbish' may then be the convention, as Sweet foresees that coster-Cockney will presently be, when the 'lords' and lawyers, if any are left, will be saying 'Mrs. Eney Awkins'—which, anyway, is distinctly more refined and pretty than 'Henry Hawkins,' hawking up the 'Hawkins'; but meantime an unfortunate child is taught that Hawkins is refined and Awkins vile, with the same solemnity of face with which a child will presently be taught that Awkins is refined, but Hawkins a horrid hawk of quaint barbarians . . . And her drop of beer—to toss that out of window—a little beer—all that she had to comfort her dulness a little, to take out the taste of that drastic draught of all her poverty and wrongful sorrow . . . Aye, she likes 'her drop' . . . I can see . . . I can see . . . but, my God, is that a monstrosity? I treated it as if she was a culprit, and I a puppet-show 'Judge' in a wig dropping righteously upon her, // Dear me, if I only had that old woman here now to stuff up her mouth with malakoff chocolates, and see her drunk on punch au rum: but I will be having her . . . I will . . ."

His thoughts paused to list to voices of stormwinds which within the void of the chimney's windpipe noised things Orphic and forlorn, while the little clock in the jackal's jaw clashed once; and after he had scribbled a note to his Máhn-dorla, expressing regret that events had prevented his going to Como, and after he had directed two envelopes, one to "Mary Semper," one to "Josh Giddins," and then had banished the cat, he stepped up the little back-stair to his bed.

Chapter 9

Mary Semper Interested

IT WAS that same evening, near eight, that Mary Semper tripped up to Josh Giddins, loitering in his off-hours there by the pillar-box at the Swinton Street corner, and in her flippant way mentioned to him "There you are, then," and they two being good friends, there they stood gossiping—friends in a "platonic" mood, for, though they lived vis-à-

vis, and Mary had a figure of Venus, the good Giddins, so far, seems not to have perceived this; in fact, though his fancy must at some epoch have "turned to thoughts of love"—for he was a widower—at present he was dulled, sunk in a pre-occupation with his daily cares, with his discoloured "clay," and with sucking last charms of the savour of ale from his moustache . . .

And at once Mary commenced to talk of "that old woman," asking him if he had heard nothing more.

"No, I ain't heard nothing," Giddins answered through the droning of two trams that rolled close, and through a quarrel of two women, mixed with clamours of an immoderate populace of children transacting their business in that island of lights and shadows builded within the sea of Night—lights blinking at winds that rioted through that night-long.

And Mary: "It's a funny thing, mind you; her son don't know nothing about it. But wait—I'll get to the bottom of it. You know which way them two men took her?"

"No, how am I to know, Mary?"

"*That way*"—pointing south toward Holborn.

And Giddins: "How do you make that out? It's a lick to me how you get at things!"

"Whoy, ain't I been making enquiries? Stop—you know that she took a bag with her?"

"No, I didn't know, Mary."

"But you've been up in her room! Didn't you take any notice what things ain't there any more?"

"Fact is, I didn't look that much into it," answered the phlegmatic Giddins.

"Well, she had a bag: she put clothes into it, enough to fill it, because they aren't there now, so the bag was heavy, you see, that's why the tall man carried it for her until they got into Gray's Inn Road, and there he got a boy to carry it . . . Only I can't get at who the boy was . . . if I could only find that out . . ."

"It's too long ago," Giddins remarked: "but however did you drop to all that?"

"Whoy, didn't little Phœbe Williams see the two men and the old woman? and didn't she see the tall one give the bag to a boy opposite the chemist? But she don't know the boy's name. He was singing . . . he had fair hair . . . I don't think he lives near here . . ."

"It's too long ago, Mary, you'll not find out now," Giddins again said; "and if you did find——"

“What’ll you bet I ferret it out before another week is over? I’ve set a lot of boys and girls making enquiries—*There’s Phœbe Williams, look!*”

Now she hallowed, and when a flushed forehead ran up, she set to questioning. But Phœbe Williams had not yet spotted the boy’s name; she said: “Lotty Sullivan saw him, too, and he was singing, but she don’t know his name.”

“Funny thing to be singing when he was carrying a bag,” remarked Mary: “and where’s Lotty Sullivan?”

“See her down there playing.”

“Run and tell her to come . . .”

So presently the flushed forehead of Lotty Sullivan rushed up to be questioned by Mary, who, however, could win no picture of the boy; until in her exhaustive manner she demanded: “What was it the boy was singing?” and got the answer: “He was singing ‘Jesu lover of my soul.’”

On which Giddins: “Funny thing to sing, too. I should rather say he was singing ‘There you are, then.’”

“No, that wasn’t it what he was singing,” Phœbe Williams put in: “he was singing a hymn.”

Whereupon suddenly Mary: “*I know! He lives down Coram Street—that’s why the children on this side of the Road don’t know his name. Yes, he does sing hymns—he’s a bit soft in his head—I know im. Has he a stoop in his left shoulder?*”

“Yes! he has!” both the children cried together; and “that’s im!” cried Mary—“come on, Josh! we’ll soon have im”—she was off across “the Road” with the uprooted Giddins in tow.

Nor was it long before, in Coram Street near, Mary had dug out the boy’s name, and then tripped to drop upon the boy himself, who was trotting, hymning, toward his mother’s door with a mug of drink that he bore.

And he recollected very well the event of the bag—had been given sixpence, though he had not carried the bag far, only a hundred yards, till a taxi had come up; and after the old woman’s reluctance to trust herself to it had been coaxed and overcome, the three had driven away.

But when Mary asked if he had not heard where the taxi-driver had been bidden to drive to, the boy answered no—a tattered fifteen-year-old in a jacket too long and trousers too short, more hymn than hem about him, and though those tatters bore a blue ribbon in proof of his “temperance,” that drink in his hand was as black as sin and silliness.

"But," demanded Mary, "didn't the two men talk? Didn't you hear them say nothing?"

"No," he answered, "they didn't say nothing. One of them said: 'I wish we was there,' and the other one said, 'We'll be—Somewhere—in an hour and a half.' That was all."

"Yes, but 'Somewhere' where? Can't you remember? See if you can remember!"

And he: "I can't think of the name of the place. It had a m in it . . ."

"A m . . . Was that all it had in it, a m?"

"I think it had a h in it."

"A m and a h . . . a m and a h . . . Has Maidenead got a h in it, Josh?"

The deliberate Giddins reflected a little; then: "Yes, I should say Maidenead would have a h in it, only she ain't sounded-like—'Silent H' they name her. But it would never take them an hour and a half to get to Maidenead—unless there is some other Maidenead further along."

"Oh, go on," said Mary with half a laugh, "there ain't so many Maideneads about . . . It was Maidenead! You may bet that was it."

"No, it wasn't Maidenead," the boy now said: "I know Maidenead. It was another place what's got a h in it. It's on the tip of my tongue . . ."

Silence now . . .

Then Giddins: "There you are—we're looking for a needle in a bundle of hay. It's too long ago, Mary."

Whereupon they remained there silent, lingering, idly at a loss; until Mary suddenly came out with: "Wait—I'll get at it!" and to the boy: "You come along with me, I'll give you tuppence"—upon which, the boy having delivered his drink, the three set off, wind-whiffed, for Swinton Street.

There Mary knocked at a Danish prostitute's, where she borrowed the atlas of a promising lass, the prostitute's daughter, who was resolved to become something other than her mother; and with the atlas the three stepped up to Mary's room, a rude enough den, everything in it inveterate, done-for from of old, the table shaky, the chairs, the carpet just a memory of the past, though in the midst of that misery there lived an intelligence which, but for the wastefulness and blatancy of men, might well have determined for what reason the perihelions of Mercury are perturbed.

In that atlas on the staggery table they soon discovered the map of England, and though neither Mary nor Giddins

knew how to use "the scale-of-miles," she quickly twigged how many inches of the map represents the distance which a train travels in "an hour and a half"; whereupon she cut, in a bit of paper, a hole having that distance for its radius, and after lying the paper over the map, with London as the hole's centre, she commenced with her keen peeper to seek out m-and-h in the names within the hole.

In three minutes they had Midhurst, and "*That was it!*" exclaimed the singer of hymns: "I remember, miss—it was Midhurst!"

So that was whither the old woman had been taken . . .

"Right O, we'll tell her son," said Mary.

"Yes, but where's her son now?" Giddins asked: "he ain't at Rowton House any more, I know."

"No," she said, "he's come into some work . . . Where would he be, I wonder? I saw him the other day, and we chased the old woman's cat; but I didn't think to ask him where he's living . . . Didn't the old woman say that he had a sweetheart somewhere?"

"Aye, I've heard that he has a sweetheart," Giddins reflected, "but blamed if I know whereabouts."

"Whoy, we are as fur off as ever we was," said Mary; but added: "Never mind, I'll get at it . . ."

Then the three separated . . .

Chapter 10

Mary Semper Married

Now, MARY had the habit of rising betimes from bed to light her fire, make tea, eat bread-and-butter, and then seat herself *en déshabille* at that rickety table to string beads: these being given her from a business in "Little Britain" (a street), and for stringing a hundred and forty-four she received a penny-farthing—a half-penny more than before "the" war.

She was thus employed when she was conscious of the eight o'clock postman's knock below—which little interested her, since few were the letters addressed to her, until a woman ran up to rap and present her with a letter, and then Mary exclaimed: "Well, I dreamed of horses! and so sure as I dream of horses so sure there's a letter."

At about the same moment Giddins in his room over the way was being presented with a letter . . .

It was by her little window that Mary read hers, for the more sunlight the better for letters when one is but little of a pundit; but this script was readily read, the writing big, and little of it . . . There was a cheque: "Pay to Mary Semper the sum of One Thousand Pounds"; and there was a piece of paper that had on it: "For your help to the helpless."

No house could hold her! Out like one whose clothes are in flames she flew to seek human sympathy, and in the street came to a meeting with Giddins, whom no house could hold: for as when one day, in Rome, I saw a man rush from an office, he having just won a premio in a tombola, and the man span somehow, ran distracted, his stare a blaze, and as when on another day of my days, in Bucks, I saw a cat's haunch crushed by a motor-car, and the cat span somehow, dancing mad, a cracker distracted, her stare a craze: so were they; and quick, with quivering fingers, they compared their case: Mary revealed, Giddins revealed . . . "pay to Josh Giddins or Order the sum of One Thousand Pounds" . . . "for his help to the helpless" . . . And cried Giddins, white: "Don't you have nothing to do with it! Don't touch it!"

And Mary: "What's it mean—help to the helpless? which elpless?"

"I know nothing about it!" protested Giddins, washing his hands of it: "don't you have nothing to do with it, that's all! Take my advice!"

"But we ain't done no wrong!" exclaimed Mary: "they can't do nothing to us!"

And Giddins: "Do you suppose they won't work it in somehow against us? Don't touch it!"

"One Thousand Pounds. . . . I dreamed of horses last night. . . ."

"Well, keep clear of it, that's all I've got to say. There's no good meaning in this 'ere!"

"Go on! It's come to us! It ain't our fault!"

"So what would you do? Would you have the devil's cheek to go to a bank with this 'ere thing?"

"Yes, I would! They can't touch me for that."

"And do you suppose for a moment they'd pay you the money?"

"No, I don't suppose they'd pay me the money, but can't anybody just go and see?"

“Yes, and suppose they ask you who is this ‘Henry Beresford’ who sent you this cheque. *You* don’t know any Henry Beresford! They’ll put it down for forgery, that’s what they’ll do, you think I don’t know them?”

This gave Mary pause, forgery is such an awful thing; but pretty quickly she was saying: “How the devil can we forge Henry Beresford’s hand-writing when we don’t know who Henry Beresford is? . . . Who *is* Henry Beresford? . . . ‘help to the helpless’: *I* ain’t elped no elpless. Is it some mistake? No, that ain’t it . . . *one* might be a mistake, but surely to goodness not the two: *somebody* must know our name and address. . . . It may be somebody getting at us for a lark . . . though that’s hard, because I ain’t done anybody any harm. . . . Or it may be somebody we once did a kindness to, and we didn’t take no notice, and have forgotten all about it. . . . Henry Beresford . . . Beresford. . . . I dreamed one night when I was a kid that I had a watch . . . for, after all, God’s above the devil, as the saying is: there’s never any telling! By Heaven, I’ll try my luck, if they give me six months for it.”

And finally, after no little of “arguing the point,” Giddins gave way, the venture was decided upon; Mary, after flying up to her room for a hat, flew down anew; and they were off in a flurry down Farringdon Street for Fleet Street, Giddins for the first time for years missing a day’s work: and in Fleet Street they waited, dreading, hoping for, the bank-door’s opening: but two hours after its opening there they still were on the pavement before The Daily Telegraph, “arguing the point,” and again arguing it, lingering still on the brink of the precipice of enterprise: for, evidently, whatever risk lay in the thing, there was no necessity for both at once to run it, so the question was which should dare to test it: and, the longer they were afraid, the stronger their terrors. Mary said: “You are a man, I am a woman: surely to goodness a man has more cheek than a woman.”

“We don’t look at it in the same light, Mary,” lamented the wary Giddins: “cheek is one thing, but a woman has more bottom to fall back upon when trouble’s about; they come down pretty heavy on a man, mind you, by gum they do.”

“Oh, well, it’s no good arguing the point any longer”—now her heart bounded into her mouth—“here’s off . . . I’m in it . . .” as with a visage of ecstasy she skipped up three steps to disappear into the building—leaving Giddins to stroll a little to and fro, down-looking on the ground, his

spittle struggling sick in his gullet in the grip of doubtfulness . . . until out afresh rushed that face of Mary, she escaping the door's swing, skedaddling, ecstatic, and from her heart a gasp parted, "Got it. . . ."

"You got it?"

"Ha, ha."

And now Giddins, too, instigated, pushed, suddenly rushed up the steps, disappeared, presently reappeared, escaping, and to Mary's "Got it?" panted in answer, "Yes, got it; I've got it."

Then went to sit in Temple Gardens. . . .

What, now, could they do with their day? Tamely to return to their old rooms would have been absurd—the universe was new-made for them. Only one place was wide and high-set: the Crystal Palace. So thither they went.

And that midnight, going home up Grays Inn Road, they moved ever together, supporting each other's steps, union their only strength, Mary having her hat in her hand, and anon, her head cast back, she sang to heaven, and anon the spirit of very giggling gripped them, and they giggled together, she anon charging the good Giddins with being "blind" and unable to bring forth human logic, remarking "Oh, go on, you're blind," and laughed; and the next day discovered that they had slept together.

But within three days soberer reflections were going on in Giddins' brain. When no one had come to arrest him, and he began to grow accustomed to security and a sense of well-being, he began, too, to look ahead with the capitalist's canniness, conceiving now the scheme of lumping Mary's thousand with his thousand for the purchase and working-capital of a public-house: for, he being a brewer's-drayman, his brain flew readily to this conception, and at the same time his eyes were circumcised to discern that grace of Mary's waist and gait. So, they two seated together in new rigouts, in Regent's Park one afternoon, Giddins put it to Mary, Mary did not prove unfavourable, the thing was gravely deliberated: and within six days they were wedded.

Then the look-out for the public-house: agents, advertisements. Public-houses enough for sale, three in particular appearing suitable—at Newport, at Midhurst, at Chiswick, of which the Chiswick premises were inspected; and the two were strolling home disappointed in the gloaming, when they saw near Swinton Street that singer of hymns, who, coming to talk with them, informed them that some man had found him out, a man having one boot thick-soled,

wanting to know of him all about his carrying the bag for the two: and the singer had given the man to know that the old woman had gone to Midhurst.

Whereupon Mary said to Giddins: "We'll go, too, tomorrow. We'll see the public-house, and p'raps we'll drop upon the old woman down there."

"What's the good o' that?" Giddins answered, "seeing as we don't know where her son is."

And Mary: "Her son's sweetheart lives in this very street—so I heard yesterday: when I find out the house-number, we'll get at her son."

Chapter 11

Toward the Continent

THAT SON was at that moment close to them—up in the old woman's room, brooding there on her bed in the gloom, staring at the floor between his feet: for sometimes now something drew him to that room, he each time coming with the unacknowledged hope of hearing her cough, and seeing her as erewhile.

As for the agent Mason, recommended by Dr. Radlor, he had discovered nothing, though he went often to Hazlitt to report. There had been conferences between Hazlitt, Radlor, Mason, as on that very evening preceding Mary Semper's departure for Midhurst, when Mason at Park Lane made the remark: "I am more and more convinced that the place for us is the Continent, sir, not England. If those two who left Newhaven with an old woman on the 11th were not our two, they were remarkably like 'em."

And Dr. Radlor said: "Paris—that's the place. I happen to be acquainted with the Prefect of Police: and if we can get *him* personally interested . . ."

Hazlitt, pacing about, stopped to say in pain: "What could they want to take that old woman to Paris for? Is it possible that none of us has brains enough to hit on any sort of basis to this ridiculous riddle? What do I pay you for, Mason?"

"Calm, sir"—from Radlor—"patience. First to discover the old lady: then motives may appear. They may be holding her to ransom, and when they consider that your anxiety

is at its height, may write, demanding money: so two courses are open to you, to lie low, waiting for their first move months hence perhaps, or else to anticipate them, drop upon them, be off to Paris. . . . Which shall it be?"

"What do you think, Mason?" Hazlitt asked.

And Mason: "Paris by all means, especially as you can get a friend's letter to the Prefect. For France isn't like England, now—the police there know everybody."

"I have engagements. . . . Very well, we will. Not tomorrow—I will 'phone you."

But three days later he was still in England, his feet being already in the social web, his butler every evening now laying before him a plate of cards, some curled up at their corners with hospitable purport, cards of afternoon callers, whose motor-cars buzzed nomad, like the bee, on momentary business from door to door, yet homed no honey; nor did he any more open his own letters, for at the morning-room table the secretary and head-"groom" sorted the envelopes, she gathering what seemed "business"-matter, he what seemed "personal," and when Hazlitt, having run round the Park, or spurred a cob up Rotten Row, returned to breakfast, the groom, standing by him, opened one by one and handed him "the personals." The secretary's zeal was even then all engaged in the organisation of a ball; and on the night following that decision to "be off to Paris," a twenty-five dinner sumptuosity flushed the mansion, something "posh," everybody on the look-out for a chance to tip the butlers, so that they might ever give him the nicest slices of flesh, nor ever let glass of him lack plenishment. But on the fourth forenoon Hazlitt 'phoned to Mason that they would start for Paris that night; and later in the day, though he hardly liked to call at Mr. Farrel's to see his Jessie, still, as he had not seen her for a week, he set out to see her there in haste, to tell her that he had to be off to France, and to press her hand.

But, as he was near the corner to enter Mr. Farrel's Park Street, a man ran right into him—young man, small, with spectacles; and this fellow exclaimed: "Damn you, sir, what do you mean?"

"Oh, go on," Hazlitt muttered—"your own doing."

"You lie!"

"Why, what is the matter with you? Lie yourself."

Upon which the other aimed at Hazlitt's face a blow, to which, though it did not hit, Hazlitt in an impulse answered with another blow—one without much force, which, if it

touched the man, must have touched him, Hazlitt imagined, harmlessly; yet in a moment the man's nose and moustache were blotched with blood, he now calling out: "Help! Police!"

Instantly a little mob was springing up; before long a constable was boring through; and, as the bleeding man, having seized Hazlitt's sleeve, now wrathfully "charged" him, the policeman remarked that they "must come to the station"—an event in his uneventful day.

Hazlitt protested: "I am busy!" but "Can't help that, Sir," answered the helmet; and the procession set out.

At "the station"—a long way off in Marlborough Street—the "defendant" was afresh "charged," and then with his "plaintiff" sat in punishment on a bench to await the coming of a medical officer; during which waiting the accuser suddenly stood up, mentioned that he must go out a little, did so, and did not come again! When Hazlitt and the doctor had waited long in vain, "the case" lapsed, Hazlitt saying then, "I hardly touched the man, I think!" to the station-inspector, who answered "there was the blood, Sir"; and it was only on his way home that the notion entered Hazlitt's head that that blood may have been *put* on—from some little squirt or bladder perhaps—the accuser's bolt being due to his reluctance to have his cuts too closely scrutinized. . . . In which case—what motive? Everywhere mystery, and still more: so that ever, if he struggled to ignore mystery for an hour, an hour afterwards mystery new-cloaked, in some new mask, was ogling him.

And now it was nearly evening, his Jessie doubtless gone home, and he, having to meet his Mason for Paris, unable to go to her; so, instead, he slipped, in hastening home, into the Wimpole Street Post-office, whither she now wrote to him, to see if there was a letter, and to send her a letter-card—noticing, as he approached the post-office, that a boy loitering there at the door blatantly scrutinized him; and when he afresh stepped out with a Jessie-letter, this boy said to him: "Beg pardon, Sir, are you Mr. Hazlitt?"

Hazlitt started—the name "Hazlitt" becoming now rather strange to his ear! "Well?" says he.

"Mr. Giddins, Sir—put me here to watch if you came. He is waiting in the public-house round the corner, and I was to tell you that he knows where your mother is, and you've got to wait here for him, till I run to call him to you."

"He said that? 'Knows where . . .'"

"Yes, sir."

“Right! Run!”—and while the boy ran, he himself doubled back into the post-office to 'phone to Mason, “Not going to Paris—mother found!” nor had he yet walked out of the call-office when there before him stood Giddins, smoking not clay, but wood.

Chapter 12

To Midhurst

SOON, THEN, they two were at Waterloo for Midhurst; and Giddins at the booking-office whispered: “*You* paid for the cab, I'll do this lot.”

“No, that is all right,” Hazlitt absently muttered.

But Giddins again: “Better let me, I can stand it better'n you: been in luck's way—uncle in Ireland—left me two solid thousand.”

“Ha, ha, that so? My congratulations—you deserve it, Giddins. Very well, I will let you pay.”

Giddins then stood in the *queue*, but when he asked for third-class, Hazlitt said “No, no, first,” and at this Giddins felt hurt—Hazlitt, in fact, wanting solitude to talk in; and when, alone in a compartment, they started, he remarked: “Now tell me everything. . . . So you are married to Mary Semper?”

“Aye, that's so”—Giddins, a little shy, eyed the mat, eyed the lamp—“safely spliced—married man. It's happened so—there you are. I always loved Mary, mind you, but—didn't know it. Nor I don't regret it, for Mary——”

Hazlitt put in: “But tell me—how did you know about Wimpole Street? Did Miss Page——?”

“That's it. Mary had made enquiries, knowing that you have a sweetheart, and on Tuesday, while we were waiting for a 'bus to take us to Waterloo for Midhurst, a woman gave us your sweetheart's house-number. So when we got sight of the old girl at Midhurst, Mary wired your sweetheart for your address, and got the answer: ‘Try Wimpole Street Post-office’; then she packed me off to London, saying I was to hang round the post-office every day till you cropped up; and there I've been messing about six mortal hours this day; so I deserve your thanks, or rather *she* does.”

“You, too, indeed, indeed”—from Hazlitt, who now,

rushing his eyes afresh over the Jessie-letter got from the post-office, duly saw in it the news of Mary's telegram; and "Yes," he said, "here it all is; and now tell me, Giddins—tell me—how came you to see my mother at Midhurst? Is the old woman well? Curious that you should happen——! Did she look all right to you?"

Giddins' answer hesitated, he eyeing the mat, eyeing the lamp, in a way he had of twisting his speculative nut about; and he said: "It didn't *happen*, so to say: Mary has taken a great fancy to the old girl, look, and the minute we got to Midhurst she started asking after her. At the station they said that a particular ticket-collector, who would be there at four o'clock, might remember about her coming; so, meanwhile, we walked down into the town to see the pub that's for sale; but Mary wouldn't entertain it—nor she don't need to go inside a pub, that girl, just bosses at it, and in two ticks she'll say 'No, that's no good.' Then we got some grub in a cook-shop, then we mooched about the town—pretty place, mind you—penny-ha'penny houses, but every one different, with faces like human beings—not like London. And in an hour Mary was friends with everybody in the place, just like in King's Cross. She kept popping into little shops, making enquiries, and when we came out of one shop, I'm blessed if she didn't give me the history of the shop-girl, saying the girl's father was dead, and a lot of things—how she made it all out, damned if *I* know. That girl will——"

"But my mother, Giddins, let's have it," Hazlitt put in, gazing out at Sussex grunly migrating, he having made a glade within the thicket of mist that dimmed the window-glass.

And Giddins: "Well, at four we went back to the station, saw the ticket-collector, and after he and Mary had argued the point between them, he directed her to a cabman who hangs out at one end of the place near the police-station; so off we goes again, and when we find the cabman he says to Mary, 'Pretty little old woman?' he says, and Mary she says 'Yes, *that's* her'; then he says, 'I drove the three of them to Ezbon, and there they got out to walk on with a bag'—so there you are: they didn't want anybody to know what house they went into; and the cabman told us, too, that some man had been at him the day before, sounding him about the old woman. Well, we had some tea, and then it was off to Ezbon, this Ezbon being a kind of suburb of Midhurst, at the fur end. There Mary kept making enquiries—must have boarded fifty different people, until it got dark, and I

was ready to drop—from pillar to post—never walked so much in all my days. At last, to cut a long story short, a man with a spade directed us to a little house, saying that p'raps Weeks might know, and when we rapped at this Weeks's door he came to us eating in his shirt-sleeves with a piece of meat stuck on a fork, and the man talked so broad, really it was a lick to drop to his meaning; but his missus, who was looking over his shoulder, she helped to make clear that he had lately seen a light in a house called 'Cowley House' that had been lying dark a long time, and it might be that them we were after were there. So off we starts for this Cowley House—a long way. I says to Mary, 'To-morrow, Mary,' but not she; 'Oh, come on,' says she, 'pull yourself together'; and we went asking the way, till the house stood before us—great place in grounds enclosed by a wall with a gate—looked pretty dismal—no light that we could spy, the night all dark, and now Mary was afraid to go on: so there we stood a good time looking at it, five hundred yards away; and presently we saw a man walk smartly up, pass us, and step softly on, with stoppages, toward the mansion, peering at it—tall thin gentleman with a thick sole to one of his boots—and Mary whispered in my ear, 'It's the same man as questioned the boy in London and the cabman down here.' And then all of a sudden we saw your mother break out of the gate and come running our way . . ."

"Running—*she?*?" Hazlitt, who had been reclining with closed eyes, started.

"Fact is, I wish it wasn't me had to tell you about it, for it's painful. Mary says——"

He hesitated, and Hazlitt: "Let me have it."

"Mary says she was half-seas-over—there, that's flat. Myself I couldn't spot anything o' that, but that girl she has the eyes of a cat—*she* says that she was; and that she was escaping. I think I could tell that she was escaping—by her flurried way of running; but she had hardly run a hundred yards when a pair of hounds came bounding out of the gate after her, barking; I don't think I ever saw such great dogs—bloodhounds, I should think, great brutes like donkeys; she and Mary shrieked out together, as she went down under——"

"No, *don't*"—Hazlitt defended his head with the bend of his elbow, digged as when the ruthless drill thrills the tooth's root.

Giddins stopped, eyed the mat, eyed the lamp; until Haz-

litt, gazing away again out of window, quietly said: "Go on, get it over."

"Well, two men came running out after the dogs, and one got her in his arms. She made no resistance: Mary says she had fainted. They carried her back, clanged the gate. Then we saw the man who had been watching the house run off toward the town; and we, too, made paces for the town, Mary hoping that the post-office might still be open: but it was closed. So we got lodgings; the next morning we sent off the telegram to your sweetheart; in the afternoon Mary sent me off to London; and here we are."

Hazlitt stared out of window; the train raged through a station, plunged anew into country, before he looked inward, chuckling a little—dangerously; and Giddins said: "Well, I am only sorry I hadn't better news to give. A son loves his mother——"

"*Some* sons," Hazlitt remarked . . . "She never troubled my head, I think . . . my head has always been full of experiments . . . Giddins, listen: the last time I saw her—the very last—she had been to 'the pictures,' and you wouldn't believe how I . . . treated her: left her—she called after me—wouldn't go back; it cost sixpence, you see, 'the pictures': it was the sixpence, ha, ha . . ."

And Giddins: "Well, we are all but mortal. The thing now is to get her out of the hands of these men who seem to mean her no good, for——"

"Ha, ha, when I get at them . . . if they have really hurt one hair of that head. Giddins, you see this arm?—believe me, man, it will have in it the strength of ten men . . . by God, I'd murder ten of them——"

"Yes, keep cool—keep cool. It'll be all right. Mary she swears that she'll do them yet, though, to tell the truth, it is making a hole in our bit o' money—lodgings down there pretty stiff this time o' year; and we should be in London now, seeing to things. But that'll be all right: we've got hold of two safe thousand—made a new man of me, like sitting at a fire in slippers, and not caring a damn if it rains or lightens. That'll be all right! Nor I don't blame you for loving the old girl—been a mother in a thousand: no doubt o' that. Always swore her son should be a gentleman; and, by gum, you look it, too, now: must have got into something good, ain't you? Oh, aye, she always swore that: curious thing, mind you, for her to say, considering what she was born. Knew her from the time I was so high, I did. In Shore-ditch that was, when she was at the Charity School; but of

a Saturday they'd go home till the Monday, look, carrying a bag of clothes, and the other children used to mob them, calling after them 'Charity brats! Charity brats!' Aye, sometimes of a Saturday morning there'd be a pitched battle, the charity children banging at the others with their bags—wore blue serge dresses, they did, with yellow-stockings, and a fichu over their shoulders. Then she went into service in Bermondsey, and I knew her there, too, for, it's a curious thing, she and I have generally kept in touch—no doubt I was a bit gone on her in those days, for she was a daisy, now, made a man's mouth water, bit of a thing as she was—and saucy! aye. Then there was some disturbance in the Bermondsey house—fact is, the master was after her, and I won't say that she didn't wink at him herself. So she got a job now as a pearl-stringer in Hatton Garden—some skill in it, mind you, position of trust, seeing as she was always handling jewels, though precious little pay to it; and it was there the man that was to be your father saw her—fell mad in love with her, he did, though a gentleman, so to say, and snapped her up sharp—I was there at her marriage in St. Pancras Church; you favour him remarkably, too, in face. They hung out in Highgate; then I got to know they'd gone to Portsmouth; and I thought I was never to see her again; but within four years she was back in London, with you; husband dead; his life not insured, and she, poor thing, left with next to nothing——”

“Brutes that men are”—from Hazlitt: “I can just remember a man somewhere whom I hated.”

“What, hated your father? Why, you were only about three or four then . . . Anyway, they took her back now at her old job in Hatton Garden; and there she remained till you were a lad at school, and till that rumpus came.”

“Rumpus?”

“Oh, you don't know about it . . . kept dark from you it was. Well, she was accused of nicking a jewel——”

“*She* was? My God! Why, she could no more do that——”

“We-e-ll—wait a bit—I may as well be frank with you, Hazlitt, as man to man . . . To tell the God's truth, she did do it—admitted as much to me years later. Oh, aye, she did it all right; and the deuce of a to-do they kicked up about it, too, though they didn't exactly prosecute. She had got into difficulties about keeping top-side-up with your school-fees, and, by gum, she—took what wasn't hers. They gave her the sack; and then for some years, till you left the

training-college, that little woman was fighting like a lion for life, I tell you: aye, worked like a nigger she did. From a child she'd always liked a drop—got it from her father!—but not then, wouldn't look at liquor, for she and me was then living in the same Wells Street, and I'd often want her to join me, but 'no,' she'd say, when her boy got on his legs, she'd say, then me and her would go on the razzle together. It was then she went thin, with the cough, for after coming home at night from the toy-factory, she'd be dress-making into the midnight——”

“Yes”——Hazlitt interrupted——“I think I know—I'd rather not . . . Gentlemen would be decent to women and children, if there were any gentlemen—would do battle for them, making the streets run red, with barricades and butcheries, and prolonged trench-warfare, for them; but there are only louts, you see.”

“What, no gentlemen?” asked Giddins with a speculative head held aslant: “how do you make that out, then?” but before ever Hazlitt could commence to explain how it comes about that there are no gallant men, but only louts, the train's brakes began to grate at Haslemere, whence, in a motor, they hummed away down to Midhurst. . . .

Chapter 13

Chichester Way

BUT IN Midhurst—no Mary! Mary gone: only, at Giddins' lodgings, a letter for Giddins, which she had evidently got someone at Chichester to pen for her: . . . “the day you left for London I got a taxi, when it got dark, to go to that Cowley House and try to get into the grounds, to see if I could get at the old woman some way . . . When I was passing through that big park where the deer are, a motor-car came tearing the opposite way, the same two men were in it, and the old woman clinging to one of them, scared like. So I offered my driver two pounds if he'd keep up with them, but he couldn't. We caught them up in Midhurst, but they got away from us outside. Then we almost caught them up where a motor-car had broken down across the road, then they got away again. I called out to them three times, but they didn't answer. It was near Chichester I lost them, so

I slept there; and the next afternoon I saw the same car in front of a grocer's, and the tall one came out of the grocer's, and got into the car. I was a fool, I let him see me, and before I could get a cab to follow I lost him again; but I know they are somewhere about here, and I mean to know where, if it takes me a month. So, if you are at Midhurst now, stay there till I tell you what to do, and, if you have found her son, tell him about it, and the least he can do, tell him, is to pay our expenses, if he is flush. . . . Love and x x x from Mary."

In the little parlour of Giddins' "apartments" Giddins spelled it out to Hazlitt, who listened with a hung head; and he muttered: "Rushing motor-cars . . . her heart's not strong . . . all that can't fail to lay her dead."

"Well—there you are," Giddins remarked, as Hazlitt sprang up with "I must see this Cowley House . . ."

"Where's the good? She's gone . . ."

"I must see it."

So out to the lonely house they now drove, where, finding an iron gate closed, Hazlitt scaled it, to go prowling about the grounds—without any weapon but a penknife, but having in his fists a vigour to fell, and a rigour in his fingers to strangle: a fruitless prowl, however—house and out-houses blanketed in blackness, no sound but sounds of the household of Pan, the owl's hail, the rabbit's brush through brake, and breezes hushed in the cradle of the trees to a strangeness of reverie. So back now to Midhurst it was, Hazlitt, like Hamlet, muttering with a hung head "I must 'absent me from felicity awhile' "; and the next afternoon said from a train window to Giddins on the platform: "Tell Mary I have come to depend much upon her, so let her stick to it . . . Don't mind spending a few pounds for me: you won't miss it. I am bound to be in London, but will send down a man, a skilled agent, to co-operate with Mary; will soon discover who now owns this Cowley House, and then—Goodbye, goodbye . . ."

But Giddins left the station thinking within himself: "Won't miss it . . . I don't know so much about that: it's the little leaks sink the ship . . . And he looks flush enough—Swan Hotel—first-class carriages—he should be able to shell out something . . ." But these scruples as to 'little leaks' soon received a rebuke: for, remaining at Midhurst, awaiting orders from Mary, on the second morning he received an envelope forwarded him from his Swinton Street address, and now anew he stood thunderstruck, "Henry

Beresford" afresh at him with yet a cheque: "sum of five hundred pounds" . . . He rushed to Chichester to find and whisper this thing to the wife . . .

Chapter 14

Toward Paris

BUT IN respect of unearthing the lessee then in possession of Cowley House, this turned out unexpectedly perplexing, and Hazlitt, having entrusted the discovery of it to his Mason, in vain expected information: for the agents of the owner gave, Mason said, the name of a lessee whose address Mason failed to trace; and "I never was so pestered, Parson," Hazlitt sighed to his Rev. Dr. Radlor that night of his ball, he having just fallen-in with the reverend gentleman's suggestion to shun all the buzz of the ball for a smoke, they two alone, in their old Amoor Room, as cronies do, Radlor clothed now, though still in old trousers, in a new coat ordered for him by Hazlitt, who now called him "Parson": "never was so pestered! every step fails. I confess that Mason seems to me rather futile—even the Cowley House lessee not found . . . I have now sent him down to Sussex to be in touch with Mary Giddins, who alone, so far, has shewn any efficiency——"

Radlor asked: "What is the interest of this Mary Giddins in the matter?"

"Disinterested . . . loves my mother, the dear. Sharp-eyed thing——"

"Evidently. But she must have some *motive* . . . 'Disinterested!' Are you not paying her?"

"Not that *she* knows of."

"Well, Mason will probe her. She has some personal motive."

"Well, of course. Neither a car, nor a man, nor anything, can move without force, without a motor or 'motive,' nor can a person move without a personal motor: this motor, in every case, being the intention to procure pleasure for himself. In the case of noble natures, the motive for undergoing loss, and groan, and cross, is a prospect of the pleasure, sweeter than pain is piercing, which such natures receive in doing good. And such, I say, is Mary."

Now Dr. Radlor wriggled himself to comfort among cushions and coloured stuffs, saying with a gimlet ogle: "But do you suppose she will discover your mother?"

"*Has* once discovered her—may again. She has that native plain capableness——"

"Oho! that's the stuff, 'native, plain—' She will, then: wait, you will see. So leave it to her and Mason: let us two cut to Paris. My sister, Máhdorla, now there, desires to be remembered to you."

"Ah! thanks, thanks"—not mentioning that he himself had letters from that lady—"but I could hardly go away just now."

He was, however, being tugged that way: for not to go was uncivil, his Máhdorla having written, "Cavaliere is now in Thaïs at the Opéra—if you care"; besides which, she was now nightly with him in strange regions in dreams of his head, contending with his mother for a place in his bed and space on his breast—very strangely: so that in the day-time, when he belonged to his Jessie, he was often astonished at his infidelities in the dead of night. He might have gone, then, so tugged, to his Máhdorla, but for his friendship with Radlor, he rather shrinking from kissing at random the sister of an intimate, of a doctor of divinity, who somehow touched men's instincts with more of respect and shrinking than do other D.D.'s, like those animals whose black and saffron warn all the forest swarms "beware my bane!" But that night a discussion about "land" happening to arise, the doctor lost control of his horses, and this had a sudden result as to the sister . . .

Radlor said: "*I* should go, if you would. Mason will be Mary's little lamb—Common girl, this Mary?"

And Hazlitt: "Poor, uneducated. Common is dull, not bright. Those pretty dears down there are common"—he being seated near a window whence could be seen marquees and lantern-galaxies in the garden-back, a bazaar and market of the fairies transacting itself down there, evaporating a rumour of prattle that mounted up compounded with outcries of music wounded, swooning.

And now Radlor, who loved subtleties of argument, but could little be convinced: "Mary is 'uneducated' yet 'bright'—though your theory is that it is education which makes bright. *You* should say that the pretty dears, being better educated, must be 'brighter,' less 'common.'"

"Yes"—from Hazlitt—"if they *were* better educated, but they are worse, being wrongly 'educated,' and it is better to

be stationary than to be led astray, as Spencer says. Happily, they are taught the piano, drawing, hockey, tennis—all which manual work, genuine education, they call their ‘accomplishments,’ while what they call their ‘education’—reading, history, ‘geography,’ grammars—has no tendency to educate, and ruins for ever the prick of the young intellect. As to what you once told me about there being ‘an intelligent duke’ somewhere, if there is the least truth in that, I can tell you the two reasons: (1) he was born with a strong brain, like Worcester, Ross, and (2) he drank and golfed at Oxford instead of cramming grammars. Yes, Wellington ‘won’ the battle of Waterloo on the play-grounds of Eton, and he lost it (or nearly did) in the class-rooms. Of the lords known to me the only two whom any stretch of charity might call intelligent can’t ‘spell.’ One spells ‘literature’ with two t’s like an Italian, the other spells ‘already’ ‘all ready’ (stand by!), the charming man: and that’s where the shred of intelligence comes from. Bertrand Russell spells ‘colossal’ ‘collosal’—sublime! the good Eddington believes that ‘viz’ means ‘for example’; and Kelvin——”

“You can’t spell, then?” the doctor a little sneered in asking.

And Hazlitt: “Oh, yes, I can spell all right in three or four languages: but one should pick all that up haphazard after being educated, shouldn’t one? as one gets to know the number of the Fulham bus—not be taught it! the educator’s sole job being to educate, to teach a trick, the trick of *seeing truth*, of seeing the untruth of untruths, and being sceptical, of seeing the truth of truths, and being inventive: *sceptical* and *inventive*—those two, the two that distinguish modern times from ancient, distinguish European scientists from Chinese ‘scholars,’ from children, from savages. Now, only traffic in radical truth can educe the brain to these two relations with truth: so only radical truth, science, is the tool of education. And even in teaching science the educator’s object is not *to* teach science: that’s not his *job*, to give *any sort* of knowledge, or goloshes, or jugs, or sugar, or other useful things, but only to give two useful things, scepticism and inventiveness, which two things are one thing—WISDOM—like the two faces of the same blazing sabre: having which, one can get *all sorts* of knowledge, and goloshes, and jugs, and sugars, and healths, and heavens. No need to teach a child to read and write: teaching conventions *dulls*, not brightens, makes *foolish*, not wise; in his second year of life the child reads and writes *spontane-*

ously, if he is then a trained scientist, as Mrs. Montessori has proved. But we teach them conventions and accidents! . . . Suppose you come upon a group of boys playing marbles; you ask, 'what's the game?' they answer, 'if blue strikes red, we gain ten': that's their convention; you go to another group in France, and they answer, 'if white strikes blue, we gain five': that's their convention: well, are you any better educated now after knowing that? Your *memory* is, as *any* nonsense that you try to remember—Plato's arguments, the Book of Ceremonies of the Chou Dynasty, Whang Hou's Admonitions to his Sons, the comic physics of Aristotle—*any* nonsense educates the memory quite as well as science does; and the memory of Chinese scholars, of people like Macaulay, does often become monstrously educated, acquiring a kind of hypertrophy like a deformity; but memory is the lowest of the mental functions, being known to exist in beings so low as infusoria, while in bees it seems to be superhuman. But otherwise you are no better educated after knowing the conventions of many groups of marble-players or of many languages—by which time you are a scholar, a Chinaman, a pundit, your brain deplorably ruined, staled, softened, deformed, like treadlers who always use one leg, and go crooked and crippled. But suppose that, instead of asking 'what's the game?' as scholars, lawyers, do, you set yourself to discovering just how much heat is developed when one marble hits another—ah, then, you can see what a higher *type* of being that will bring you out to, *e-duc-ating*, *bringing-out*, all your handicraft and head-craft, your strength of brain, mental muscle, independence, your *finesse*, trickiness, resourcefulness, your reason, veracity, reverence, contempt, selflessness—in two words all your scepticism and inventiveness,* in one word all your Wisdom. Things, then, not conventions: a question of the hands, isn't it? for as the racial brain-development *followed* upon hand-development, so must the individual's brain after birth, just as before birth his development follows the racial course: the baby from his first year learning to deal with woods, metals, with *physics*, that is——"

* Elsewhere he says that *in-ven-tiveness* is a readiness to *come-upon*, or discover truth of all sorts; scepticism a circumspection or wariness in accepting as true what may not be true: the chemical-combination of which two is Wit, Wisdom, or Intelligence, i.e. a quickness in seeing truth and untruth. With a little intelligence animals are naturally endowed, some with more than others (genius); but it is mainly due to education (performing dogs); while wrong 'education' (Gladstone, Baldwin) strangles, atrophies, the little that Nature gives. An educated genius (Maxwell, Niels Bohr) is "a wit" (when young).

"You are full of gospels!" Radlor laughed, squatted within silk hangings that ran round a square divan, he exhibiting shins blanched like fish-flesh above his socks: "and, gospels being unpopular, some day you may make a powerful enemy. But the intelligent man is no martyr to ideas, sir. Five thousand dollars in your pocket are more worth than all the ideas of all the philanthropists and theorists."

Hazlitt threw down a tuberosé to a *débutante* who looked up, before answering: "No, there I don't call you business-like, Parson"—at which the parson flushed-up a little, "business-like" touching him; and this sometimes happened, that Hazlitt's authority to teach the teacher would draw from the doctor's eye-corner a gimlet glint of malignity—if one noticed close . . . "In general, yes, give me the dollars, but I except the theories of scientists, who are men trained in disdain of theories, so that *their* theories are likely to have some cash in them. Sometimes, too, a system of theory contains some demonstrated truth: Socialism, for instance——"

Radlor broke in: "You are not one of those Reds?"

And Hazlitt with a smile: "No, not one of those Reds."

"Well, I sometimes suspect you of being one!"

"In sympathy, yes; in love."

"So why not in fact?"

"No, I am a mathematician, so can't help seeing that what the Reds need is a reverence for demonstrations, other than May Day demonstrations, and a contempt for opinions. Their shibboleth is 'the nationalization of land *and* the means of production'—meaning factories, etc.; but in thus lumping together a planet and 'plant,' the mountains and a mouse, they forget that these 'means of production' *are themselves products*, themselves had a means of production, namely Nature, 'land,' which alone is not a product, which *alone* is the means of production. And fancy saying '*and*'—'land *and* the means of production,' when just a little looking-round, *circumspection*, *scepticism* (*scep*, Greek = *spec*, Latin = *look*—before you leap) would shew them that land is the *sole* means of production, since, having land alone, a Crusoe can, by 'means' of land, produce first tools, then no end of foods and furnitures. So these 'means of production,' which, if they were all destroyed today, could readily be replaced tomorrow by 'means' of land, should be named 'aids in production'—or something; and may-be to nationalize them would be good; in my opinion it would be: but, as a scientist, I despise my

opinions, until they are as strictly demonstrated as it has been demonstrated that to nationalize a crowded country must be a boundless good. But to Socialists the countries are not so much landlord countries as 'capitalist countries': they see capitalists richer than landlords (through a freak of the economics of the moment, the reason of which is clear enough to me); they see capitalists paying wages to 'wage-slaves'; and they jump to the conclusion that it is the capitalists who make the slaves. But there is no truth in this—as is readily demonstrated: for slaves' turbans touched the earth ages before there was capitalism; not before there were land-'owners' though, who it is that make slaves, this being the *definition* of a slave, 'a landless man,' for a man who has no Nature, or 'land,' to labour on for himself must labour for some other's benefit, or be dead; and *this* is to be a slave. Whether or not he is *said* to be a slave is, of course, of no importance; he is a slave: he fulfils the condition. So, at bottom, Adam Smith and the Physiocrats, Turgot, George, saw true, that the chief thing about Englishmen is England, that without France Frenchmen would be nowhere, that it is land that matters—*England, Deutschland, Frankland*; so that the apparently 'capitalist countries' are in reality landlord countries—as when I was in Jamaica some years ago there was an earthquake which killed fifty persons, with a tidal-wave which wiped out nine hundred, and the absurd men went about saying that it wasn't the earthquake which did the mischief, it was the tidal-wave: but it *was* the earthquake—which caused the tidal-wave. So it is the earth, the land, the planet——”

“I am a landlord, sir!” Radlor interrupted in his peremptory manner: “and I say, woe to that Government that attempted to grab our lands; we'd fight to our last gasp.”

“Father forgive you, Parson”—Hazlitt laughed—“you know not what you say. Don't you love good, man, for yourself?”

“‘Good,’ indeed; what is ‘Good?’ A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, sir!”

“But not billions in the bush, which are as sure as the one. What is ‘Good?’ ‘Good’ is ‘pleasant’ ”—now he went on to tell of an incident in a restaurant in Soho where one Frenchman said to another over their soup “C'est bon,” it is good; and the other nodded back, “Oui, c'est bon,” *yes*, it is good—meaning pleasant; something specially pleasant they call a “bonbon,” or goodgood: “nor can ‘Good,’ ” he

said, "ever have any other meaning, except for warm uneducated souls like Plato, Carlyle, Zeno——"

"Yes, yes," Radlor said, ever jealous of Hazlitt's mind, "nothing new in that—Bentham, Helvetius, said it——"

"Ah! I am sorry for that"—from Hazlitt—"those sorts of untrained people are nearly always wrong. But this is evident enough. Think of a universe without any living thing: it would still be perfect in working, mighty, sublime, but could in no way be *good* or *bad*, could it? if it all crashed, that wouldn't be *bad*, or if the globes became plum-puddings, that wouldn't be *good*, *good* and *bad* being notions of living things applied to what they find pleasant or painful—no other *test* of 'good' or 'bad.' Now, this that I have just said is a *demonstration*: so 'good' means pleasant; as 'right' means pleasant: for 'right' is certainly good—differing from 'moral,' which means customary, 'moral' being what men locally *consider* good, while 'right' is what *is really* good, whatever men may consider. In England it is now immoral, *considered* wrong, to kill children; in the nineteenth century it was moral, *considered* right, if done in mines and factories—so transitory is morality; and since opinions are mostly wrong, and morality is opinion, morality is mostly wrong. But Good or Right is different, being whatever, on the whole, in the long-run, does give happiness—'*happiness*' being a succession of pleasures, misery of pains. So that's '*Good*.' You asked, and I answer: *good* is *pleasure*; a good egg, a good man, a good God, being one whose existence *does actually* give more happiness than misery. If the man strangles his wives, and invents matches, gimbals, wireless, he is a good man by billions——"

"Let's hope that he invents the wireless before he's hanged and in hell!" the doctor sharply said; and added: "Yes, yes, no doubt Good is what is pleasant in general; 'Better' is pleasant to one's family; 'Best' to one's self. So I stick to my lands, sir: it would be Good to give them up, but Best to keep 'em. What has all this about Good to do with land?"

"I am getting to that"—digging a cigar-point into a cutter that lay on a leg of the god Gan big-bellied; then, glancing outward: "Ah! my neighbour at a back-window, looking at my ball. Do you know him?—named Farrel . . . Offends me in some way; but noble stamp of man, impressive. Recluse, I think—fingers jewels! one doesn't seem to meet him anywhere. He must fancy me a Kahn or something, noting the colours of this crowd of moonlights in this

room . . . and what a midnight of stars! Italian! as I saw them when 'at the front' out there: conflagrations of cosmic dust flushing, explosions of sulphurs going on down the cosmic gulfs, storms of gold-dust . . . Hallo! you have gone quite pale. Feel bad?"

"No! . . . strange——"

"Strega! sip a little . . ."

"No, not tonight—that's well, that's well—these yellow hangings, perhaps . . . Go on; go on about 'Good.'"

"Well, I thought you looked . . . Well, that is so, isn't it? *Good is pleasure*, and there is no good save pleasure—in drinking, in self-crucifixion, in discovering, in adoring. But now, tell me: how does Life get for itself *good* or *pleasure*? In every case it gets it through science: for——"

"Chut, man"—from Radlor, who, in reaction from flushing pallid, had already flushed red afresh.

And Hazlitt: "Now, why do you say 'chut?' Have you thought about it? Possibly you don't know what science *is*."

"Ha, ha."

"I say 'possibly,' since many 'learned' people do not. Look, now: 'science' is Latin for 'knowledge'—but means knowledge of *the cosmos*, of *the order of things*: and that is the definition. You may know Spencer's definition 'science is organized knowledge,' but that can't be *my* definition, since *I* don't know what 'organized knowledge' means; and, anyway, there is no truth in that: for the knowledge in a 'Time-table' must be 'organized,' yet is not science; the knowledge that atoms are complex was not 'organized' a moment after it was known, yet was science; and a little looking-round, circumspection, scepticism, would have kept Spencer from ever dipping to pen that definition. So let's take Maxwell's, Huxley's, that 'science is *any* knowledge—on *one* condition, that it is knowledge of order' . . . If you know that 'ego' means 'I' in Corfu, or that Chaka of Zululand was king in 1066, or that Italy is like a boot, or that Sirius is a twin-sun, or that your finger is cut, or that you are hungry—just that is not science; but if you know that sticking-plaster is good for cuts, that food dulls hunger, *that's* cosmic knowledge, *that's* science; or, if you know that *my* diamond is of pure carbon and is shiny, just that is not chemistry, but, if you know that diamond is shiny, *that's* chemistry, *that's* science: and 'scientists' are people who know by experience a multitude of *immutable* truths like these three. In these three, then, you see that good, or pleasure, is directly due to science: and so when you scrutinize

every case of pleasure—to Life in general, though, of course, *individuals* get pleasure from knowing truths that are not science, from knowing where their cigars are. Look here: think of a planet without animals; then fancy that a life arises on it. It happens in the night, no wind, no stars, all dark and still; and there he stands, open-eyed, but unconscious: for consciousness is a knowledge of facts, and he knows no facts, not how many arms he has, nor what arms are: and he is there without pleasure, without pain. Presently, though, up, by Heaven, somebody runs a sun: and now he knows pain, panic striking him: for still, though he now knows something, he has no science, until the next day the thing arises again, and the next, and now he gets to realize that it is a *regular* thing, and not malignant to him. *Now* he has science: and down now, heart-smit, his arms flung out, he tumbles, pleasures thrill his breast, Religion is born under those morning stars: for though it is so excellent a thinker as Huxley who says that ‘science is the twin-sister of religion,’ you see that that’s not so, science being the Mother of religion: for, before adoring, one, obviously, must be conscious, must know something, something of some order of things; and to know anything of this is science, to know more is to adore more: which is why scientists now are much too profoundly religious to be ticketed as ‘Buddhist,’ ‘Christian,’ or anything ancient—forgive, Parson, if I——”

“I forgive *you*, though not forgiving”—from Radlor who, in his cloud of downs, surrounded by hangings of “apricot-yellow,” sat clasping now one knee, now two, restless.

“That’s good . . . Well, so he goes on. He is soon hungry, so, seeing some figs, he picks up a lump of thistle-down to fling at them; but the thistle-down does not go to the figs; so now he flings stones, and *this* gives figs. More science for him! ‘So, *so*,’ he says to himself, ‘the cosmos *is*.’ And so he goes on: science after science, pleasure after pleasure. One day, on stretching a thread of vellum over a cocoon shell, he finds that every time he strikes the tense vellum it cries out, venting a melody—more science for him! *so* the cosmos is: if one but knows how to approach and broach it, by heaven music booms out of it, there’s music in the Bosom of it. This profoundly touches and moves him. And he discovers, moreover, that the music differs with the string, a thin string singing out more acutely, a thick more moodily mourning; and, as to strings of a like thickness, he finds that

if one is precisely one-half, one-third, one-fourth, the *length* of another, the two when twanged together twattle a duet: so that soon he owns a sort of lute that he calls a psaltery: on an instrument of ten strings he is making melody. And though to this pleasure he gives a special name, 'Art,' he never forgets that every pleasure of Art, like every other good, derives from science. And so he goes on. Another day, on coming home, he notices that his must, or grape-juice, which he keeps in kegs, has acquired a new taste—not so sweet and nice, yet he likes it like this, too; drinks some—likes it, finds it warming to the mind, finds it go royally with the psaltery, gulps some more, feels its glow streaming all through him, a psaltery in his organs, a psaltery in his thoughts, and now his foot, too, is seduced, he is doing fandangoes to God—O joy! O happy day!—his hands are to heaven, his eyes are in the heights, and, 'O, Thou,' he shouts, 'Thou Power, it is well that Thou art, and well that I am Thine: and Thou, O Thou, art mine, and those smokes that roll about Thy glory!' Then he gulps some more, goes to sleep, wakes with a headache. More science (when this has happened twice): a little wine gives love, more wine gives dulness. And so he goes on. He invents weaving, a wheel for pottery, writing, papyrus; discovers coal, melts metals, anneals, hardens, tempers, welds, makes bronze, white-metal, and at last alloys of iron; pretty soon now he stumbles upon electricity, electro-magnetism, and in making a magnet out of tantallum-steel, gleans the law of ampère-turns: now he has dynamos, mighty lights; and by noting eclipses and the motions of planets, one day, with panting emotions, he comes to the conclusion that his planet *moves*, flies, flits, he now aware of his hair flying stiff on the ether-winds of infinity; and now he invents lenses, a telescope; then a micrometer; and, by attaching micrometer-screws to a telescope provided with a divided object-glass, he gets the parallax of a double-star in Cygnus, discovers its distance, and dodders giddily at the augustness of the gulfs of God: so, so, the cosmos is. And so he goes on. He gets consumption and discovers that ultra-violet rays cure it; then lupus, and γ -rays cure it: by which time he begins to twig that *all*, *all* his bad is nescience, that *all*, *all* his good is science: that science is the light and delight of life, the ineffable Blessedness, the utterly Lovely, the *whole* of his lowness and dulness being chargeable to not knowing, since, knowing enough, he'd be *at large* in the heavens, would dwell in the suns, and never sweat, but he bathing

red-eyed, writhing in riot for ever. That's so, Parson: here am I in grief this night, God knows, for an old woman who has asthma: if I only had a pick-up detector that I could tune to resonance with the particular wave-length of her V-rays, I should be able to rush straight to my love to kneel at her feet . . . but I don't know enough . . . don't know enough . . .”

Here his voice rather faltered, while the doctor swept a finger round his collar inside, his chin pitched up, like one intolerant of sweltering; and “Yes, yes,” he said, “some pleasures undoubtedly are due to science, but certainly not ‘all,’ as you assert. Kissing and cuddling—the pleasure which we and lizards feel at the sun’s heat—to what science is that due? When your lonely man found his must fermented, his *first* pleasures, at any rate, were due to an operation of nature, not to any science——”

“Oh, but, come,” Hazlitt answered, “my lonely man is a fancy: in reality no first life ever bursts up like that, with eyes, nerves, belly, readymade: *our* eyes and brains are themselves the creation of science—the science of amœbas, of the ancestors of lizards, of the lizard-ancestors of linnets. We can be certain that the first life or lives were quite without pleasure, since it was by responding to stimuli of ‘pain,’ as Baer says, by cosmic perceptions, then, that they bettered themselves, and evolved the organs that men and lizards get of them. We *know* that infusoria have, not only knowledge, but memory; and you will never say, will you? that men’s knowledge of the cosmos is science, but other animals’ knowledge of it is not science? that my knowledge that nuts dull hunger is science, but somehow a monkey’s knowledge of it is not science? No, that would not be reasonable. Why, those Elberfeld horses know ten times more mathematics than Mons. Maeterlinck, as the good Maeterlinck has had to confess; in fact, owing to the institution of slavery among men, the lower animals and babies know better than many men that the natural occupation of every life which wakes up in a cosmos is the finding out what kind of lodgings that cosmos is, and research is their pretty constant work. That is so, then: good, pleasure, began with science, and there is no good not due to *someone’s* science—an amœba’s, a bee’s, or Newton’s . . . Hark! they are playing ‘Berceuse’ . . .”

Now the doctor, drawing up a red sock, and scratching a shin rich with jasper of reddish hairiness, went fretful, saying: “I dislike scientists: for, though not men of the

world, they upset the world. Give me a fixed world, and I will do, and do, and cook my stew in it: but all this commotion—This war, I can see, was the direct result of the invention of Zeppelins and aeroplanes: and here you have *pain*, not pleasure, due to scientists.”

And Hazlitt: “What, you, a Christian, dislike war? Or don't you see that war is the essence of Christianity? of all that is Divine and utterly lovely in the ‘vine-god,’ or ‘Christ,’ idea—the idea of Society—the dying of one for many—the individual's submission to the principle that ‘one man must needs die, so that the whole people perish not?’ *That*, don't you know, is Christianity—not meaning Paul's (Hindoo-Greek) ‘Christianity,’ which saves the half-a-soul of Harry and Harriet, but meaning Christ's Christianity—if Christ really was, as the ‘scholars’ say, a vine-god: vine-gods, corn-gods, being men inflamed with the idea of *Society*, caring nothing about Harry—the martyr-idea of self-immolation for the State, and they die, so that, their flesh being buried, the tribe may have harvests of rye and vine. If Christ was this, then I say that there is nothing Christian, nothing rich and generous, left now in our civilization, save war, and the vine-god lives and death of scientists for Society. Remember, too, that Good is what is pleasant *after all*, and war, so far, can be shewn to be good after all. Its pains are intense, but only to a few Christs—ten millions—and are temporary: compare the zephyr of happiness which refreshed this land while this one lasted with the dull old woe of the peace that preceded it. Already, too, I can see, this one is having a good effect upon the stock, and upon the mentality, of us English. And as to its *pain*, this is due, not to science, but to lack of science, and the lessening of the pain to science: for, but for the guns and thunders of science, the war would be going on still, science more and more shortening wars, from ‘Hundred Years’ to hundred hours, until it finds out just what use war is in evolution,* and how to do what war does in a less insensate and wasteful way. Wasteful indeed! for if a little of the energy which we spent in killing Germans had been spent in exterminating flies, or ‘lords,’ that would have been well for mankind.”

Now Dr. Radlor, wriggling, scratching his shin, asked: “Are we still talking about land?”

“We were,” Hazlitt answered: “it was you who switched us off to war.”

* For the biology of war see “Children of the Wind,” a tale, by M. P. Shiel (Richards, London; Knopf, New York).

"Then, back to the land: we are now all at sea."

"What were we saying? . . . We said that *good* is *pleasure*, or happiness; that happiness is got through truth, science; so that 'good,' 'happiness,' 'truth,' 'science,' these are all one—excluding from 'truth' such peculiar truths as that your finger is cut, which, alone of truths, is not science. So, then, since good is science, evidently the one vital question for Life, for Society, is this: How to acquire science? Now, as to that, I state you a law: *truth, or science, likes a troop*—likes *many* minds, free minds, playing freely upon Her. Now, how can I demonstrate that to you? Let me see . . . Or is any demonstration necessary?"

"Indeed, yes"—from Radlor—"for, like Buckle, I say the opposite: that it is a few select brains that make discoveries, not the mob."

Hazlitt laughed: "No, no, that's wrong! By the Law of Chance our few 'scientists' are not with—just average bourgeois bonshommes who, by some chance, have become educated, and are over-men solely through the miracle that education effects in intellect; and they alone make discoveries since they alone are in the way to make, since 'the mob' is a mob of slaves, of landless men, all preoccupied with their landlessness; but how about *would* make, if the myriad mob, many a genius among them, were free to follow the one proper occupation of every life which wakes-up in a cosmos—the finding out what kind of lodgings that cosmos is? Look, now, Parson: you know, don't you? that to the discovery of truth two things contribute—brains and luck; and you know that, though a million men have not a million times more brains than one, they have *precisely* a million times more luck. So you see why Truth likes a troop, each of the troop peculiar with his own genius, knack, luck, to catch the ray shed from some one of Her myriad facets. Think of a thing like photography—X-rays—radio-activity—cohesion under Hertzian waves—discovered by the merest freak of luck . . . it is the luck that counts: only, of course, one must be *in the way*, knowing, looking out for, truth, or no luck can accrue, since Truth gives only to Her own, and Her adage is 'to him that hath shall be given' . . . Just hand me that book on the divan—thanks—book on mathematics. I open it: what do I see? I see——"

He stopped embarrassed, a letter of his Máhndorla dropping out of the book—the handwriting big like a row of beads rolling—no mistaking it; and six times the clock ticked while the eyes of the men met in silence. . . .

“What do I see?”

“A letter,” said the rough throat of Dr. Radlor.

“No, no, I mean——” he rescued the letter from inspection—“I see ‘Machen’s series’; I see ‘by De Moivre’s property of the circle’; I see ‘by Wilson’s theorem’—a lot like that. Now, who are these people? Who the dickens is ‘Wilson?’ They are not great mathematicians like Laplace, Gauss, Riemann. Why didn’t Laplace hit on Wilson’s theorem? Why didn’t Newton think of Cartesian coordinates, or Descartes of fluxions, or Leibnitz of the calculus of variations, or Lagrange of tensors, or Pascal of least-action? You see why: it is that *truth likes a troop*. Suppose that Society said to Laplace, ‘You are a wit, we will make you a duke, and Wilson and Machen of the mob shall be landless men, slaves, to hew your wood, while you thrash-out truths for humankind’: would that be the best way to get good, to get truth? No: Laplace would discover no more, I think—less perhaps; Wilson and Machen nothing. But when society says, not to Laplace, but to a band of lubbers, *you* be dukes, and be multitudes of landless Laplaces hewers of *your* wood, while *you* guzzle like bugs, doing what lubbers may to smother truth, then truth does not greatly thrive, good hides her face from men.”

Not instantly did Dr. Radlor answer, in whose eyes smouldered a malign something, he thinking of other than ‘Wilson’—of his sister—until he said hastily: “Yes, yes, but society does not say this to dukes: dukes are *there*, whether society likes it or not, having earned what they own by combat in the world’s open market—they or their fathers; and if society covets their land, let society fight for it, as *they* had to. No other way!”

And Hazlitt: “Oh, quite so, no other way—unless society can contrive to educate the ‘educators’ of dukes. But the stupidity of the fight on the duke’s side! to fight for tuppence when diamonds are about. What is it he wants—champagne? a feeling of superiority over the villagers? But he could have nicer brands of champagne than lubber ever dreamt of, to lie drunk on in mansions in the skies: for specially of these men is it true that ‘he that loseth his life for truth’s sake shall find it.’ But not they! no manhood. You talk of their fathers? Their fathers were no doubt African in mood, but were amusing and picturesque rascals, like our house-breakers, not foul to the sense of smell like these louts, their sons. With just one germ of virtue in their bellies, just pluck enough to prick a bistoury a little into the dull

old carbuncle of their lubberliness, they couldn't help being foremost in proposing, instead of opposing, revolution; but from their youth they have been emasculated and made eunuchs for life, and they have no stones, save diamonds. Fox-hunting, polo—they fancy that Man is like that. And consider the sin of these little men. We know that good is truth, and that there is no good save truth; we know this; and we know that truth likes a troop—that the multitudinous lucks of Man, unshackled from slavery to engage in the natural occupation of every life, the finding of truth, must lift the pinions of truth from spattering in the mud to raptures in the sunrise: we know this; so we see the sight of a band of living beings resisting the anabasis of Life, deliberately saying No to the good of Life for their lowest guts' sake. Certainly never on earth before was a sin so loathsome committed; I can believe that never in all the fleets of spheres which God ever launched did dog or louse commit sin so foul, or sin so meanly diseased——”

“Ha!”—from Radlor—“you are a man of talent, ha, ha, man after my own heart, eh?—would preach a better sermon than I; only, the people would suspect you of sincerity and resent it. We mustn't let our ideas injure our digestion, sir . . . If there were any sin in sticking to the earnings of one's battle-axe, or one's wits, certainly that would be no new sin. Landowners have always struggled against the grabbing of their lands by the hungry rabble: you forget the Gracchi's——”

“I do *not* forget”—Hazlitt peered at the truth, as at the sun, in his peering way—“I remember: and I see that there was no sin in *them*—*not wilful*. Those Roman owners——Perhaps you do not realize how feeble was the brain-power—the scepticism and inventiveness—of the best of the ancients, of Democritus, Eudoxus, Pappus . . . Think of Archimedes darting from his bath to scream ‘*Eureka!*’ through the streets—naked, I hope—on solving a little nothing in specific gravity that could bother few modern school-boys—built on quite a pigmy scale. Newton at school refused to read Euclid—too easy; and, if Euclid rose from his grave now, he could never be got to *grasp*, much less invent, the mathematics of Christoffel or Ricci. In reading Plato I get quite a pleasant little feeling of my godlikeness in comparison with the intellect of that pretty prattler; or take any one of Aristotle's bright discoveries: such as that heavy bodies fall faster than light, then ask Mary Giddins, say, whether, if she jumps off a chair with an orange

on her palm, the orange will be left behind by the palm, and I bet she'll say no. Blatantly babyish . . . ! To the good Aristotle Nature was made, not of ninety-two, but of four elements—'fire,' water, 'earth,' air—and with that dog's luck that attends all the speculations of child-minds and savages, not one of his four is an element. Of course, without the splendid *efforts* to think of those people, like the weak-kneed efforts of infants to toddle, *we* should be nowhere; but our fondness and thanks need not keep us from laughing at the essential babyishness and naiveté of their intelligence. Aristotle compared with Niels Bohr is a lower *type*: and it is in a society devised by that type of life that *we* still live, like a man clad in his Eton-jacket, and no more, in which to shudder squeezed and indecent through the streets. It was no wonder, then, that those Roman 'owners' accepted without scepticism the notion, already old, that land can be owned—a notion as fantastic to modern economists as any that ever floated through a lunatic's reverie. To *own* means to own *wealth*, to own something that one makes one's *own*. But, of course, 'land' is not wealth, as every boy knows who has read any Economy. *Well* is *good*, or pleasant; *well-th* is *goods*, or pleasures; and goods, or well-th, is obtained by '*doing work*' on 'land'—as economists call Nature. But Nature itself is not wealth; the air is not wealth—though the air that I have *taken*, i.e. *moved*, into my lungs is; coal-in-a-pit is no good, or pleasure, is not goods, is not wealth, though, if I *take* it, '*do work*' on it (as physicists say, i.e., *move* it), coal in a fire-box is; Nature is not wealth, cannot be owned, can only be *said* to be owned: and so we have the absurdity of men being wealthy through saying that they own something that is not wealth, and cannot be owned: it is not curious if nothing but absurdities come out of a community founded on an absurdity so ducal and buffoon. But the ancient nut——"

Radlor interrupted: "I don't care what economists say. Animals are born into Nature, and to all comers Nature says 'here I am, *take* me: let him take who has the power': that's the good old simple plan, sir; that's the Divine Law."

And Hazlitt: "Well, of course, that is the Divine Law: no other Law is conceivable; and what one *takes* from Nature is his, his *own*, he *owns* it, as he owns the air that he *takes* into his lungs; before he takes it it is Nature, after he has taken it it is wealth, his *own*, and he is then robbed by whoever extracts from him a fraction of it. But, of course, to own it, he must really take, not *say* that he has taken. If

he cracks some skulls with battle-axes, and makes a 'law,' and sets up a board marked 'Trespassers will be prosecuted,' that is *saying* that he has taken, and is preventing others from taking; but it is impossible to *take* anything without 'doing work' on it, i.e. moving it, the 'work done' being $f \times d$ —the force used multiplied by the distance the thing is moved. If I say to you 'take some rum-punch,' you may trumpet 'yes! yes!' till your throat's sore, and you may get the good little Mr. George to pass ten million 'laws' to say that you have taken, or you may crack my skull and say 'now I have taken it all': but saying is not taking, to take you must 'do work' on it, move it, do something to it. In the case of a plot of land, it has soil, it has site, it has under-soil—those three; and its *soil* can be owned by an individual who takes it, moves it, ploughs it, compresses its particles by building on it, as when one 'takes' a chair, does something to it, somehow changes it from Nature into wealth—for a while; its *site** cannot be owned by an individual, since he cannot take it, move it, do anything to it—or hardly anything; but it can be owned by a community which, by growing up round it, takes it, immensely moves it—moves it from being outside a community to being inside a community; as to its *under-soil*—the planet's lithosphere—that cannot be taken, moved, owned by one or by many. You see, then, the absurdity of saying that one is an owner of land of which he cannot take the site or the under-soil, and has not taken the soil. But the monkey-nuts of the ancients accepted the absurdity—no sin in *them* that their age was unseptical; whereas today a duke, however stupid, could no more help hearing and seeing that he does not own what he says that he owns than he could invent something. And he has heard a word that never once entered the conception of the ancient head (save as a poetic notion)—'evolution,' 'the climb of Life'; herein is the newness of his sin. A Roman owner of 'latifundia,' seeing men, monkeys, thrushes, imagined that as he saw them so they always had been, always would be; and, if ever he felt conscious of wronging his generation (which does not matter), never within him was born the thought that he was committing the cosmic enormity of blocking a climb of Life. A duke, a Yankee land-'owner' knows—can't help; the modern stones clamour it; if only at the 'movies' he sees a sea-plane speeding, drawing after her a wrath of froth, then aspire and fly away, with arms outcast to Him that made her: and how

* i.e. relative position.

dull must be the blood of a lubber, how deep the sin and sleep of his liver, who does not thrill, even to the spring of tears, at that hint and promise from God, and is not eager to leave all to follow that. It climbs, Parson—we know now; and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like Him that moves us—lightning and thunderous, wild and musical, turbulent and burning—like Him. So the duke——”

He stopped to call “Come in,” whereat the butler, descending four steps into the room, stood to say: “Her Grace the Duchess of Grochester (acting as Hazlitt’s hostess *en titre*) desires to see Sir Henry.”

“I will go down,” Hazlitt answered; but added to Radlor: “let her slide till we finish our cigars.”

And Radlor: “Yes. You prefer my company to anyone’s; as I yours. Ha! we are brothers. Both religious minds—though you worship a God of the Caananites.”

Hazlitt answered: “Yes, but the God of the Caananites is the same God of Israel—Power—the cause of motion; only, Israel sees fit to attribute to Power various traits, the Caananites various other traits, and scientists one trait only—powerfulness that moves to good. But it is all the same God. Are you religious really?”

“Yes, sir—or wish to be. But I live in a world of sin, and am sinful”—his eyes cast down.

“Does that matter?” Hazlitt asked, smiling: “religion is an attitude of adoration and donation——”

“And a course of conduct, sir, dictated by fear of the Righteous Judge. I, for my part, know my sin to be as scarlet in His holy sight. But Thou”—now his eye-whites lifted—“cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.”

“Well, well,” Hazlitt went.

Then the doctor: “But, I confess, you tilt at things with a certain unworldliness—hermit of the Thebaïd!—as heavy with child as a type-writer girl in her first mishap in motherhood. It’s no sin not to be a martyr, man: martyrs are gamblers who stake all on crowns they may never get. Dukes are not heroes, and not crooks, just *hommes sensuels moyens*——”

“But duke means Leader!” Hazlitt cried: “if the man is average, he might have average honesty, and stand out to say ‘I am no leader, give someone else these powers.’ That is no ‘heroism’: he wouldn’t lose much, since, being dull and common, he is in the horriddest sort of misery—can’t help being, for things are so intertwined, ‘members of one an-

other,' that he can never smell the butters and honeys, laughing in his heart, nor weep water from the well of deepness, while his slums are dull. Yonder is a slum-woman, look, at Nottinghill, dropping a letter into a pillar-box, her ill-health chronic, her fingers by no means medically clean; and presently up steps a lady, drops in a letter to the Queen; whereupon the pair of letters kiss in the dark, leer and laugh together, finger on lip, so three days later the Queen's physician suggests that she keep to her bed a bit. And millions of subtler threads marry slum to palace; the palace is slummy; it is even *because* that slum woman is dull and common that queens are so dull and common, and I, damn it, more or less dull and common, too—damn them for that. All things intertwined! as the good Einstein insists—what Spencer calls 'the multiplicity of effects,' and, if you lift your finger, the results go on, and never end. Observe how entirely the absurdity that our society is based on permeates it, 'the whole head sick,' stomach at war with kidney, lung with liver. Go to a grocer's for some plum-jam; *inside* the jam-pot he may give you a mixture of mud, sugar and plum-stones, but *outside* you get plums—on the label—a plate overflowing with plums: you give him money for grub, and the rogue gives you garbage and art, grocer and grossest art, *suggesting* plums to you, weakly and wickedly attempting to hypnotize you, believing you weak and wicked enough to be hypnotized by stuff like him. War, then, it is. Go down into a street lavatory: you see 'beware of pickpockets'—the dull dunghill. A dentist, if three or four of your teeth are gone, will threaten you with death, that you may give him a job. War, war: not *bright* war with rifles, but dull war with frauds: how odious, a dull war. That's not society, don't you know: the whole head's sick, and stinks of dukes. Think of that House of Commons of ours, everlastingly concocting nostrums at random, to physic, now the kidney, now the gall-sac, of an organism that is sick of one sin, the giving up of which would render unnecessary all those centuries of law-stuff that drugs and gripes the vitals of society. Volumes of criminal law—needless! for, surely, white men aren't so vastly inferior to Polynesians, who, having their land in common, live in lawless, sinless joyance at this gift of God—not a fancy, but a fact—or lived, until white slaves, debased by centuries of slavery, went to preach to their betters 'the Gospel' of slaves and thieves, and to steal from them. Factory Acts! National Insurance! Poor Law!—all that hotchpotch of haphazard

patchwork . . . ! Without our Poor Law millions would perish: but no Poor Law in France; and no millions perish there, as *once* they perished there, until a few dukes perished there——”

“Well, yes, that’s true”—the doctor nodded concession: “but though ‘it is expedient that one man die, so that the whole people perish not,’ still ‘Expedience’ is not Right, sir——”

“Well, but”—from Hazlitt—“whether a thing done a century ago was right or wrong is not a matter of opinion: we *know*. Didn’t we agree that Right is good, and that good is pleasant? so that Right is whatever God does actually send pleasure, more pleasure than sorrow, upon, as He *has* sent upon that massacre—though unfortunately, in guillotining a few big dukes, the French created millions of little dukes; which is a million times better, but still frightfully bad. And isn’t this what we want in England and America, not many a law, but just one, that England shall be English, and America 100% American, as France is already half-French?—at most, half-a-dozen large and simple laws——”

“Well, nothing new in *that* idea,” the doctor remarked: “Descartes said that.”

“Well, Descartes was a wit: if *he* said it, it is likely to be so.”

“No law at all, man!” the doctor’s jaw snapped: “a fair field to ruffle it in, and no favour.”

“But isn’t that rather Anarchism?” Hazlitt laughed: “why, you are Redder than your beard.”

“It is *you*, I think, who are a Red!”

“No, I am not:—in sympathy, I say; but I differ in knowing what a demonstration is, and in being as much more touchily respectful of demonstrations as I am more contemptuous of opinions. So what they and I both want *I* want more redly; and then with a motive very different—*they* wanting to redress ‘the misery of the masses,’ to get ‘justice,’ while *I* don’t know what ‘justice’ is, and care no more about ‘the misery of the masses’ (*per se*) than about the misery of ichthyosauri, or of all the generations of the geologic ages that raged in sorrow; what I care about is, not man, but the son of man—what God cares about——”

“Ha! you *know*——”

“But don’t we know what God is—Power? and don’t we know this one thing about Power, that it causes motion, and causes nothing else? We *know*, then, what God ‘cares’ (so to say) about, namely motion, evolution, the trumpets of

progress, and the rumpus of some consummate psalm toward which His stars and armies march . . . So my *motive* is different, *they* thinking of the 'misery of the masses,' *I* of the masses' lack of apparatus and of leisure for experiment, *they* of 'justice,' *I* of good, truth, discovery. Nor can I quite contrive to acquire their wrath against 'capitalism': for I know that, though capitalism, finding landless men around it, rides and trounces them, capitalism does not make slaves—how *could* capitalists make slaves of land-owners, of a nation that had a country? so that whatever is repulsive in capitalism cannot but collapse presently after every citizen is born free—provided that the rush of population which (I suppose) would follow upon freedom were somehow checked to keep pace with the rush of science that would follow: for, evidently, if there are more men than land or science, nothing whatever can rescue them from misery, even though it is a misery of free-men, and not of slaves. So my *motive* is non-Red. And then my *method* is: for, whereas they think to 'capture Parliament,' I see that a slave who cannot run away, cannot gain his master's grace, or has no potent champion, can only attain to freedom in three ways—(1) by educating his master to see that slavery is bad for masters, or (2) by killing himself, or (3) by killing his master. 'Parliament' is an engine of the master, and if slaves 'capture' it, the master, naturally, will smash it like a match-box, as he can, if the slaves lack cannons and officers. So what you Red should be getting red and ready about is, not 'justice,' but guns, not flights of bombast, but flights with bombs, nor declarations of rights, but declarations of war. 'Rights!' 'Justice!' undefined stuff! Oh, dear, I can't stand loose people who use words without clear concepts. Only yesterday I saw one of their manifestos: 'Since all have an equal right to live, and can live only by the land, *therefore* . . . ' 'Equal right,' now: how weak! Flies included? If I was the ruler of this country, as I nearly was nine years ago, I would soon reveal to my duke whether he has an 'equal right' to live with decent people——"

Dr. Radlor's forefinger pointed: "You were nearly ruler . . . ?"

"Well, yes: I had invented an air-boat, so—I was in Canada then, not so opulent as now—I approached two different millionaires, one of whom shook me off, but the second—young man—Socialist—was on the jump of financing me, when he went funky. Then, disgusted, I broke

the model—for safety: had been eighteen months making it . . .”

This, for some reason, irritated Dr. Radlor, who now turned to snatch-up a glass of green liquor, his first drink, and, like one green with jealousy, he jeered, saying: “And was the boat to conquer England? Do you say that?”

“Yes—easy enough,” Hazlitt answered: there was nothing very particularly tricky about her, I think—someone is sure to have the same idea some time, and may then do what I meant to. Do get out of your head Napoleon’s childish notion that ‘God is on the side of the big battalions,’ God being on the side of the educated intelligences, and, as sure as your shin itches there, one inventor will one day be stronger than the rest of the mob of men. *He* will fix things up, for if he has the wit to invent, he will have the wit to will well.”

And now Radlor with a sideward eye: “Ha! you’re big! What size hat do you take, man?”

“I don’t see anything so big . . .” Hazlitt said. “A landlord society is not, of course, difficult to conquer: in a fight with scientists it would be like mice fighting with lions——”

“Well, then, now is your chance!”—the doctor had flushed—“now you are rich!”

And Hazlitt: “Ah, I was richer then, was twenty-three—the age of Newton, of Descartes, of Niels Bohr, Einstein (they were no good a few years after), the age for the changers, the makers of Ages, the masters of man . . . Young scientists! whizzing, fizzing, not decomposing old barristers who smell bad a yard off. Yes, *then* I was bright! *then* I danced. And yet, ah, I had been tampered with and tarnished, my enemies had taught me ‘Latin’ . . . And for so long! I’d undertake to teach a boy ‘Latin’—what they imagine to be Latin—and ‘Greek’ within six months, but these people keep him *years*, and then he doesn’t know ‘Latin’ as well as I—or Hugo, or Berlitz—would teach it to him in three months. To do that to a poor boy who hasn’t the sense to defend himself! Surely of the evils that are done under the sun here is the deepest, the silliest, the hugest—done, too, by such little people, as when a bacillus kills a seer. That it is done to other boys makes my blood boil, but the thought of it done to my own self, spoiling my one flying life in eternity, turns me wild to be putting a bullet into some fool’s bosom——”

“Hanging matter that!”—roughly from Radlor’s throat.

And Hazlitt: "Yes, I know, the foolish people, they always hang the wrong man, in the impotence of the ill-educated to think straight about anything—as though it was murderers who hurt society, not 'meat-trusts,' 'landlords.' And why should society hurt murderers, who don't hurt it? The idea that a private fracas is a matter for Society to mix in is African, and is a true idea when Society consists of a kraal, or patriarch's caravan, of fifty: for where there is only one smith, if someone kills the smith, Society sighs; but the situation is changed when the fifty become fifty thousand. In Corsica for centuries, as lately in America, everybody murders everybody; but does that hurt Corsican *Society*? Not a bit: and I can see the people of the future amused at nations retaining the rules of nomads, as already the French are amused at the laughingstock which we English make of ourselves in 'trying' our Oscar Wildes and the like. Perhaps when we become adult the Parish Council may concern itself in a murder—if such a thing could occur in a polite society. But, meantime, matters of village-interest fussed-over by the State make 'the papers' sell, you see, so the village-editors wish to keep the people villagers. Before long Mars will be in opposition: well, look at 'the placards' then; nothing as to Mars, but 'Mysterious Disappearance—not of Algol and Almach—but of Hoggbottom'; yes, 'Mysterious Guest at a Glasgow Hotel. Was it Hoggbottom? Astounding Details'—the dull souls. Yes, those louts in those offices live in a state of stound at the doings of their fellow-louts—still of the mood of Old-Saxon village-communities. Lately a number of books have come out on Einstein's tobacco-fancies, and it is amusing, the dilemma of the authors to explain anything without formulas, and their reluctance to offend 'the non-mathematical reader' by putting in a penny-farthing formula, or two: 'the non-mathematical reader'—not in Chinese villages—son and brother of the non-mathematical yokel-duke. That pardonable chatterbox, Sir Oliver Lodge, actually conciliates 'the reader' by assuring him that formulas are not introduced '*in malice*'—three little village-lads are we! and the village-editors of *The Dairy Express*, and *The Dairy Maid*—"

"Well, but you"—*again* quaffing chartreuse the doctor cried it—"but you by yourself, ha, ha, ha, redeem the world—you are 'bright!' . . . So what was the boat to do?"

"The boat? Small thing, cigar-like, armoured with five-inch nickel-steel, so that a shell in air would just push without piercing her, and she would easily smash a couple of

hundred aeroplanes rash enough to attack her: for even if they shattered her little steel planes—nine inches wide—she wouldn't mind; able to be stationary in the air; speed 215; her motor not explosion, just heat, she soaring for just the same reason that a piece of paper half-burnt wrenches itself from your hand to dash up a chimney—bombardment of heated atoms. Wonderful force, heat, you know: a few calories will stretch a rod of metal as much as a hundred horses doing tug-of-war on it, and a boiler carrying 100 lbs. pressure contains energy enough to project it three miles high! So my plan was to gather two hundred gallant lads, then set up a little factory-fort (for dépôt, base, and flying-practice) in the Isle of Man—well inland out of harm's-way from battleships—and I calculated that before we could be spotted and suspected, we should have manufactured enough to bomb away any land-troops that might come bothering. Then, when ready to burst out, I purposed—as my first job—to give a fortnight to bombing the churches of England—forgive, Parson!—the churches, the prisons, the palaces, the gin-palaces; within six weeks I meant to have England hungry by turning back every in-coming ship, and prohibiting sea-fishing; within twelve I meant to have my lords' heads dropping in sharper succession than ever in France—not in order to do any good, just in punishment for the million deaths and horrors that these little men have wrought, and to satisfy my private spite against them for ever having dared to regard themselves as the fellowmen of men of noble blood, and for ever having been guilty of daring to breathe with me the breezes of my England. I was as sure as I am of geometry that three months would see it all over; within three years I meant to have England beginning to see the stars, beginning to sing half a hymn——”

At this point it was as if some cauldron of poisons brewing in Dr. Radlor's bosom boiled over, all control lost, and it was as if one of Hazlitt's bombs exploded betwixt the cronies: for, striking his knee twice with his fist, leaning keenly forward, the doctor sent out in a confidential sort of voice: “Oh, you lie, you lie: not a word of it true”—his face red-hot.

As for Hazlitt, never so amazed, he sat up in his chaise-longue, staring at that eruption—could just mutter: “Why, what's up?”

But Radlor, uttering nothing more, scrambled, was up, was off, walking masculine and broad, arm akimbo, toward the door; and Hazlitt's sudden outcry, “Don't trouble about

coming any more!" was drowned in the resounding of the door's thud.

At that door, Hazlitt, half-risen, gazed dumb at this sudden gale, till he muttered: "But what a fury! What have I done to him? 'Oh, you lie, you lie' . . . ! Well, I'm damned! the man must be an ass . . . See if I don't kiss his sister. . . ."

That is, kiss a she-ass . . .

And now again, glancing outward, he saw that form of Mr. Farrel at a back-window opposite, while from the garden-back a bazaar and market of the fairies transacting itself down there evaporated a rumour of prattle that mounted up compounded with outcries of music wounded, swooning . . .

Chapter 15

Kissing a Sister

ON OPENING his eyes after his dance-night, Hazlitt found his decision to kiss a sister no little reinforced by a dream just dreamed, in which his Máhdorla had been charmingly with him; but by the time his horse-headed John was moving about the room, he was saying to himself, "No, not going"—musing on the nearness of his union with that near and dear one of his youth. However, after he had padnagged about the park, and was at breakfast, his head—"groom" opened and handed him a Máhdorla-letter in which was said that, had he been in Paris, she might have presented him to several charming damsels, art-students; and he said then: "I will go and let her know that I am going to be married"—though there was no need for that.

But "Oh, you lie, you lie"—this, repeating itself in his ears, impelled him, his resentment increasing at that crime of the night, which in the light of day seemed incredible; and after sending telegrams and letters to Giddins and Mason, he started for Paris . . . though, almost while he had been telegraphing to Giddins at Midhurst, Giddins had been telegraphing to him at the poste restante.

As for his Máhdorla, lying in bed the following morning at the Grand Hotel, eyeing her face in a hand-glass of agate intaglio, she smiled at the sight—little posy of a nosey—well done—luck that it was she and not another to whom

it had been apportioned—she liked herself—the coloured flesh—more lovable than lovely, bonhomme, near and dear, like some grapes of Tuscany, pigmy as a maid's nipple, as wrinkled, gracious, every grape of a bunch tinged to some gradation of the rainbow's blushing, pinkish, sky-blueish, shy-crimson, so that the eye begrudges to the grinders the butchery of the crime of crunching them—so coloured her flesh, the finishing touches given with a cherishing featness by that Brush which gives finishing touches to cherry and peach; and with a little rictus of the lips she breathed: "Yes, pretty: the lip . . . crop of prickles on it . . . coppery . . . no wonder he likes it . . . I wish I was a man, by heaven I'd kiss myself" . . . muddle-headed! And now with the day's mail came Giuliva, her maid, one letter saying "coming," and quickly she was in a peignoir of surah, quite radiant, though by the time her bath had scented her body with her special concoction of frangipane and ambre d'Arys she was cross, and meant to be cold, since he might have come before! Yet at that laboratory, her dressing-table, all pots of rose-jade, crystals, creams, chromes, ciprias, washes, she said to Giuliva, a Florentine with long fingers, "make me sweet today, Giuliva," and watched in the glass how the brush of Fragonard just touched with brilliantine the eyebrows to brighten them, and at the temples a reverie of poudre violette, a lick of poudre Rachel at the chin, and then rouge to paint the rose, just the spectre of Aurora, and there where tears start a wee star of vermillion to twinkle, and now carmine of Jezebel to embellish that "brass" and bravado of the mouth's pout—cruel sphinx—pitiless puss—Giuliva archly remarking: "I think Monsieur de Hanska must be coming today!"

Whereat Máhdorla broke into Roman slang. "Go die slain (va' mmorì ammazzata)! *he* is nobody . . . Someone coming from England."

And Giuliva in Tuscan Doric: "Yes, I think that we of this household have a liking for Englishmen; and indeed they have a languor, a careless grace, a non so che——"

"Well, yes, I like Englishmen: always intended to marry an Englishman."

"Shall I put you, then, in the rose challis by Peron?"

"No, *I* know which—Come in, Ada!" whereupon a Miss Barker was there, and then a Lady Darling (*en voyage* with Máhdorla), and presently, making quite a *levée* there, an American Beckie Graves, Conservatoire gold-medalist, baggy at the waist, with a swagger swing of the hips; but

no plans for the day would Máhdorla make with them: Sir Henry Beresford coming—bosom-friend of her brother.

And at noon in her suite drawing-room she undertook to make Sir Henry “connaître son Paris” when he confessed himself no Parisien—which was not the confession that the poor male had come to make, was not saying “congratulate me, I am going to be married”: so that for two days they were wedded together, snuggling in whatever nooks and lairs of that wayward place are infected with a “decadence,” they two making a stately pair, costumed by Savile Row and the rue de la Paix, and a merry pair, for, as to her little assumption of stiffness, this he quickly liquidated when he told her, “You would forgive me, if you knew what kept me from you”—at a té-tango in the Rue de Rivoli, where was not tango only, but fandango!—“look here, I have lost my mother . . .”

“Funny thing to lose!” she exclaimed.

“So that is all the sympathy I get . . .”

“Oh, poor dear . . . Tell me.”

And when he told her of it, at one moment she looked like one struck by some thought, lost in some wondering reverie, recollection . . .

In the evening, too, in a queer den near the Odéon, he told her: “Your brother and I are no longer friends”—and gave the tale of how her letter had dropped out of his calculus-book, and next of “Oh, you lie, you lie” . . .

On which she muttered, “Strange . . . strange . . . But then, my brother is x, no one knows him; and his ungovernable temper . . . Mine, too, I hear! got from our mother, a Neapolitan—with red hair! so I am sorry for the boy who weds with me, his wherry will be tossed on my billows. But *he* is worse: I wonder what he’d *do*, if he saw me in this with you? This is pretty illicit, this is”—tasting vermouth, gazing round at Hungarian and Andalusian beauty on view; at art-students scattering a franticness of cravat far-flung; at girl-couples eternally matched, as rash to jealousy and “crimes of passion” as Aphrodite and Jehovah; and “geniuses,” Jovian in bushes of beard, Daudetesque, bitter as the byrrh they sipped, stale souls, led-on for many a day to hope for fames and treasures that never came, and owning no treasure in Heaven; and “demi-vièrges,” “half-virgins,” taking no oil in their vessels so far, foolish half-virgins, half-foolish, half-wise, their better half bright-eyed and ready for adventure, taking stock of life; and *cocottes* not all lost and hardened, having one heart’s-love, one hid-

den hoard of truthfulness, like the widow's cruse; and on a little platform violin, viola, 'cello, that rendered foxtrot, jazz, St. Vitus dances of de Fala, rhythms of Rimsky-Korsakov, king of rhythm; and through the hum of it Hazlitt asking: "You afraid of him?"

"Not afraid," she said, "but I am 'in his charge' at present. It is not known that we two are in Europe"—her voice went secret—"Someone thinks that we are in America, and our letters to someone are sent to Boston to be posted, that the post-marks may be in order——"

"Rogue!"

"Oh, well, no harm is done—we are little sinners. But he had to come to Europe on some secret mission—addicted he is to secret missions—and, as he can't move without me, I came too: so I am 'in his charge'——"

"Fond of you, then?"

"Inwardly. A bond between us: doesn't like me to be too far . . . Oh! those two with their faces together."

"That is kissing."

"Aye. Let's run"—so out now to her Darracq, and away through that maelstrom of Paris transacting its merry-go-round with a shrug, dash, gallantry, a snap of the finger, a toss of the head, the talk still of the brother, with whom she was obviously much preoccupied, for à propos of nothing she would talk of "he," "he." "He has a passion for architecture," she told him the following night in a Quartier Latin boîte à chansons, "the Noctambules"—"he intends to set up some day in Madison Square a temple that is to out-splendour all the Solomons and Sardanapaluses"—words at which some haze of half-memory occurred in Hazlitt, some sense of relation between this and something somewhere heard or seen . . . "To cost millions of dollars, this chapel, and to flash like a star, like those passionate palaces of the Inca kings; only, he hasn't enough money yet: waits to inherit—with terror: poor papa's heart not strong . . ."

She spoke to Hazlitt with no little intimacy and disinvoltura, as to a crony, so that it was evident to him that she held him in favour, and meant "yes" to his "will you?", and since every moment the aura of her femininity and the morphia of her lips' warmth wrought more poisonously upon his system, the longer he put off informing her of his motive for coming the more excruciating grew the shrinking and difficulty of it . . .

"Oh, yes, he is religious," she told him in one of those bushy nooks of the Bois where lovers dote and do, unre-

buked by the Puritan grossness of the gaslights' glare that deruralize and degrade our London Parks: "you mayn't think so, but he is. On Sunday afternoons at home he likes me to play 'hymns' for him to sing, and one can see tears stream down his cheeks. And he's good-hearted! There was a family that had diphtheria—three of them—he couldn't be got to leave them, even when hope was given up, and in the end he saved one—knows something of medicine and of everything. Not that he is not of the sinners—'the passions!' Ah, God, there was a scandal . . . ! At a little country-place named Ebenezer, where he used to go to preach every fourth Sunday . . . a girl who looked after the 'mission-house,' as they call it . . . her name was Nancy Burke . . . had a—baby . . . and the financier Bretherton said that the baby—*resembled* . . . Ah! the explosion, the scandal, the todo. Brought an action against Bretherton—*cause célèbre*—day after day it lasted—poor papa, you would have pitied him—I shall never forget the tension, the tragic suspense. In the evidence it came out that this Nancy Burke had some man-friend hanger-on who could visit her only on Sunday evenings, and once my brother left the pulpit with a whip—had the whip ready—to go to hunt through 'the mission-house' . . . hunted cupboards, beds, everywhere, the congregation waiting; but the hanger-on had skedaddled . . ."

"Dear me: and the verdict?"

"He won it! but"—her voice dropped—"got no damages."

"Oh, you scandalous tongue," he whispered, sweetly feasting on the meat of her lips, until her face flushed to a pink as deep as those lips' pink, which in a passion of complicity she lavished on him.

She whispered "Serpent's tongue," and at the effeminacy of that feminine in her, whose venom infected his veins, led brain and strength astray, his breast laboured with a breathlessness that vented "Hoh!", he barely able to hold his paw off her.

Silly," she whispered, kissing him; and presently: "When he was seventeen and I twelve, I saw a shred of a letter written to him by some girl about another girl . . . 'poor thing, you have kissed her cruelly' . . . Oh, it infected my fancy—years and years—sweet disease . . . 'poor thing'—the pity!—'you have kissed her cruelly' . . . It is dreadful that he should so wish to be 'good,' and not be able in various ways! His repentances are terrible—torments of remorse,

taciturn tantrums lasting weeks, fastings . . . His mother was the singer Ricchi, who married the millionaire Van Maatens, and then married our papa, and they say she had passions and tantrums—beware of me, my Henry——”

He said: “Call me Caxton, like my mother.”

“Yes, I like that, ‘Caxton’ . . . I will . . . So that is how he is—mixed: when he is good he is very, very good, but when he’s bad he’s Neapolitan. I have done my best to equalize his states, and to convince him that there is no God, but that makes him cross, he seems really to believe——”

“Well, of course: you do, too”—glad to converse on something impersonal, to divert his nerves from her.

On which she: “Not I—va’ a morir ammazzato! Atheist, of course.”

“Sinner . . . sweet,” his cane petting the crimson pyramid of her shoe-heel raised: “but, then, there never was an atheist—‘atheists’ being people who do not know the meaning of a certain word. If you looked out ‘God’ in a dictionary, that would be the end of your ‘atheism.’”

Her brows knit. “Why so? Isn’t ‘God’ an idea evolved from the worship of ghosts by savages? So I’ve always understood.”

“Ha, ha, I can’t help laughing”—shaking her little finger—“this about ‘savages’ only shews how what is called ‘learning’ can throw dust into the wisest eyes—Frazer’s—yes, Spencer’s. Pooh—nonsense.”

“Well? Tell me . . .”

“Look, now,” he said: “those leaves are stirring, my lips stirring—there’s no doubt: a Something—‘Stress,’ ‘Force,’ ‘Energy,’ ‘Power’—stirs them, works the world; and all lives are aware of this thing—can’t help; ‘the ant wots of its ways, the white doves know it well’; savages know of it nine months before they are born: consciousness is consciousness of It. But since nothing is known about it (except that its amount can never be altered at all, that it inhabits Eternity, and that it causes motion and emotion), all sorts of fancies are apt to come up in our nuts about it; priests, negroes, conceive it as an animal somehow: and when the ‘atheist’ says *in answer*, ‘No, there is no God,’ he doesn’t at all mean that there is no God, no Power (for he has seen things move), he means ‘No, Power is not that sort of thing.’ A mother goes with her dot of a son to the coast of Cornwall, look, and one morning of storm he watches the ocean all in motion, on-rushing like the hotchpotch and

robes aflaut of a host of Saharan horse all brawling 'charge!', rows of froth rolling after rows of froth, throwing off a throating of oratories, an oratorio of sorrows, the whole sea tossing sick, hectic in that restlessness of Orestes' frenzy, its sprays a distraction of gesticulation and tragic rage, scattering the hairs of Hecate's head: and he, standing there in amazement, demands: 'What makes it, Mam?' She answers: 'God made it: God is the power that runs everything.' But, now, tell me: does he know any more now than he knew before? *Nothing!*—except a name. She has taught him *some English*—that's all. He *knew*—before ever he drew breath—that there is motion, that there is Power, that Power moves, and makes, though he knew no English to say it. And so with the savage——"

"Yes, I see that," she said: "but if savages know about God, what makes them worship ghosts?—as they *do*."

"The thing is very simple really," he answered: "put yourself in the savages' place: he hasn't your sense of necessity of death, remember, as Grant Allen well says—no historical past of dead men—nearly every death round him accidental, sudden; and when he sees the force that yesterday was his tearing brother laid dead today before him, he can't *realize* that his brother is done, thinks him still kicking somewhere, somehow. And now, *this being so*, think how like God his brother has suddenly become: dumb—like God; enigmatic—like God; stark—like God; raise his hand, it drops; raise it again, drops again—starkly the same yesterday, today, and for ever; speak to him, ply him, coax him, ask him 'how are you feeling? how are your feet faring this day in those places?' he only smiles, makes no reply. So the sky smiles, the stark sphinx, so the sea smiles, and answers no asking, the stars are far from answering. And at this mystery of rigidity in a force that yesterday was so capricious, this sudden resemblance to Force in general, the heart starts, the hand covers the mouth, and a man, having become God-man, is adored as God. That is how ghost-worship evolves from the idea of God—not the idea of God from ghost-worship."

"But it seems to me"—her cheek on his shoulder, her lids shut—"that 'God' now means Force that is a 'person.'"

"Oh, no," he said, "doesn't mean that—not a question of philosophy, but of *English*: so see the dictionary. If, by chance, the dictionary-writer says that 'God' means 'Force that is a person,' or 'Force that is not a person,' he doesn't

know English: for 'God' means 'Force,' 'the Almighty,' whatever kind of thing Force or Might may be."

Now she asked: "But *you* don't think that Force is a person?"

And he: "Now, how can I 'think' anything?—no data—know nothing about it. He may be three persons—three hundred and a half; I *guess* that He is not a person——"

"Why, then, say 'He?' "

"Well, one says 'He,' doesn't one? or 'She?' Grotesque, of course; but a little less grotesque than 'It': for, though we can *guess* that He is not an animal, not living and intelligent like plants and animals, but something boundlessly nobler, there is something about Him laughably *like* intelligence—something quite German in style in the working of the heart, for example, wonderfully like the design of a Hun mechanic. And the sex-mechanism—a distinct little wink and wickedness in Him somehow. One says 'He.' And then, 'speak to Him, thou, for He hears' . . . queer . . . yet true . . . as true a fact of this cosmos as that water infuriates sulphuric acid . . . 'speak to Him' . . . that's so."

Silence. Then she, playing with his thumb: "Well, I don't see all that. I thought that 'Force was abolished'—by Einstein?"

"Ha, ha, yes, the unsceptical man," he laughed: "I used to assume that his hands lack culture; but not so—violinist. Grandly sceptical—gallant adventurer!—of the old, but unsceptical of the new (of his own musings o' nights over his stove-fire and porcelain pipe: a mind like Goethe's—tighter-fibred—but still more poet than scientist, expressing himself in ciphers for rhymes, and for 'hail, holy Light!'

he scribbles $\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}$, where c is the wings of the morn-

ning. Ciphers more seductive than rhymes!—luckier dovetails, tricky coincidences—so that one of our scientists admits point-blank that he is not 'unbiased' toward them. Think of *that!* 'Scientific' means 'free of bias,' and when a high scientist has bias so badly, that he is actually conscious of it, avows it without a sob, why then the very devil's in the Holy Place, and c is the speed of Lucifer. Anyway, the *force* of gravity is proved; and some *looking-round*, circumspection, scepticism, would have rescued them from abolishing it."

"What, though, is it proved by?" Máhndorla demanded.

“Oh, different things; the shape of planets, for example——”

“But have things ‘shapes’ any longer?” she put in: “don’t shapes and sizes ‘depend upon the observer?’”

“Ha, ha, no, that’s a fallacy,” he laughed: “if that were so, unobserved things would be shapeless, the back of the moon and the back of a sideboard having the same non-shape, non-size; and your heart’s chambers, your killing little kidneys—no difference—no shape: so that instantly there’d be no Máhndorla more, and what should *I* do then? Shapes depend upon a manner-of-massing of atoms, don’t they? sizes upon the number of atoms so massed; a manner, a number; both definite, absolute: so that, if to different observers having ‘perfect’ instruments an apple looks round, cubical, oval, oblate, gibbous, all but one are very wrong—all are always wrong: their impressions are not correct registers of the matter of fact of the atoms’ manner of massing. But throw the apple, and, if it rolls smoothly, you may then be sure that it is really spheroid, and *not* cubical.”

“Well, tell me,” she said: “the shape of planets proves force . . .”

“Yes, the earth is tetrahedral, isn’t she, a little? ‘geoid,’ we say, though ‘geoid’ is as childish as ‘ge-gee’; but say ‘tetrahedroid’—not ‘like an orange,’ don’t you know—but like a pear, an egg, the sun having drawn-out the (south) egg-point during southern summers in perihelion, in eras when her stuff was more fluid. And the equator, too, is egg-like, having its egg-point there at that ‘roof of the world’ near the north tropic, where the sun dragged at some prominent rag nearest him every noon of our northern summer—this tending to stop the earth’s spin, as already it has stopped Mercury’s, whose drawn-out egg-end now points always at the sun—even Venus may be like that; and it was this alternate summer-pull at our south pole and our Himalayas that caused our little cyclical swing and seesaw, I think. But we were too remotely out to be soon lured into stillness, as Mercury was, though *we* have done the very same to our moon’s spin, dragging some equator-rag like Tibet down and out into an egg-end south-pole, that always now points our way. So you get a regular gradation: the inmost planet not spinning, the next scarcely, we pretty quick, the exterior ones frisking free like spinning-tops (Mars once had a two-hours day, but, being small, has slowed, moon-dragged). And the tides, look: the land, too, tidal like an Atlantic; then the moon’s tendency to recede and recede at

the sweep of the tides—and so on. In all this you see operating that very $\frac{x}{o}$ that you call 'force' when you draw-out a bit of india-rubber, or drag a dog back: at all points it is all in all, and calls to all 'I AM,' calling

*They reckon ill who leave ME out:
When Me they fly I AM the wings;
I AM the doubter and the doubt,
And I the psalm the Brahmin sings.*

But the good Einstein's planets roll 'down' curves and valleys '*in space*'—fantastic dancer! 'quaint opinions wide!'—roll 'down' as 'streams follow the easiest course,' though, in fact, streams do not follow a course—follow a *force*, and are no more disposed to flow 'down' than to flow 'up,' won't flow, or do anything whatever, unless forced—flow up when forced by the moon or by force-pumps, flow down when forced by the earth: for effects are caused, and effects are motions, so force, the cause of motions, is the cause of all effects. But, then, there are no curves and valleys '*in space*'; if there were, our minds would be quite foreign to the cosmos, and we might as well drop bothering about anything at once; but our minds, tiny and tottery as they are, are an offspring of the cosmos, not foreign; and though Being is Wonderland, Being is not freakish and leering, is not Alice's Wonderland; if to 'an observer' asleep it is Alice's, this is because all observers are always wrong, especially when asleep: so that when our fancies, or our mathematics, land us in *grotesqueries*, we may guess that we have gone wrong (in concept or in terminology), as when we are led to such statements as that 'energy has inertia'—'quaint,' misled, to make a Martian laugh—or as when we state that those star-rays passing the sun in that eclipse were bent by 'hills and dales *in space*'—squint-eyed, rude in the expression of notion and the use of phrase, even if containing truth; but not true: as by *looking-round* one knows; by looking up, too: for have the stars no hosts of planets? no twin-stars? some twin-stars many times denser than our mite of a sun? and if those dark bodies, darting all about the place, bent the star-rays that pass them, wouldn't the stars appear as streaks a little whenever two or three bodies at the ends of a star-diameter stepped between a star-rim and us? and shouldn't we be always detecting distortions in the constellations? our own planets, too, and moons, bending the rays

about, as they came—*very* slightly, yet *very* effectively, the bendings so near, the stars so far? And the *earth* would be bending: bending horizon-rays and not zenith-rays, so that *these* distortions would be obvious, for the bendings could not be zero, and their effectiveness would be infinity (practically). No, *suns* bend rays, young suns—I think I know why—not because they are bodies, but because they are suns.”

Now Máhndorla remarked: “But since Einstein foreknew exactly the *amount* of the bendings——”

“No, ‘exactly’ is a popular fancy,” Hazlitt answered; “and, if he had been exact, his explanation of the fact would have been no less ‘quaint and wide.’ Indeed, some of the rays, bent-in by the sun, must have still nearer pierced the ‘undulating country’ round the moon, to be anew bent-in; and nearness counts more than mass, the effect being proportional to the *product* of the body’s nearness to us into the square of the rays’ nearness to the body.”

Now, Máhndorla’s chin cocked in mock-hauteur. “Oh, well, *I* am Einsteinian: they are like nuts-and-wine, the fashionable fanatics—Bergson, Coué, Freud, De Sitter, Minkowski, Weyl, Lobatchewsky. I couldn’t live now without space-time.”

“Make an effort,” Hazlitt laughed, “take to cocaine . . . The wonder is that we ever bracketed space and time—as we do! ‘*Space*,’ for me, is a concrete noun, like ‘*Money*’; space is something; space is Bethel, is Room for Force to flutter in, and the Vulture to brood in; but ‘*Time*’ is an abstract noun like Beauty, Blueness, Liberty; there is no such being as Blueness, as that dear Baby-Plato believed; there are blue things; but Liberty, Number, Time, are nothings, abstractions, idols of the mind, and we make Statues of Liberty, of Victory, of Father Time—‘*Time flies*,’ plies a scythe; we make no statues of Father Space, of Mother Money, these being real beings, while ‘*Old Time*’ is a personification of those aspects of force which we engineers call ‘*Strength of Materials*’ and ‘*Action*,’ forces which hold things together against dissolving forces, and give to things definite velocities against a force of tension which, pervading space, prevents things set in motion from pitching instantly through infinity? But the quaint statements now being made about space and time by scientist after scientist! A serious thing: for, though what they intend is seldom quaint, what they *say* must be pretty upsetting to the common man’s apple-cart—if he is feeble enough to believe:

for the statements made are false, and this not always because of the makers' awkwardness in respect to the delicacies of philosophic expression, but anon also because of a wish to be astonishing and aloft in wit. Now, scientists are a step (or two) above the rest of men, for though many men are endowed with better brains than ours, we alone are educated; and just for the reason that we are a step above, it should be beneath us to yield to the temptation to appear three steps, to be oracular, and paradoxical, and prancing. But we let ourselves make statements . . . 'distances and times depend upon the observer' . . . Well, they do not—though measurements of them do. Duration is endurance: and the duration of the geologic ages, the distance to the earth's centre, depend upon other than 'the observer,' as Clerk-Maxwell was fond of insisting, depend upon a wrestle of strengths which are definite, upon a rate of change which is innate; and if there is a bit of uranium in Syria, and a bit in Sirius, both being parts of one old lump, of the same mass at parting, spitting alpha-particles ever since, then they spit particle for particle in a simultaneous way, the two *n*ths together, the two *z*ths, shameless, careless of observation or non-observation, changing simultaneously into the same weight of Uranium X, 'Time' in Syria and 'Time' in Sirius being one, precisely as Newton presumed, as Einstein *au fond* presumes: and, if it is not true, then the Well-Beloved is no father of ours, we are cast-aways in the dark. And so as to distances. Truth is in a well, eh? Observers are wrong—all—and are pretty raw when they do not know that appearances deceive, and that rulers look crooked in pools. Yonder in a Bayswater square is a lamp-post magnetizing, dragging the bicycle of a beginner, who is struggling in vain against, and yonder flies wild-eyed by, riding a light-ray, an Einstein 'observer,' who 'concludes' that the struggler is in a gravitational field, wriggling there in the grip of the hills and dips of space-time, and he notes it nosily in his notebook, scribbling ds^2 , drawing coordinates abstractly in Tobacco-land: but, then, none of it is true; the sun is bigger than a hogshead, now—more *atoms* in it—whatever the observer Hodge may observe; Oxford and London are not in contact—a number of *atoms* between—and if an 'observer on a comet,' or a 'flea in the train,' thinks so, they need seeing-to, and the flea should be killed, for Being is builded of thicker timber than his limbos. But we make statements . . . 'there is *no* absolute motion'; fancy that, now: when 'cannot be measured' is what is meant—unphilosophic! that

is, false. When one says 'relative motion' one *has said* absolute motion—of something: for how could a cart ever pass a field, if neither had any absolute motion? Both always have."

Máhdorla asked: "You mean absolute motion relative to the æther, is that it?"

"Ha, ha—no—relative to nothing! Space consists of soap-boxes, doesn't it? packed, packed: these soap-boxes not having any bottoms, or tops, or sides, nor do they (in general) contain any soap, or anything material, their only trait being that they are motionless for ever: and absolute motion is any motion among them. Now, as they are not stencilled with different shippers' trade-marks, nor numbered, nor named in any chart or mesh-system, no absolute motion can ever be noted, for no box has a *position* (if there's no end of boxes); but, since each box occupies a place, and since motion is a change, not of position, but of *place* (as when two specks spin on a spinning globe), you see that it is only our anthropomorphic girlishness of thought which causes us to assume some observer, or super-observer, or some 'æther' and 'frame of reference' for the super-observer, in order to realize a stone's absolute motion from box to box. There the box-places are, and a place is a place, named or unnamed: it is not a *name* that makes Mesopotamia."

And now Máhdorla, milking his thumb: "Well, you strip one of one's stays and things; but I like to hear you, and elect you as my Gamaliel, to sit at your feet. You aren't to go back to England—not before me: I am more to you than your mother. At noon tomorrow I pick you up at the Opéra: we are to luncheon with Beckie Graves and Bernhardt, then to *bibeloter* a little in the Faubourg St. Honoré. Know anything of fiddles? There's a Strad there—they say. And I haven't yet shewn you Montmartre . . . *mauvais lieux* there . . . I like *mauvais lieux*: I think I am *détraquée* and orgiastic . . ."

"Sinner, sweet: Who made you sweet?"—in saying which he had a sense of plagiarism, of saying something somewhere said before; then, remembering having said just this to his Jessie, too, in a moment now he found himself desperately saying: "I have something to tell you—tomorrow."

Whereupon she, supposing that he meant a "proposal," that he meant anything but a rupture, said affectionately: "Tell me now; this is a nice place; we can set up a stone here, as the savages do, and call it 'Beth-el.'"

He was about to answer, like a Spaniard, "No, tomorrow," but now a sound, a brush through bush, startled them, and after he had sprung up to peer—for it was as if someone was eavesdropping—nothing more was said of that "something" to be told. It was already late in the night; and they were presently driving up Grande Armée, for the centre.

At Máhndorla's Grand Hotel portal reluctant was the parting of their palms, Hazlitt telling her then, "Nearly every night I dream of you," and she, "I, too, dream deep things": whereupon he drove for his own rue de Rivoli, looking forth from his motor, remarking a half-moon riding at anchor becalmed on high, the cafés' night-mobs already decimated . . . and he was now passing southward there by Cook's, when anew, as he had started in the Bois at that brush through bush, so his heart started, on catching sight of red in a taxi to his left—Dr. Radlor—driving north in the direction of Máhndorla's hotel . . .

And on stepping into the entrance-hall of his Meurice Hotel, yet again his heart started, for there, vaguely pacing in foreign parts, he saw his Giddins . . .

Chapter 16

The Old Woman Translated

"WELL, HERE I am," Giddins remarked: "you said I was to come, if anything happened, and here I am; you said you'd stand the racket, and Mary she said——"

"Come"—up in a lift to Hazlitt's suite, where, seated in softness, Giddins let his gaze wander with awe at walls of silk shimmering greyish, at a hearth-place which resembled a chapel of alabaster, at Second Empire garnitures, with mughetti in vases of garnet on the piano, and he called upon God, saying: "God's truth! you must be in luck's way."

"Oh, that's nothing"—from Hazlitt—"not at my own expense—tell me everything . . . You tired? hungry?"

"Done up; but I got some grub . . . Well, this is Paris: here I am. Everybody in the place talks a foreign——"

"John!"—Hazlitt called his horse-headed valet to order liqueurs, then, seated in a great chair opposite to Giddins'

near a grate that flickered for prettiness' sake, he listened to Giddins, while his John listened with a keen ear at a key-hole near . . .

"Well, Mary's spoken with the old girl . . . she gave Mary this to give you"—producing an envelope which Hazlitt broke open, to bring out a strip of newspaper, round the rim of which rushed some scribbling, and then there met his gaze an emerald of great size incised with the intaglio of a dragon. But, as to the scribble, it was so illiterately written, and the ink had so run, that he could not contrive to decipher it, even though, on spying a magnifying-glass on an album, he peered through this: could see "Caxton," could see "I send"—no more!

Giddins said: "The stone, she told Mary she saw it in an old drawer, and was sending it for you to get some money for yourself——"

"But it can't be hers!" Hazlitt exclaimed.

"Well, there you are: *she* seemed to think that possession is nine points of the law—there you are!"

"Tell me—tell me everything."

"Well, she has been up in an aeroplane——"

"Who?"

"The old girl. She——"

"Oh, Christ God . . ." Hazlitt breathed in awe.

"Take it cool, old——"

"That old woman? in an aeroplane? You tell me that?"

"Yes, take it cool——"

Flying now into a passion, Hazlitt, his eyes alight, was up, to step like one pressed by a time-table, stretched to action, his fists clenched, and a crystal which held lilies-of-the-valley he crashed down in italics, shivering it, to say: "An eye for an eye, by Christ, murder for murder—that's fair—when I once lay hand on them . . ." while Giddins came to him to say: "Take it cool—there's no murder—she has even got free somehow—been to her old room in Acton Street, looking you up—she's free——"

"She's free?"

"Aye. Come, let me tell you"—and, on sitting again, he talked-on a long time, while Hazlitt, seated sideways in an awkward knot, hand over eyes, listened . . . It came out that Mary's researches had succeeded in unearthing the retreat near Chichester to which, when she had discovered the retreat near Midhurst, the old woman had been whiffed away in an automobile—researches in which Hazlitt's Mason had been no help, but the opposite (Mason, bidden by Hazlitt

not to mention to Mary the name "Beresford," had been sent down to cooperate with Mary); so that Mary had promptly "taken a dislike to Mason," and finally had said to Giddins, "Whoy, ain't this Mason *on the other side?* He ain't no friend to Hazlitt. Wouldn't I have found out the old woman two days before, but for him?" Anyway, at eleven one night she was climbing over a bit of broken wall in a spinny at a house in more open country than the Midhurst house, half-a-mile from a racing-stud at its back, having paddocks in its neighbourhood; and, in spite of her fright of the hounds, she prowled round the house, spied the three hounds through a kitchen-window with three men eating and drinking, two of whom she knew as "the tall one" and "the short one," the short in his shirt-sleeves, and with them a third one, plump, with a pale lump of face all craters of small-pox, like the moon as Galileo saw her big and crude through his optic tube—this evoking in Hazlitt a recollection of Mr. Farrel's flunkey once seen in Park Street: those three in the one lighted room—no sign of the old woman.

And the next night the same sight, minus the moon-faced: this night, however, spying a light at the house-side, she crawled up a short outer stair there, and through a glass-door saw the old woman seated lonesome in a room of ragged tapestries, antique grandeurs, portraits, moulded ceiling. The door was secured with a board nailed on, but, its panes being broken, through these the two spoke in secret.

The old woman was much aged, her flesh paled, though she was then "elevated," and danced some steps—"looked Spanish," Mary said, with her blanched flesh, her hair henna-browed, and her "drops" of coral. She insisted that Mary should take cake and beer—there was a box containing bottles of beer in squares—but, as to the reasons why she was being treated as a prisoner, of this she knew nothing, though she believed that a man whom she dreaded, "a man with a red beard," was at the bottom of it all, and she meant some day to "have the law" of somebody.

What bothered her, she said, was her son, whom she had left in poverty, and she then entrusted Mary with the emerald, saying very privily that, having been in that business, *she* knew the value of jewels, and pointing out the drawer in a Jacobean carving-table within which the object had lain; but now she was attacked by asthma, and perhaps her coughs attracted the hounds, for now barkings broke out, "the tall one" darted out somewhere, caught Mary on

the stair, and tortured her arm, saying: "So it's *you*," and "Shift while you're safe"—hunting her out, while the hounds barked, to the gate, thrusting always at her back, causing her to stagger forward. Now, Mary was Irish, endowed with some human pride, was rich, too, now, and new-rich proud, so that at this contumely, though feeling caught and sheepish, she constantly retorted, "Who you pushing of? Who you pushing of?" and the moment she was out, her back now up, was fore-casting, was in action.

She had engaged a chamber at a tavern, whence, across a green, she could watch the mansion's gate; and, after arranging with her host that his motor should be kept before the door, ready for her at a moment's notice, she got a note written to Giddins at Chichester, bidding him come quick; then, having her lamp extinguished, sat at her window, vigilant.

So it was, that soon after one she was pursuing a motor-car which bore the old woman Londonward, nor could it leave its pursuer behind this time; seeing which, the men in it, abandoning their purpose after an eight-mile chase, turned back to the mansion; and, though Mary continued her watch at her window until the morning, she saw no more of them.

At ten she saw that "tall thin gentleman" with one thick-soled boot, who had prowled round the Midhurst house, prowling round this also; at eleven Giddins turns up; Mary hurries him off to a village, to see if the constable there would take any action, and also to telegraph to Hazlitt's poste restante address—a telegram that Hazlitt, through going off that forenoon for Paris, did not get. Presently after eleven Mary is aware of an aeroplane in the air, without suspecting that it is in any way related to her; but near two in the afternoon, she being now asleep, Giddins, who is now keeping sentry-guard, rouses her to announce that the old woman is being led out of the house to a meadow at the back where "one of those aeroplanes" at present stands; and soon, rushing and dressing together, Mary is there, gazing from a hedge-gate at a group moving toward the aeroplane, then at the old woman's sudden realization, start, alarm, and backward bolt; a tussle, a hustle; now she is in it, held prisoner, Mary now racing toward the scene to interfere, to threaten, somehow to stop the horror, though now the propeller is pelting round with a row through which a shriek reaches the ear, as the machine moves jolted, shoots light, decides to fly; and still the noising of a little voice is

wawling, that in a wink is caught away, swallowed up, and lost in all that hollow of heaven, as when a clock stops, and now stillness is, where sound was . . .

Up there Mary's motor could not pursue; and "the tall one," putting thumb to nose, laughed at her.

So it was back now to Chichester, at which Hazlitt's telegram giving his Paris address awaited Giddins; and when the next day a Hazlitt-letter came, the pair left for London, Giddins to go to Paris, as bidden; and he was on the point of starting the following morning when Mary had from a Mrs. Jackson the strange news that the old woman had been to her room the previous evening—free—and had left with Mrs. Jackson a message for Hazlitt . . .

And Hazlitt: "Whyever did she not stay at her room, I wonder?"

Giddins answered: "There you beat me. I was in a hurry—didn't hear the ins and outs of it. She left her address, but Mrs. Jackson didn't seem to remember——"

"Oh, why am I in Paris?" Hazlitt cried out: "I ought to be in *London*, not in Paris!"

It seemed to him that someone must have a motive to *kill* that slight life, though shrinking from cutting her throat: and in his soul now was not room enough to hold the rush-in of the ocean of truth which tore it, so that his night was rived with anxiety as to whether he would find a place in the next day's aeroplane; and when this, through magic of Cook's, was managed, he at once scratched off a note to his Máhndorla . . . "my mother . . . be sorry for me . . . I may come back . . . think of me . . ." but before ever this could have reached her, her Giuliva was with him, bringing one from her . . . "he *is here* . . . for quietness' sake I must be off to London today . . . you come, too . . . all my heart . . ." and he was in his hotel entrance-hall scattering last gratuities, and now was about to get into a motor for Le Bourget and his Handley-Page when a page-boy ran to hand him a telegram—from London: "You are recommended to remain abroad for a month, else may find yourself embarrassed. Dædalus."

Hazlitt laughed aloud at it a little! whiffed it off him, was away . . .

And when from aloft he saw the sea trotting with wandering feet along beneath him, and the breezy holiday of heaven and earth evolving itself in Eternity that day, a fervour warmed his nerves, he with moistened eyelids murmuring: "How admirable her tabernacles! and her pavilion

over us is loveliness . . . blessed is her blessed name, and blessed are my eyes that have seen . . . for surely this is the Seventh Heaven that her breezes fly far in, and her trees sigh laughters of satiety . . . world worthy of Lloyd-George, land fit for hero-dukes to live in . . . seraphs and fairies that reverie's travelling never fancied are her proper populace, and when they appear on her will feel their knees not worthy to melt in her perfect temple" . . . and now with eager wing he is throwing off leagues of England, until now the eagle stoops, seeing "Croydon" traced on the ground in great white letters illumined by a group of lights, whereupon she shoots a rocket, and when another is shot up green in answer, leaning she wheels, lands, runs, stops, the lofty voyage accomplished: whence in straight career he was off in a car for Acton Street, and, after darting up that dark stair, found on the table a scrap of brown-paper with scribbling on it—thick scribbling! Though the evening twilight was now dying out, this was not the reason why he could not contrive to read any of it—the ink had run again! the writing hieroglyphic. Many minutes he stood bent over it, using ingenuity in vain, and now dashed down to tap at "Mrs. Jackson's" second-floor-door. No answer: but presently, seeing her in her temple and spiritual place, the public-house next door, he beckoned her out . . .

And she: "Yes, she came . . . could hardly stand, she looked very bad . . . I should look after her, if I was you, you look flush enough . . . She's been away up in the air in one of them things, sh' said, and now she's in service in a gentleman's kitchen, sh' said. She *did* give me an address to give you, but, to tell you the truth, I didn't take no particular notice—no doubt I'd had a drop . . ."

"Now, how hard of you!" Hazlitt mourned at her.

"Oh, not so much of it!" she retorted in a new tone of revolt: "I've got my own troubles, my good man——"

"Yes, but think, think, try," he pleaded, but might as well have said "fly, fly": thinking was not in her line, her "pub" being "The Duke's Head."

"It's passed clean out of my poor head," she declared: "I fancy there was something about 'Park.'"

"Park . . . 'gentleman's kitchen' . . . Park Lane? Park Street?"

"May-be that was it. I think it was 'Park.'"

"And the number? Think, think——"

"Oh, my God, don't ask me about numbers, I never was

any hand at figures. It may have been 9, or it may have been 22 . . .”

She got from Hazlitt a look of reproach, before he left her to rush round to press to his breast his Jessie, in whom he now found a musing and a dwelling of her eye upon him, a mystery of femininity in her simper, that smiled at a mighty think known as yet in her own soul alone . . . he not understanding, not suspecting!

“Well, how does it strike you?”—she exhibiting “the dress” now ready, atingle now at her wedding-day eight days thence, giving him with her mother the tale of the bridesmaids’ names, the ice-cake made, “the breakfast” to take place in that humble home, and he was not to be feeble enough to go and forget the ring . . .

And when Mrs. Page had undertaken to put a woman to live in his mother’s room, so as to send him a telegram the moment the old woman came again, he drove away home.

Chapter 17

The Old Woman Cries Out

TWO DAYS, and no news: only a note from Máhdorla, a rendezvous at The Grafton; one, too, from Dr. Radlor—begging forgiveness! since “Oh, you lie, you lie” had been the result of an admiration so genuine, that it may have bred a jealousy of Hazlitt’s “genius,” that species of jealousy which is sometimes bred between brothers, “for indeed we two are brothers, and I intend to present myself again at Park Lane . . .”

Two days of suspense: but on the third evening Hazlitt heard . . .

He had stepped up the little stair that led from the Amoor Room to his bed-room—nine o’clock, he spending a quiet night, smoking in a dinner-jacket over Quaternions, his purpose in going up being to get another book left up there: and, as he entered the bed-room, there reached his ears a shriek in which he seemed to hear his name “*Caxton!*” called, and to be aware of that buoyant voice of her he sought.

All his heart started, and, on darting to a window, he saw her—thought that he saw her: for, though it was some-way off, and some trees intervened, the moon, nearly full, was nearly overhead, and he was conscious of a little female form, shrieking as she rushed from a policeman who pursued her out of a back-door of Mr. Farrel's house . . .

In an instant she and the policeman were hidden by a brick-wall between the two house-grounds; but in the same moment he was aware of that moon-faced flunkey of Mr. Farrel beckoning agitatedly from the top of the wall, and of his own horse-headed John, just back to him from Paris, running from below him toward the moon-faced, who sent out at the runner a hushed shout of something, whereupon John span to race back, and vanished.

Hazlitt, for his part, was so startled, that he remained there in a maze two, three, minutes, until the moon-faced had disappeared, and the policeman had reappeared leading captive the little woman back into the Farrel building: whereupon, breaking from the bands of his paralysis, Hazlitt dashed to that room-door, with a view to rushing down and out and round to the Farrel house; but his wrench of the handle had no effect on the door: the door locked; the key now outside.

Without lingering one instant before this mystery he bolted down the little stair to the Amoor Room, wrung the handle of the door of that: that door, too, stood unmoved.

Now a little giggle—of bitterness—gurgled out of him, as he spurted to a bell to summon his servants. And he rang and rang: no answer.

Now he dropped upon a seat, his brow bent down, grating his teeth, tugging at his hair, till suddenly again he was up at the door to shout "Brown!" "Bridges!" with poundings; and now to the window to shout down; and now afresh threw himself down, brow-bowed, having found the house mute to him . . .

If hitherto he had not been convinced that it was his mother from whom the outcry had come, now he was convinced . . . *Farrel* had her: it was that *Farrel* . . . Here at least was something that seemed ascertained at last: this explained why that moon-faced of *Farrel's* had been seen by Mary Giddins with "the tall" and "the short" ones near Chichester; and the servants whom he, Hazlitt, had grown to regard as his own were *Farrel's* servants, alert to lock him in at *Farrel's* orders . . .

But to sit still a prisoner, this was not long possible: so rushing afresh to the Amoor Room window, he measured the jump down with a judging eye, shied at it, noted, however, that a pipe ran down not far from the bedroom window above, and up he pelted; but on leaning out to touch the pipe, found it out of reach.

Meaning, however, to be free by some means, even at the risk of a leap, he was not beaten by this, feeling himself nimble on his feet: and he spent some time in deciding what was best to be done—though, if he had but thought of trying the doors once more, he might probably by now have found them unlocked. As it was, he finally decided to tie his sheets together, and, getting out of window on them, to swing his feet outward to the spout; and though the sheets did not reach far as a pendulum—fastened to his bedstead, and shortened by the knots—he managed to catch the pipe with his right toes, and now, agilely catching out with his right arm, started to slide down.

But he had hardly descended three yards when he came to an elbow where the cylinder bent almost horizontal, and the instant he was on this bit fears seized his instincts, thrilled to his feet, he feeling it yield, hearing it creak . . . so, having a care, hanging there at his length, his palms clapped their wary way along half its length, until now out of his heart in his mouth hopped an outcry of “gone!” as the spout’s pop sounded, and down he dropped.

And, though some foliage at which he clutched for support broke his tumble somewhat, plumb he dropped, to thump upon four steps before a door, and there lay wrecked; until, in not more than three minutes, he was scrambling again, to go with a staggery gait, undone, but headstrong, headlong, holding his left humerus, toward the brick-wall of division, bent on climbing; but, on coming to it, felt his eyes closing, stood some time leant on it, holding his wound with a face of pain, until he drooped and dropped in a sort of swoon, propped upon the wall.

And there he remained so many minutes, that it was pretty late before his brain broke a little through the haze of his daze, though the moment his strength of will functioned afresh, he was up with that same mania and infatuation, attacking, attempting to scale, seeing himself now with only one slipper, for, having thrown slippers, socks, jacket out of window before falling, and, being shocked out of his wits by the fall, he had started out for the wall in one

slipper and one sock, and still was so shocked and unnerved, that, in missing his catch at the wall's top surface, he caught at an urn on it which contained geraniums, and this, not bearing his weight, tumbled over him, buffeting the buffeted, as he tumbled overwhelmed, and lay moaning.

But with that obstinacy of mania, he was doggedly at it again, got up somehow, got over gasping, staggered to the door of a box-pantry stuck-on to the Farrel house-back, found it locked, banged upon it . . .

And immediately at a little window near the door appeared that flunkey's moon-face, scared like the full moon's face of scare and amaze, and "Yes, Sir? Yes?" it said.

"Farrel! Where's he?"

"Sir, Mr. Farrel's in bed!"

"Open this door."

"Sir, I dursn't! It's more than——"

"Cute nut, you, to keep clear of me, ha, ha—clever fellow!"

"I'm sure, Sir, I don't know——"

A run of Hazlitt's interrupted him, and a spring at the little window, where, on winning a knee to its sill, and then standing on it, his fingers gripped the architrave of an entablature, then, by getting upon the lattice-shutter, which stuck out, he caught at a cornice, and, grinning—for his left arm was little good to him—got to the top, his last slipper now gone from him; and as he dropped to lie on the roof's flat part, that ran leaded round a sky-light structure, his face convulsed like a baby's toward blubbing.

However, he was soon up anew to be stubbornly on, and though in all that hind wall of the building not a light was visible, this did not influence him, he feeling that that house was his, feeling the authority to rouse a thousand households out of sleep, and knock their heads together; and now, as he stepped along the leads toward the house, for the first time he observed light—freshe—burning on a French-window ahead; so, wrenching the knob of this window, he stepped down into a large apartment lit by fire flickering to his right.

But he had noticed nobody in it to the moment when, some seconds after his entrance, electric light flew to illumine the room, and there, at its far extremity, erect, he saw the grand mass of Mr. Farrel cocking at him a revolver, knawing a cigar.

Chapter 18

Mr. Farrel Two-Sided

"LIFT UP your hands," came calm from Mr. Farrel.

And Hazlitt: "Oh, nonsense: where is that old——?"

"Sir Henry Beresford? You, sir? Now, heaven forgive me: I declare I took you for a thief"—this rather disarming Hazlitt, the tone of it so calm, ordinary, of the drawing-room; and while Hazlitt stood a moment silent, Mr. Farrel added: "Let my excuse be, sir, that you appear before me in 'such a questionable shape': no boots, I see—your trousers rent—and why do you hold your shoulder in that fashion? Have you received a hurt?" his voice strong, enunciation formal, slow, a "judge's summing-up."

"The point is——" Hazlitt began to say, but his shivering knees giving way, he succumbed upon a chair, his forehead dropping: whereupon Mr. Farrel came straight to put an arm round and support him to the Chesterfield on which he himself, musing in the gloom, had been fingering jewels in two jewel-cases; and, after propping Hazlitt upon a couch-end, and raising Hazlitt's legs to stretch out, he rang a bell, and said to the blanched moon-visage which looked in: "bring brandy quickly, Selfridge; then send to Dr. Lloyd, requesting him to attend."

"This is nonsense," Hazlitt said on faint breaths, "had a fall, but——" making to rise, but held down by Mr. Farrel, who coaxed: "No, lie still a little, lie still, be guided by me."

"You have that old woman"—from Hazlitt—"where is she?"

"'Old woman'"—Mr. Farrel pondered it . . . "Did you say 'old woman'?"

"I mean to have her this night . . ."

"Compose yourself—keep quiet a little . . . I do not know to what old woman you refer. Lie still until the doctor arrives."

And Hazlitt on faint breaths, his forehead dropped, eyes closed: "I saw her—heard her scream—a policeman——"

"'Policeman' . . . Ah! now I think I can divine——" He stopped short to turn to the moon-faced now entering with

brandy: "Selfridge, has the woman who stole the gem been arrested?"

"Yes, sir, this evening while you were out."

"Is she an 'old' woman?"

"Oldish woman, Sir."

"Stole? Gem?"—from Hazlitt.

"Just sip a little brandy, you are faint"—holding it to Hazlitt's lips, and saying to Selfridge: "Did the woman 'scream' when arrested?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Then, it is the same. This gentleman is interested in her . . . Did the officer of the law discover the gem among her things?"

"No, Sir, she had removed it from her box."

"So the gem is not yet recovered?"

"No, Sir."

"Well . . . Has the doctor been summoned?"

"Yes, Sir"—moving out, while Hazlitt, having sipped a little, opened his eyes, and wildly whispered to Farrel: "Stole? Which gem?"

"You know her, I think, do you?"

"Ha, ha, know her . . . Gem be damned: you had her here, and now you charge her——"

"Yes, but do not distress yourself: the matter is not of great importance, since you are interested in her . . . The facts are these, Sir Henry Beresford"—sitting now at a table by Hazlitt's head: "I have a fancy for collecting mineral specimens, and three days since, on opening this jewel-box, saw that one gem was gone—an emerald, once the property of Lorenzo dei Medici, having the intaglio of a dragon——"

Wide went Hazlitt's eyes, his hand starting toward his waistcoat-pocket: for *there* the gem was, where he had deposited it when given to him by Giddins in Paris. But, then, how had it got into that "old drawer" in which she had found it near Chichester? It was from *Chichester* that she had sent it to him—before ever entering this house apparently . . . !

Mr. Farrel went on: "When I mentioned the theft to Selfridge, my butler, he told me that he had a shrewd suspicion as to the culprit, and a day later told me that he had *seen* the gem among the belongings of a woman who appears to have been received into the below-stairs as a scullery-maid some days previously; whereupon I gave directions for her arrest. I myself have not seen her, did not

know of her existence; and the matter may be hushed up, since she is 'old' and you are interested in her, if she will now restore the——"

"All lies!" cried Hazlitt: "the rascal may have *believed* that the thing was in her bag—could not have *seen* it——"

"Well, but, Sir Henry Beresford, he *says* so——"

"Oh, God, oh, God, my arm . . ."

"Ah, yes! you are in dreadful pain——"

"Prison-cell—*she*—rough police—just the word '*police*' strikes panic to her heart—Christ! is there no compassion in the make of men? You all have some motive for massacring—you took her up in the air, mind! Which Station is it? Marlborough——!" He was sharply up, wrenched himself from the attempt of Mr. Farrel to restrain him, and went tearing away; but at the door stopped to prop his forehead, and sank and sat on the floor.

And five minutes afterwards, the doctor having arrived, he was carried relaxed like the Christ of Spagnoletti to a room upstairs, there was put under a.c.e. to have his humerus set, his wounds dressed, and the next morning lay listless, remarking through a southwest window an army's march of cloud-masses which without limit mounted up and up with wings beyond his own house-top athwart the blue, like fumes flung constantly aloft from some cosmic drama of the underworld; and with a gaze sick and glazed he marked that winging as in a vision, for to his sickness it was on Mars that like hearts uplifted with palms cast far they winged and lifted; but soon after noon, in a moment when his nurse had gone out, he furtively got up, discovered his clothes, some slippers, hurriedly dressed, peered out, fearing that, if seen, he would be entreated and pestered, then stepped out and down, encountering only one flunkey, and so out of the house . . .

On glancing backward as he was getting into a taxi-cab, he beheld Mr. Farrel at a front window becking him back, but with just a throw of his arm at Farrel he jumped in and was off to Marlborough Street, having now of Farrel a profound mistrust—unreasoning—but a deep-seated thing in him—bitter . . .

And at Marlborough Street, breaking-in upon a station-officer bent at a desk over case-books and office-forms, he asked: "Where is she now? Hazlitt . . ."

"Hello, been in the wars, haven't you?"—from a eupetic "inspector" who had never wept nor hasted.

"Yes, tell me—Hazlitt——"

“Hazlitt?” turning some leaves—“Oh, aye, I know: ‘Hazlitt’ was the name *she* gave, but her real name is ‘Hammond,’ the butler said. Charged with stealing——”

“Yes—She in a cell all night?”

“Yes.”

“Had any breakfast?”—secretly.

“Oh, yes.”

“What for breakfast?”

“What do you suppose? Oysters? . . . Tea-and-Bread!”

“And her case—come on yet?”

“Two hours ago.”

“So where is she now?”

“Gone away—bailed out. The prosecutor, a Mr. Farrel, couldn’t attend, but sent his butler, who gave evidence, and she was remanded for fourteen days, that the prosecutor may attend in person. Then Ricketts—he’s the prosecutor’s solicitor—said that he had instructions not to be hard, but to stand bail for her, and the magistrate told her that, if she restored the stone meantime, he might feel disposed to be lenient—she looked so queerish—kind of daze—staring, scared-like . . .”

From a well of emotion in him wet rose to Hazlitt’s eyes, he standing awhile uncertain whether first to fly back to blurt his thankfulness to Mr. Farrel, or first to hurry to Acton Street to see her: for there he supposed that she, having nowhere else now to be, would be. And thither he went, presently to be climbing that dim stair where the microbe tribes spent their lives, isolated like tribes buried through eras in secret dells of Polynesian Islands, he breaking-in upon a woman, put to stay in the old room, with “Where’s she?”

And when the woman replied with surprise: “She ain’t here—nobody’s been—only Mary Giddins . . .” he turned his face to the wall, all at a loss now, balked, bereft; then, lacking strength to stand any longer, let himself drop upon her petty bed of Codrus, and hugged the soft of her feather pillow, petting it, patting it, like her paps that had pampered him, and her dugs that gave him suck; until, feeling again the need to see Mr. Farrel, to grasp his hand, if still with a gangrene of suspicion, yet with gratitude for that man’s compassion to the mangled, he got up to go down, slowly now, pressing upon the stair-rail, and at the bottom had to stop to prop his back a little, when in stepped Mary Giddins to go upstairs, a middle-class Mary, who exclaimed at

seeing him there—arm in sling—clothes torn—slippers—sticking-plaster . . .

Chapter 19

Mary's View

WHEN HE explained with moans and halts, told of the old woman's call of "Caxton!", of the accusation, and the moon-faced, and the "bail" by "the prosecutor," "Funny," she breathed at once, "that she should be working in a house just near to where you are. *That's* no chance . . ."

Then, her back propped upon the wall opposite Hazlitt, she stood silent, her eyes on the floor, until she remarked: "*He ain't* in it, this Mr. Farrel of Park Street, I'd bet; that pock-faced man just chances to be his butler."

"Possibly so," Hazlitt said: "what makes you think so?"

"Whoy, wasn't they at their wits' end what to do with her that day of that aeroplane? They want to keep her *hid* for something—that's what they want—and, that day, they knew I'd follow them wherever they took her to—nor I wasn't the only one, there's somebody else looking for her, a tall thin gentleman he is, and the one sole of his boot is two inches thick. Didn't I see him prying round the house at Midhurst? and round the Chichester house, too? So that's why they took her up in the aeroplane, and may-be they didn't have any other house ready for her, so they pretended to set her free when the aeroplane came down, and then that pock-faced one, who perhaps she hadn't seen before, must have offered her work in this Mr. Farrel's kitchen . . . Farrel ain't in it."

"He *may* be, he still may"—from Hazlitt—"I don't see on what grounds you make the statement."

And Mary: "Whoy, ain't a prison the very best place to hide her in, if it's hiding her they want? I bet Farrel's kitchen was only a makeshift for her to be in a bit, until they got her into prison: because you know that *she* never stole the stone from Mr. Farrel; it must have been this pock-faced one stole it from Mr. Farrel, so as to put it into that old drawer at Chichester, to tempt her to take it, as she did: but they didn't think she'd send it to you, see? they thought it was

safe in her bag, and they must have been surprised when the police didn't find it in her bag. But, if this Mr. Farrel was in the plot to hide her in prison, do you think he'd go and bail her out?—not likely."

"No, you seem right," Hazlitt admitted—"though he *may* have reasons . . . But she hasn't come home! Why not? If I could once lay hand on her . . . ! Mary, she was dazed, she stared, they say, like a sheep that before her shearers . . ."

"No, she ain't comin' here," Mary suddenly said, "so don't think it. They must have asked her for her address at the station, and, if she gave this address, she'd go anywhere but here when she once found herself free. You needn't think she's going to surrender to any bail, for she ain't, she'll be too frightened: she knows she ain't got the stone to give up——"

"But, if she does not surrender, she will surely be caught!" Hazlitt exclaimed: "there will be a warrant for her arrest——!"

"Yes, but may-be by that time she'll be hid again by them that had her hid at Chichester. Theyd' be sure to have some-one whose face she don't know at the police-station to shadow her wherever she went to when she was bailed out; and when she don't surrender to her bail, they'll have a handle over her to make her do whatever they choose, and get her into their clutches again. By that time no doubt they'll have some house ready to hide her in, for they'll drop trying to hide her in prison now they see that this Mr. Farrel and the magistrate don't want to be hard on her, so may-be the police won't get her again . . . I wish I could only drop across her! May-be I may . . . Better give me your address in case"—eyeing an underglance at him, smiling.

He answered: "Send to the post-office as before: I have made arrangements to get at once whatever letter comes."

Again an underglance at him, she simpering at something within her; then, advancing to him in an impulse, she stamped on each cheek of him a pneumatic kiss . . .

"Hallo, what is that for?" he demanded: "I will tell Giddins."

"I had to kiss him!" she said; and then: "But you ought to be in bed! Can't I get you nothing?"

"No—good-bye. Do whatever you can for me. Perhaps if she has no money, she will come to you"—he moved with unsteady steps to his cab, and was away westward, intending to thank Mr. Farrel for his bail before going home to bed; but, as the cab entered Park Street, he saw, knocking

at the Farrel door, a man tall and thin, one boot-sole inches thick; and just then Mr. Farrel, who had been out, stepped up his front steps, and shook hands with the short-leg, they two then entering the house together: at sight of which intimacy of Mr. Farrel with a man who undoubtedly, by Mary's account, had had knowledge of the old woman's existence, and was *somehow* mixed up in her vanishing, a fresh rancour of suspicion was rankling in Hazlitt as to Mr. Farrel, and "Ah, *that man!*" he said at Farrel, as he bade the cabman take him home. Thither he drove with a hanging head, and remained so for several minutes before getting out, to step unsteadily to a house-door ready open for his entrance, where flunkeys for whom there was a light of menace in the tail of his eye hung deferential on him, and he let himself be put to bed by a John for whom there was a menace in his eye which meant "We will settle."

Chapter 20

A Wedding-Day

BUT OF any settling he was incapable for days—a temperature at 103, doctor and nurses existing to his semi-consciousness like workings of a mist, so that it was only in the fourth gloaming that he woke to interest in real things, in letters on a bed-table, in three letters that begged him "not to forget the ring"; and then he realised that that noon had been his wedding-noon . . .

Whereupon "Nurse! a pencil," he cried out, and, after furiously writing the news of his fall and illness, sent it off by cab to Swinton Street . . . "shall soon be well . . . fix the date for, say, the 17th . . ." a note that came to that home of Jessie Page like exculpation to the accused and like balm to the bruised, for the marriage-group had duly started out, had revealed its charm of purity to the street's gaze, and in the pews had waited with a strain of care and a bitterness of ignominy that grew and grew, until sister Ada had pouted sourly, and a bitter statement had escaped Mrs. Page, "he never meant to come!" so all that afternoon the poor Jessie, unable to look anybody in the face, had sat alone, a stone, staring at that which she foresaw and foreknew, never doubting, however, the toughness of the stuff that bound her

to him whom the soul of her youth knew, nor doubting the strength of the hills whereon the secret treaty between her nature and his had been witnessed and sealed; and when near five o'clock Mary Giddins, whose finger was in every pie of her street, got tidings of the marriage-fiasco and knocked at the Page door to say that Hazlitt was probably ill, she having seen him ill four days previously, this somewhat relieved the moodiness of the home of mourning; two hours after which arrives Hazlitt's note, and now the bride, throwing herself upon her mother's breast, bubbled forth a flood of sobbings that laughed, of laughters that sobbed; and afterwards sat mum, but comforted.

By that hour Hazlitt, now well back in his old *chez soi* of personality, had read letters—two from his Máhdorla, who, when he had not met her at the Grafton rendezvous, had come to him, and come every day since; also Dr. Radlor had come; and twice Mr. Farrel, to enquire, and a trayful of "cards" been left.

And again at nine that night Máhdorla came, wished to see him; but he did not receive her, ashamed of being seen ill, and ever, if any little thing was wrong with his body, he would have confessed to "a crime" with less shyness—*much less*—than mention such a thing to anyone; moreover, though not too weak to love his Jessie, he was now too weak to love his Máhdorla; and, on reading her message, said to himself, "She has to be told, and she *shall* be"; then scribbled a prayer for the honour of a visit two evenings thence, when he expected to be up.

In fact, he was up the next noon in defiance of his doctor, and said then to his secretary: "Make a clean sweep: I rang and rang—no answer."

On which she, exclamatory: "Extraordinary thing! I have made enquiries, and they say they acted by the butler's orders (both the housekeeper and chef were out), while *he* says that he, too, 'acted under orders'—which is meaningless. The man must have been mad."

And Hazlitt: "I care nothing about their motives. Pay off every guilty one this day."

Now she eyed the carpet to say: "It is a revolution! . . . old servants of the Dowager. Anyway, I am afraid it can't be done in a day—or a week—the house will be empty. Besides, today I am short of money: the Bank returned this cheque this morning—no funds . . ."

Hazlitt started!—remembering that letter from "Dædalus" received in Paris, threatening "embarrassment" for

him, if he did not remain abroad: so that "Dædalus" was one who meant his threats. However, having in the Bank of England a "nest's-egg" of his own, withdrawn from other banks, he drew on this, till the usual flow of funds was renewed; and the exodus of domestics commenced that day.

On the next, down in the Amoor Room, he lay convalescent in the evening in a dressing-gown of camlet, green, with crimson griffins, his arm in a sling, and, seated near him, his Máhndorla in overskirt of Chantilly, wrap of Spanish lace, hydrangeas, so much of her bust-globes suggested as when eggs which are being boiled vault within the wallowing waltz of the water's agile engine, and vanish, and, her lips slipping between his a piece of *lima* (sweet lemon), as mother-birds do, she breathed: "Mustn't stay—this is pretty defiant and illicit, but I had to see you; *he* thinks that I am at Lady Penryth's, and is going there at ten, so——"

She stopped with rather a start: for there, on a tobacco-jar on a little table of tarsia at her left hand, lay a letter—of Jessie Page's, deposited there by Hazlitt in his negligent way, and forgotten: and her eyes, lighting on a phrase, had taken in the sense of it.

She said to herself: "School-girl . . ." for the writing was boyish.

And he: "No, I did not think you would want to stay: but"—speculating now on the night-sky—"what I had to tell—dear—is instantly told. A confession, in fact—between you and me. Look, now—this is it: I am not what I seem to you—so there: a '*mechanic*,' really, I am, not a 'gentleman'—to talk the jargon of the common man with a Mongol mentality. 'Beresford' is not my name—'Hazlitt' is. I came to this house in May to mend the telephone! and was addressed as 'Sir Henry' by the butler, who was in the pay of some person or persons having some motive to furnish me with funds—funds which may fail to flow at any moment: and I should look nice then, if I was allied to a lady of society, shouldn't I? So there—it is out."

Máhndorla now was as when a lady is aware of a mouse somewhere, and sits up astare with interest rather aghast, though hardly half of her interest was in what had been said, the other half being in the letter open there on the tobacco-jar of bloodstone; and, even as she sat leaning, alive with interest, her right eye's interest dwelling on his gaze at the Great Bear, all the energy of her left eye's interest was engaged in absorbing the sense of the letter.

And he: "Of course, I have enjoyed the opulence, power;

but now it appears that they who put me here are *the same* who abducted my mother—it seems so. Hence this sling: fell in going down a stack-pipe; had heard an outcry—my mother's voice—from the grounds of my neighbour yonder, a Mr. Farrel—he is coming here at half-past, by the way—so I ran to go to her: found myself locked in!—my butler in the pay of those who know of her, you see. She was something in this Farrel's *kitchen!* so you see my rank; and her outcry was due to their accusing her—falsely indeed—of a theft: 'case' comes-on on the 19th in the common police-court, though, if they now hurt her further, I—go mad, I think. They took her up in an aeroplane—her heart not strong . . . If you see me here bearing myself with less brutishness than other slaves of our rude civilization, that is because she slaved and slaved for me—a little lone woman struggling for breath in this maelstrom of England—mother!—I tell you, the milk of her . . . Anyway, you see, you see: that is how it is. I am sorry for us—ought to have confessed before, but lovers are such cowards. . . .”

Her left lid lowered at him, judging him, she conscious of shuffling here—of the confession of a lesser thing to escape the confession of a greater: for she had read in Jessie's letter “to go to be married and not to be, you don't know yet all that it meant . . .” words within which her female instincts instantly detected a meaning of maternity which Hazlitt's thicker masculinity had not scented in them; and now her left-shoulder shrugged just a little like the flamingo's wing, and next she leant forward to shut up his neck in the charm of a naked arm plumpish like the Venus de' Medici's and warmer, fuming close over him the power of her odour of flowers and womanhood, looking away, her cheek on his, toward the hangings of that divan whence her brother had uttered “Oh, you lie, you lie,” while she said: “But why ‘confession?’ Mechanic? Dear, I, of course, haven't the provincial point-of-view of the English as to all that: an American lady who pretends to be intelligent marries the man she loves—doesn't care if he works with his hands as a Paganini, a Stradivarius, a Rafael, Galileo, Rodin, as a mason, or a Rodin *and* a mason like Hernandez; and, as to money, think, dear, how impossible it must be for me to feel about that as people seem to: I was born into a household in which millions of money are as much a matter of course as mats or combs—— I can care no more for money than for monkey-nuts. And I am twenty-four—old, old—have waited to love with real vim; have kissed—two;

no, I won't lie to you—three: experimentally! to see what would result: that's nothing, you don't mind?—no tremendous revel, till *you* touched me. By heaven, I—dance; I am off in it. And do you think, Caxton, that anything under the sun can come between us now? Nothing can. Dear, I always have what I want."

At this the soul in Hazlitt groaned. He said: "My dear, you don't even know me. I am at present more or less a charlatan—I may be a swindler——"

She pressingly kissed his temple, saying: "Rogue, yes, rascal—not swindler. I know you better than I have known, or can ever know, anyone. We were married in some former existence—— You have a little mole somewhere, and I have one to correspond: so there."

On which he: "By Jove! how can you possibly guess——?"

And she: "I feel—remember—that you have: remember it as a thing just so inveterate and stale as the beards on old piers that sway in the waves, and sway year-in year-out."

"And *you* have one there too? is that an actual fact?"

She bit his ear, holding his neck close captive in that padded cell of her arm; and, "Darling Máhdorla!" he murmured, turning his lips to be kissed; but, even as his teeth that laughed were being sweetly kissed by the laugh of her teeth, he moaned, and now all at once found himself desperately leaping the precipice, saying: "Yes, but I *must* tell you: the fact remains that I have not been frank; in fact, my dear, I am—engaged . . ."

Now she, though less outraged than he had expected, disengaged herself from him, caught up and tossed one of the *limas* crossly out of window, and now sat pouting; while he, not looking at her, miserably added: "That is so—hardly very frank: in fact, I would have been married three days ago, if I had not been light-headed in bed; the poor girl actually went to the church. . . . I have to tell you—was on the point of telling you in Paris, but events intervened: you went away suddenly, and I, too. . . . I am to marry on the 17th."

This blanched and flushed her quick alternately, like the turning-off and turning-on of a switch for fun, so that the light winks, while alert she sat with winking lids in a fighting attitude, as one who half casts off his jacket, to fight.

"That is so," he feebly added: "I had to tell you."

"But you don't love her!" she exclaimed.

"Do love her," he murmured, "love her dearly."

"And not me? Not me?"

"Yes, of course: you, too; but——"

"But what?"

"I am a thousand times bound to her!" he cried: "for ten years—— She is seventeen now, and was my sweetheart at seven: so it would be an impossibility for me to be faithless to her, since that would be blacker than human nature can be."

But this fell off her like water from oil. . . . She said confidently: "I see: an attachment; boy-and-girl play; *she* can't lead you through the ordeal of the travail of passion. . . . Look here, I will get you out of it—give me a day to think."

"Oh, come!"—from Hazlitt; and at the same moment a rapping at the door; and now a flunkey's announcement: "The Rev. Dr. Radlor"; and now Máhndorla's wild whisper: "*Oh, God!* he suspects—mustn't see me . . ." as up she sprang to whirl her skirts round the edge of a screen of lacquer at the rear of Hazlitt's chaise-longue and vanish, while Hazlitt said to the flunkey: "Mention to Dr. Radlor that I am engaged for an hour"—too late, for the doctor, who had willed to come up behind the flunkey, and had come, now looked in, saying: "Shan't detain you, Beresford," and advanced red, a thunder-cloud, with that masculine push of his walk, broadcast by an arm akimbo, up the length of the apartment's festival of tinted lantern-shines, while Hazlitt sat with shy eyelids which deprecated that violence of entrance.

And "Good boy," said the doctor, exhibiting a paw to be shaken, "glad to see you up. I was so eager to see you for a minute—— Am I fully forgiven for what was said?"

"Oh, quite, since you wish . . ."

"Good!"—sitting on the chair abandoned by Máhndorla—"we are brothers by nature—know each other, sir. And now, tell me: I gather that you had a fall—— Have you time? You are alone, I see——"

"At the moment, but a man is coming by appointment——"

"A man; not a lady"—meditatively.

"Ha, ha, shouldn't I have said 'lady,' if——"

"Of course. The notion 'lady' occurred to me because I seem to smell an odor di femmina somewhere: possibly you have a girl hidden——" looking narrowly to see if Hazlitt's eyes moved instinctively toward a hiding-place.

And Hazlitt: "Pooh, that's galloch and sandal-wood

incense you smell, perhaps. I am just out of bed—not thinking of girls.”

“Yes, so I suppose. And now tell about the fall.”

“Come tomorrow! My mother—I heard her voice, that’s all: she was in Farrel’s house—I don’t know how; it is he who is coming in a minute——”

White to the lips dashed Dr. Radlor at this, as a radish’s skin when white is stricken to a sicker fright than any other white, and instantly springing up, with an eye of anxiety toward the door, he leaned to say in a species of whisper which hissed: “What! a man who had your mother in his house—you receive him?”

“Well,” Hazlitt said, “I am not sure that he has any connection—— And he has been so assiduous in inquiring after me, that finally I——”

“Don’t see him! Turn him away!”

“Oh, but——”

“Turn him away! I know him—an American—most dangerous man! You cannot doubt that it is he who has your mother—turn him right away!”

Hazlitt’s eyebrows lifted. “How do you—*know*? I promised——”

“You *will* see him?”

“Must, I think, now: for——”

“I go”—throwing a finger of decision—“see you later”; he was away with a certain stealth of step.

However, he was hardly half to the door, when—a rapping on it! and now a trapped eye was flying round, seeking hiding. There were three screens which, crass with nacreous matter, reflected the lantern-shines in masses of iridescence that attracted the eye, and, better still for hiding, a side-door opening on a stair, nearer to him than any of the screens; but, even in the thick of his fix, his intellect was busy, thinking that behind a screen he would hear what was said, that behind *that* screen near Hazlitt a lady, if by chance a lady was here, would be: and back he darted, bent headlong, with wide strides on tiptoe, finger on lip, to slip behind that screen where indeed a lady was in hiding.

And while Hazlitt, all astonishment at all this, stood half up in an attempt, too late, to restrain the fugitive from shaming Máhdorla, he saw marching up the room that mass of Mr. Farrel, who in his somewhat ponderous manner was uttering in his drum’s voice: “I am pleased indeed, Sir Henry Beresford, to see you so far recovered.”

Hazlitt chuckled a little!—which was the net-result of the several nettles of burlesque embarrassment and perplexity in which he sat in punishment; and since in his ears was meantime humming “it is *he* who has your mother,” he just permitted his finger-tips to be touched, saying with a certain curtness: “Yes, I am better. I thank you for coming. Take a chair.”

“Well”—sitting—“we ‘fall to rise again,’ sir, as the poet sings. That is well, is it not? When we are lowest we are then at a mountain’s foot, and may climb to that happy height of him qui metus omnes et inexorabile fatum subjecit pedibus.”

“Hallo,” Hazlitt muttered to himself with a sullen eye askance on him, “we seem to be given to jewels of quotation, as to jewels of mineral: Latin—sounds like ‘Latin’ ”; and he said: “Quite so. I have also to thank you now for bailing out that poor woman in whom I am interested. . . . Have you, by chance—seen her since?”

“No. In fact, I have never seen her. She has not presented herself to make restitution of the stolen jewel.”

“‘Stolen’—never stole it: harmless as a dove essentially—gentle is her name. . . . Will you prosecute such a being?”

“Well, Sir Henry Beresford, failing evidence of innocence, or else confession and restitution, yes. That, I think, would be a duty——”

At this Hazlitt’s quick blood boiled to an intolerant irritableness of prickly-heat, he crying out: “Duty! Ah, dear, why do people use words without clean-cut meanings? ‘England expects every man this day’—muggy England! Really, I can’t stand such people! ‘Duty!’ Whence? Why? On what basis? How do you know that the duty which England expects is not wrong to do, won’t cause more pain than pleasure, as is too likely when men forget that their sole ‘duty’ is to refuse to be monkeys, using in each case their own human nuts. . . . Supposing that you are sincere——”

Like a rock upon which waves wash in vain Mr. Farrel sat, with eyes that quietly dwelt on that irritation, till he said in his weighty way: “If I have offended you, it was unwittingly, sir. When I said ‘I *think* it would be a duty,’ I was doing what you recommend—though I may have thought wrongly, since *nemo semper sapit*. ‘Duty,’ indeed—you say—is not a word with ‘a clean-cut meaning,’ though I do not quite see this: I thought that it meant what one ‘owes’ or ‘ought’ to do, in order to ‘cause more pleasure than pain’; though, here again I admit—*humanum est errare*—that one may be in error as to what one’s ‘duty’ really is.

In any case, I think you may safely give one credit for 'sincerity' "—lecturing with a finger that wagged with an isochronism as languid and strict as that lamp's in the cathedral of Pisa whose swing Galileo marked.

And Hazlitt, distracted, half thinking of his Máhdorla, and half of what was said: "Yes, yes, you say better than I what I meant to say. But the point is—you demand restitution of this jewel; well, the poor woman hasn't it to restore: so I now offer you four, five, times whatever is the value of it. Does that settle the matter?"

But this seemed rather to hurt Mr. Farrel, who a little shrank in answering: "Well, but, Sir Henry Beresford, such an offer does not seem to me congruous to the case. Let things fit each other a little, sir—as Ovid says, 'ne celeri detur victima tarda deo'—for oil and water will not mix, nor sums of money with the course of justice. Since, as you say, the old woman has not the jewel—never had it, or has sold it, pledged it—let her approach me and say so, and she will be likely to find me clement, without tendering me five times, or any time, the value of it."

"Oh, very well," Hazlitt now off-handedly said, "I will call to see you about it—I can't now say all I have—You see, I am not well, am irritated, in nettles——"

Mr. Farrel stood up. "Well, I am pleased to see you at least better. Good night, Sir Henry Beresford"—bowing, without again shaking hands.

And scarcely had the door closed behind him, when out from behind the screen slipped a little scream "*O, don't!*," and immediately Dr. Radlor appeared, leading his sister's wrist in a grip so strict, that the knuckles of his ruddy right fist stuck out white like a grin, his countenance now grum like some thundercloud's frown, while dumbly he led her past Hazlitt toward the door, but then, after some steps, sharply span to rush back to Hazlitt, whom with his left thumb he rammed venomously in the ribs, making Hazlitt buck-up, going: "*Xlk!* gay dog, ha, ha, ha!" with a rictus of the lips, near to tears—"you don't care, do you, gay dog, *Xlk!*"—another dig—"what griefs, what overthrows, what ignominies, your being and your intrigues bring upon an honourable family going its honourable way in peace"—stooping close over, speaking secretly, his red-raw gaze lugubriously grieving, loaded with gloom, his bosom bobbing toward sobs, jaw and beard anguished, as when the goat's molars chew askew, and her beard goes, too—"and the good-will I have tried to bear you, in spite—in spite . . .

you heed not what wounds you deal in recompense, eh? And how you dared address the dignity of that greying head, so forbearing to your low-bred insolence—you said ‘monkey’—oh, you, you—to *him*. War, man!”—he nodded admonishingly—“war!”—he nodded, crying with a cry-cry mask of tragedy—“look out, man, for me! lest a sword pierce your own heart also, as a sword has pierced mine”—twice now he patted Hazlitt on the arm finishingly, and, swinging round, marched off with his sister’s wrist.

She, for her part, had stood quite passive, sullen, her eyes cast down; but half way to the door, lagging slightly behind, she inserted her thumb-tip betwixt her two fingers, and, glancing back toward Hazlitt, twiddled her fist in derision at her brother—a gesture which the most ribald of the devils did at the good Dante in hell, a gesture for which many a wight has had to pay with his life in the Latin lands. . . .

As for Hazlitt, little of it having any sense for him, he sat lost in seven astonishments, his lips unable to shut to utter the labial of “But” . . .

Chapter 21

A Second Wedding-Day

AFTER WHICH, as if she had been condemned by “a court,” or was in the fourteenth century, the poor Máhdorla lay imprisoned three days, *locked* in her apartments in her brother’s Brook Street residence: a piece of despotism that merely pitched up her chin, made her the more sullen, resentful, and resolute to attain her own ends.

It offered her, besides, time and temptation to plot, and gossip, and ply the gift of the gab with her Giuliva, a prisoner with her, to whom she unfolded the whole story, both souls venomously feminine, subtle above every beast of the field, both tongues fluent like brooks; and while they amused themselves with making a dress that they cut out with nail-scissors (having no other), there was no limit to their stream of disquisition, to their scheming and cathedral-rearing, to their dropping of the voice, their laying together of foreheads, the lady talking with that Roman affectedness that draws “laur-o” for “lo-ro,” the maid with Tuscan Doricness throating “choloro” for “coloro,” Hazlitt’s marriage of

the 17th being their subject: the result of which discussions was, that as soon as ever they were set free Giuliva took herself to some solicitors in Regent Street near.

Representing herself to these as a witness in the "case" of a Mrs. Hazlitt to come-on on the 19th, she said that, since she was compelled to start for the Continent in the afternoon of the 17th, she wanted an application to be made to "the magistrate" to take the case in the forenoon of the 17th (Hazlitt's marriage-morning—as he had informed Máhndorla); and when the lawyers said that this could doubtless be brought about, the lady's-maid instructed them to send "by hand," on the morning of the 17th, a notice of the change of date from the 19th to the 17th to Sir Henry Beresford of Park Lane, who was an interested party, and was expected to come home from abroad at 10.30 in that morning of the 17th.

This the solicitors undertook to do, and the servant hurried home with a flurry of news, to blurt out, the moment she burst into her mistress's room: "It goes well, all, all"—"tut'to, tut'to!"

On which the mistress, breathing "good," stood palish round lid and nostril, while Giuliva dropped into a chair, fanning with her handkerchief, until she found wind to proceed to repeat every word that had been said by her and by the solicitor, every twenty seconds uttering afresh with shut lids from her teeth and tongue-tip "tut'to, tut'to, all, all," to punctuate the radiant tale—though her radiance was not without a shade of doubt in it, too, for she said at the end: "Only, I still feel that which I have so often said, that a spouse is little likely to leave his bride, in order to be at the side of his mother."

"He will," Máhndorla murmured, pacing the chamber, in a purplish déshabille of foulard, with a certain slipshodness of her hips' working that lazily gave-way alternately: "that is not what troubles me, but the question whether the girl will really leave her home. Depends on her temperament."

Giuliva stubbornly shook her head with: "For me, as I have often said, there is no doubt as to that—if it is actually so that the young girl is *incinta*, as you believe: for, this being her second failure to be wedded, she will be desperately affected by it. Indeed, I could pity her sad heart in that event."

And Máhndorla, pacing: "If butchers were pitiful, we should never eat meat. When it is necessary to be cruel,

pity is ridiculous, for one should pity only when one can be kind—as we shall be afterwards.”

“It is true,” Giuliva admitted: “mortals must adapt their hearts to cases. . . . But, I confess, I do not see the end of this affair, for I have a dread of the intervention of your brother at some point before the end. Ah, if he were to detect anything of this, it would be an ill case with *me*, of a truth!”

“Vad’ mmorì ammazzato!—let him go die slain”—with a pout of that mouth’s tit-bit and “parson’s-nose,” that roused the cannibal instinct in man—“he must be taught that there is more than a sister and a daughter in a woman. The ‘end of the affair’ will be a marriage-certificate—what can he say in the face of that?”

“It is true. . . . But, ah, signorina, your brother becomes aware of many things!”

“*Ah, zut alors!* we women are half an inch deeper than the most piercing man. We’ll win through—see if I don’t twist that Hazlitt-fellow round my little finger. I hate him for daring to dream of leaving me, after daring to kiss me. . . . Thinks himself somebody!—he is only a workman, as it turns out, he is not tall and beautiful, not my ideal of a man, his manners are bourgeois—and rough as a hooligan when he is irritated—dreadfully rude he was to the old man: my brother gave him two good digs in the ribs, I was astonished that my brother didn’t bash him in his mug (*muso*). There is something or other between my brother and him—*he* doesn’t know what, but my brother knows, and *I* will know, for I will find out. Anyway, I want him, and shall have him: we two are bound together for ever, he has a mole just where I have one; and I like his walk—light; and his run—light, flying; he flings a glance at the sky—flying, gallant—wildly in love he is with a fellow he calls ‘God’: I like him somehow for that—hears musics, musics everywhere; and his disdain—throned far above Czars, king of kings he is, and Cæsar’s kaiser, yet simple—I like him—see if I don’t drink and exhaust him, as a drunkard sucks-up rum through straws. I will have him—let my brother die slain!—heaven and earth shall pass away, but I will have him. . . . I only wish it was over . . . three days more. . . . Come, dress me.”

“Three days”: during which the object of her longing did not see his Jessie, not being yet quite well, though each evening he wrote her something about the approaching bridals—had now hired a little suite in the Hyde Park Hotel for

her home, not meaning to bring her to Park Lane, where the continuity of his own foothold was so little secured; and on that fatal 17th he was early up, intending first to run round to Mr. Farrel as to the restitution of the jewel, and to be at the church-door by noon. The matter of the jewel, indeed, should have been seen-to before, for he had not been too ill to step round into Park Street, but, easy and dilatory by disposition, Hazlitt was given to deferring the irksome; and when, at 10.15, the secretary wanted to discuss something with him, and he, on taking out his watch, saw that it was later than he had thought, he said to himself as to the jewel: "I shan't have time: do it tomorrow"—thinking the "case" still two days away.

Three minutes after which Máhndorla, to his discomfort, was announced, and "What does she want?" he muttered—"at this hour? She has forgotten that this is the wedding day. . . . Take Miss Radlor to the Victoria Room" . . . and he remained some minutes more with the secretary before rushing to the visitor, who in this interval had filched, and put into her hand-bag, an envelope from an escritoire-rack—a room of marqueterie cabinets lined with sky-blue silk-velvet and thick with knickknacks, water-colours hiding the walls, Friths, two Morlands, a fire-screen of crewel; and she in a trumpery of summer-muslins stood looking on the Park, when in he dashed to her with "Delightful surprise, my dear Máhndorla. . . ."

At which she laughed, saying: "I don't see that there is any need for any fibs; nor need you have any fear of being haunted, or pestered with 'scene di gelosia.' I know you; know that you are fond of me: and since the school-girl comes in, I confront facts, and reconcile myself . . . May I know, by the way, the young lady's name?"

"Oh, yes: Page—Jessie Page."

"Well, I only came to say that I retire resignedly—going away——"

"My dear Máhndorla! Where to?"

"Italy, I think. When crossed in love, I go to Italy and sit me under the sighpresses. So I came—By the way, may one sit?"

"Ha, ha, my dear Máhndorla!"—pressing her by the arms into a chair, thinking in himself, "if she doesn't go by 10.30, by heaven I remind her that this is the wedding-day."

But he did not remind her when a clock in the wing of a gilt Time under glass dropped in passing a mention that it was half-past, she then saying to him: "So you will always

let me know . . . occasionally I may write to you, see you, in tender friendship's name. Moreover, I may mention that I chance to know something about an old woman who may—possibly—be your mother, so that we should keep in touch——”

“This is extraordinary!” he cried out; “‘mother’—tell me——”

But her answer was stopped by someone tapping, and in a minute she was watching his face left blanched, as he bent with split lips over a letter from a solicitor, telling him that “the case of Mrs. Hazlitt is listed to come on during the forenoon of this day. . . .”

A wonder as to how this solicitor could know of his existence arose a moment in his mind—“through Farrel perhaps,” he surmised; then he was wandering bowed about, lost in the desert of the floor, his guest forgotten, who was peeping steadily under her eyes at that fight in his mind between the summons of his wedding-day and the summons of his mother; until he, darting to a door, called sharply to a chance under-butler, who passed full of morning-polishing and “pantry-work,” “Send Freddie!” then pelted to his guest to appeal to her on eager breaths: “You will forgive me, I know!—my mother—case comes on today——”

“It does?” says she, “today? Yes, yes, I go this instant . . . Write to me?—Goodbye, goodbye . . .”

When she kissed his fingers, he snatched at her to kiss this jaw of her and now that, but she, wanting more, manoeuvred with her mouth, got at his, and lingered musing, as bees do, joining her body to his, wantonly enjoying the feeling of robbery from his bride, sorry in her joy that his bride was not near to peep and spy; but, even as she presently waved farewell, reluctantly stepping away with an underlook and smile that sighed, that reproached, he was making in haste from her toward a bureau, Freddie already present, whose Eton jacket she touched in passing out, saying “Well, Freddie,” while Hazlitt in a fret of haste was writing: “Boz dear, *don't go* to the church, until I come to you—before 2.30. Send message to clergyman: ‘wedding at 2.45.’ I have to see to Mum in haste. Be sorry for me! Caxton”; and “Be there by eleven,” he said, throwing money to Freddie, who had ever proved himself a trusty messenger, “hop—look alive.”

The boy trotted off, slid down one stair-rail, and outside made paces south toward Piccadilly, on the look-out for a taxi; had hardly, however, gone forty yards when he butted

into Máhndorla, who was just issuing from a gateway before which stood her motor-brougham; and she remarked: "Oh, it is Freddie . . . Haven't you started off yet with the letter? No cab?"

"Not as yet, miss. There's a cab-stand down yonder——"

"For Miss Page is it, the letter?"

"Yes, miss."

"Well, it is urgent: get into my car; I will take you."

"Thank you, miss."

"Tell the chauffeur the address . . ."

This he did, she adding to the chauffeur: "Swan-and-Edgar first," and they were off, the boy seated between her and Giuliva, who presently remarked to him: "You are a lucky boy—to have met us: for you can now keep for yourself the money which you would have had to pay to a wattman."

And he: "Yes, miss—te, te—I don't hardly think I'd care to do that."

"You would not care? Then, pay me for this car that which you would have paid to a wattman, and I will then again present it to you as a regalement."

This was formally done: he depositing the money on her palm, she handing it back, remarking: "Now if you do not wish to tell Sir Henry that you went with us instead of with a wattman, it can never be known, since *we* are little likely to tell anyone."

"No, miss"—touching his forehead.

And now Máhndorla to him: "Where exactly are we going? Let me see the address"—taking the letter from his hand, while Giuliva, as the brougham now drew up before Swan-and-Edgar's, said to him: "I go in here for some parcels: you may come and assist me to bring them."

She got out; he got out; passed into the shop; Máhndorla with a fountain-pen now copying the address from the envelope to an envelope which she had abstracted from the escritoire-rack in Park Lane, the two envelopes alike, the writings, too, alike, for during two days she had been studious in practicing to reproduce Hazlitt's hand, that envelope which she directed containing a letter in a writing that was strikingly like Hazlitt's. And when, after ten minutes, Freddie and Giuliva came back, bearing each an armful of parcels, and when Máhndorla had inclined her head in assent to Giuliva's eyebrows of inquiry, and the car had started afresh, Máhndorla handed to Freddie the letter which she had before written and had just directed to Jessie,

she now having Hazlitt's letter to Jessie tucked away among her bréloques.

Now down the crowdedness of Regent Street the motor-car manœuvred its career, till, half-way down, after a glance at the glass in her bag, Máhndorla stopped the car before Houbigant's, remarking to the boy, "This lady will go on with you," and, with a nod to her maid, was gone; whereupon, *à deux*, Freddie and Giuliva pursued their impeded career, intriguing as through impeding media, as when one who runs lamenting stops for breath anon, and then is stubbornly off, lamenting, afresh—through blockage and turmoil at Oxford Circus, along the prolonged hotchpotch and holiday of Oxford Street streaming, that cried "Time-spirit, O, Dream-stuff, O," until Giuliva stopped at the Avenue Hotel, and, saying to the boy "I will not be long," went in.

Ten minutes—twenty: she did not come; and the boy got to be so hot at it, and the forenoon was so hot and flooded with glory, that finally he was wiping his forehead . . . Happy the bride that the sun shines on . . .

It was 11.35 before the Tuscan stepped out to say to Freddie: "I am kept here, I cannot go farther"; and to the chauffeur: "Take him to wherever he wishes": so now it was down Gray's Inn Road, and into Swinton Street, where Freddie sprang out to rap.

There came to him, stepping over scarlet of new carpet, a woman eventful that day in cap and apron; and at the same moment Mary Giddins, too, leaving gossip at a doorway, came peering across to know what the motor wanted in her street, as did several other women: for there was unrest in the street on account of the wedding event, and outlook, and a need to meet and lounge and mouth, the sun shining so unclouded above, the day a holiday all decked in bright array: and happy the bride that the sun shines on . . .

"But they all gone to the church!" said she who had opened the door.

"Miss Page isn't in?"—from Freddie.

"No, ain't she gone to the church? Ain't she gone to be married? Give me the letter, I'll give her when——"

"No, I've got to give it to herself, he told me."

Now Mary called from the area-railing: "Who sent it, boy?"

"It's from Sir Henry Beresford."

At which she was leaning forward agaze at Freddie with her gray gaze of Athene, soft and seeing, muttering in dis-

may to herself: "Good God, ain't he going to marry her this time again?"—for, on hearing from Giddins how he had found Hazlitt in a palace in Paris, her sense of scent had conjectured that the "Henry Beresford" of the cheques sent to her and Giddins could be no other than Hazlitt, and now she was sure; so at once "Hurry up, then, why don't you?" she cried out: "take the letter to the church—St. Pancras Church it is."

Whereupon the motor was away, Mary and other women trotting after to watch it vanish into traffic toward King's Cross; and said Mary then: "Something has happened—he ain't going to be there, I'll bet; and this will pretty well do that poor thing in, I should think."

A guess that needed no seer to make! for, for the second time, the bride and her group of moon-maidens had been waiting fifteen minutes for a groom who did not come, before the boy, having bored a passage through a flock of on-lookers at the church-porch, spurted toward the chancel; and just the sight of a messenger, a mail and no male, was enough to strike dismay to every soul there.

But no messenger nor message could make Jessie's flesh whiter, or her affright wilder, than it was already: for not three minutes had she been seated between sister and mother in that pew when the something that bodes in the bosom had boded to her "it won't be"; and when the boy's florid forehead intervened between her and the altar, it was a super-human calm that acted in her, as she stood to take and peruse, for her every-day self had failed and swooned away, and another took its place for her, as during the seconds when one is tumbling with an aeroplane it is Someone Else that tumbles for one, and bears the bale and blame of it . . .

"My dear, I find it impossible to marry you, now or ever—it is best to say it bluntly. As I am just going abroad, do not write to me, but go quickly, on getting this, to the Ritz in Piccadilly, and ask for *Miss Parsons*, who will explain everything, and take care of you. Trust her fully for my sake. Caxton."

And headlong, in the second that she had read it, fled Jessie—headlong—tearing away past the knees of half her party, throwing only at them "He can't come!" to race headlong down the nave, a wraith in a wreath, keen to leave that accursed church astern of her, leaving the shreds of the letter and her bouquet on the street, as, breaking into a carriage, she cried out: "*Drive home!*" and it was with the

carriage-door swinging wide that the trip was made to Swinton Street, for the bride's stare did not see it swinging . . .

As she rapped pressingly at her door, up ran Mary Giddins' tripping toes to her; but Jessie, in a grumble hoarsely guttural, that had in it a strong authority, commanded: "Leave me alone," and nothing more was said: in she fled; and when the bridal-troupe, pursuing, arrived, it was to find her bolted in her room.

Nor for a long while could any reply to knockings be won, until, throwing herself on her knees at her mother, with the bolted door between them, the bride cried out, pleading: "Mother, I only ask to be left alone!—do, Mother, will you?"

"Well, then, shew me the letter that you got," Mrs. Page called back.

And Jessie: "I think I tore it up—he said he couldn't come—only leave me to myself!"

"But that wasn't *all* he said? What did you tear it up for?"

"I don't know—I haven't it—I must have torn it up."

Silence; till Mrs. Page said: "You see now, Jessie, you and your love-affairs at your age; your sister is in a pretty state, let me tell you . . . But what excuse did the man give? let us know! He shall never have you now, he's not good enough . . . But—isn't the man going to marry you at all? Tell me!"

And now Jessie: "Mother, do you want to drive me mad?"

Silence.

"But what a dirty beast!"—from outside.

And from inside: "He is all right, he can't help . . . Mother, will you leave me to it now? Mother, that's all I ask!"

"Leave you to it . . . How long do you mean to stay in there?"

"One hour, Mother!"

"Well, for an hour—no more."

But within an hour the girl was out, working her way down the stair, bag in hand, fleet but cautious, all leers and thieves' feet stealing, as when attackers, sneaking, dash between bush and bush, advancing, until she was on the passage-carpet, where charier still and warier was the word, for back of that parlour-door sat the party conversing, and to earn the front-door's opening without one fret of sound meant an eternity of alertness and impatient patience; till now, like one who with arms cast out casts himself down

fathomless chasms, headlong, reckless, she was out and away, her feet freed, fleeing, fleeing . . . little female biped, two-legged thing, fleeing so from the familiar, the settled, from bed and breakfast and mother's love and grumble, giddily into the gulf of chaos—"little," but bigger than little, defying the lightning, not less high than heaven's height, stretched to the measure of the depth of death and hell—only youth so gallant! the old being cowards, "afraid of that which is high."

But she did not fly unmarked, for two eyes were vigilant: and hardly had she pitched into Gray's Inn Road, when Mary Giddins, with that pretty tripping of the toes on which she tripped, was at the run-away with "Where *you* off to?"

The other stopped, caught; and hoarsely low she uttered: "I don't see that that is any business of yours."

And Mary: "Whoy, do you suppose anybody is going to let you go off like this ere?—not likely. You've got to come back with me."

Whereat Jessie, her eyes now wide in fresh affright, suddenly took to flight anew on her southward way—not far, for, her bag being heavy, presently Mary was again pressing with her, saying: "Well, then, you've got to tell me where you're going to, or I'll call a policeman; tell me—I ain't going to tell nobody."

But pressing on, panting, Jessie did not answer; and now Mary: "Got any money? Because I can lend you some."

"Oh, do let me be, can't you?"—from Jessie—"I have money."

"Well, if you promise to write to me, I'll let you go, and I won't tell nobody where you are—so there."

"Oh, my—if you like. Why should I promise to write to you?"

"Whoy, ain't it just as well? Don't me and Hazlitt meet sometimes? You might just as well be sociable with anybody . . . Tell me what Hazlitt said in the letter—something to do with his mother, ain't it?"

"No, not his mother"—brokenly from a throat that throbbed, she stepping petty along as rapidly as possible under the drag of the dangling bag, that fluttered staggery, erratic, along, like butterflies that flutter staggery along; and anon she tossed a glance backward.

And Mary: "I could er sworn it was something to do with his mother why he didn't come . . . But, however it goes, listen to me: *Hazlitt ain't bad*, so don't think it. There's something queer—Why did Hazlitt send the letter to Swin-

ton Street when he knew that at that hour you would be at the church? There's something—do you promise to write—”

Now a taxi stopped at Jessie's hand held up; and Jessie: “If you promise——”

“Yes, I tell you!—I ain't going to tell nobody at all, not for nuts. So good-bye—goodbye—I've got to kiss her!” moisture now brimming in her eyes, the bride's countenance also puckering up, convulsed one instant, at the pity of the kiss, until, calling “Aldgate!” she was in, and gone.

Chapter 22

“The Court”

DURING ALL which Hazlitt, for his part, was at “the court”: for, on sending off the boy with the letter, he had rapidly dressed in “frockcoat,” with “a buttonhole,” to be ready for the wedding, then, having hurried round to Mr. Farrel's and heard that Mr. Farrel “was out”—the moon-faced flunkey knew not where—he had driven for “the court,” to see already waiting there among constables that stepped with bustling a flock of “the poor”; and rapidly his glance ran through the tagrag, seeking his mother's face, seeking Mr. Farrel's: neither there; and now he pounced upon an officer, who, however, would not be stopped, but kept on, tracked by Hazlitt's enquiries, into a side-room, where it was found in a book that the old woman had given as her address both Acton Street and Park Street, and at both had been notified of the change of date from the 19th to the 17th.

“But she has not been to Acton Street—I know,” Hazlitt said, “and probably not to Park Street: so what will be done to her, if she does not come?”

“There will be a warrant——”

“What! even if she hasn't received the notice? Haven't official things to be served ‘personally?’ ”

“Not in a case like this. If she could shew that she never received the notification, no doubt she'd be treated leniently; but she'll probably turn up presently.”

“But if she doesn't? Either today or on the 19th? What then?”

“What, not to surrender to her bail? Catch it rather hot,

sir—" he was gone; and when Hazlitt followed out to the old-clothes room he now at once saw Mr. Farrel peer out of a door-way; so, throwing up his hand, he ran, saying: "Good! I was looking for you"; on which Mr. Farrel bowed, saying: "Step in here, Sir Henry Beresford"—into a room containing a table and brown tomes brooding round in book-cases; and there they two stood alone, confronted, Hazlitt rather blanched, fluttered, saying with agitated breaths: "I have been to your place—must settle this matter with you. Mrs. Hazlitt hasn't come—perhaps won't come—or may be here any minute . . . I see that you still intend to prosecute, since you are here?"

Mr. Farrel did not at once answer, his eyes dwelling side-ward on the fireplace, until he said: "Mrs.—what name did you say?"

"Hazlitt—the old woman——"

"*'Hammond,'* I was told, is her name."

"No, Hazlitt, Hazlitt. You persist in wishing to put into a Zulu prison a frail old woman——"

"But, Sir Henry Beresford, is this that you say well said? In truth, I do not wish to put into prison any old woman. But, as I have said to you, it seems to me good that, if one appears to have stolen, and does not make restitution or confession, then, he or she should be prosecuted. You apparently think not: but you have not yet convinced me."

Hazlitt eyed him with an underlook of dislike, of profound mistrust; then: "Suppose I tell you now that she is perfectly innocent?"

"You have told me so before, Sir Henry Beresford. Since that is so, it will, I hope, appear in the course of the proceedings."

With dislike Hazlitt eyed him, and suddenly put two fingers to a pocket to draw out the intaglio of the dragon . . .

"Here is the stone . . ."

Mr. Farrel's eyebrows lifted a little in his deliberate fashion; then, "Very good," he said, taking the stone, "I assume that the woman has handed this over to you, to make for her restitution and confession——"

"Nothing of the kind!" Hazlitt sharply said: "I haven't seen her! She confesses nothing!—never stole it—harmless, gentle to the heart—I told you so—I forbid you to slander her——"

Mr. Farrel bowed. "I apologise, Sir Henry Beresford, for having made a wrong assumption; and I now await an explanation of your possession of this gem of mine."

Hazlitt impatiently shook his face. "You have the thing back: is that not enough for you? *She* did not steal it, that's all."

And Farrel: "Then, since she does not confess, sir, has nothing to confess, her innocence will doubtless be proved during her trial."

He got an ugly look from Hazlitt, who, after tossing his top-hat off his forehead, and throwing himself some steps away in the throes of a fret of perplexity, came again to say: "Do you mean to say that you will still appear against her?"

"I will appear."

"Oh, don't do that!"—with a change of tone, pleading now with appealing arms.

"I—will, Sir Henry Beresford."

And now Hazlitt: "'Duty,' you see"—with a judging eye—"England expects: mother of 'courts' she is, king's 'courts,' police 'courts,' and still she is 'expecting'—prolific mother; and America, too, 'expects'—twins, winsome twins: *if* you are sincere, *if* all this is not in the *scheme*."

At which "*scheme*" keenly he watched the face before him to see the effect of "*scheme*," but that rock did not budge an eyelid, nor reply, and now afresh Hazlitt weakened toward pleading, saying: "Look here, Mr. Farrel, that old woman is no thief, sir. When I tell you that I don't even know where she is, and yet I have the gem, what conclusion do you come to?"

"I—come to no conclusion, Sir Henry Beresford."

"Well, the natural conclusion is—that I—stole it myself . . . Anyway, that is—so. Now—you can do your 'duty,' and prosecute me."

No answer: only some raising of the brow, some hardening of that marble of face.

"Not that I properly *stole* it," Hazlitt added: "found it in an old drawer in a house near Chichester—did not think that it now belonged to anybody in particular—took it—wanted ready-money at the moment. That was *before* the old woman was in your house, so the thing was undoubtedly stolen from your house by someone else—by that butler of yours, I suspect, if not by—I won't say—yourself. So, seeing it, in a moment of"—he shrugged—"I, yes—took it. You may think as you please of me—spread it abroad that Sir Henry Beresford is a wrong-one—'prosecute' me, since you have a passion for 'prosecuting'; but, then, I am not really—a thief, don't you know; never stole—Oh, yes, I

forgot—once took some chocolates in a shop—yes, yes, I remember—but really—” he turned to step three steps away; and when he turned again Mr. Farrel was bent at the table scribbling with a gold pencil on a visiting-card—a note to his solicitor; which done, at once he stepped toward the door without vouchsafing a glance toward Hazlitt, who said to his back: “I take it, then, that you now drop——”

“Yes,” the other curtly said, without turning that now stern countenance, as he went out of the doorway; and he had left the “court” when Hazlitt, too, passed into the outer apartment.

And now, among the crowd and fustiness of “the court” that had the smell of an old sore uncovered, Hazlitt waited, muttering to himself: “The hotchpotch and old-clo’-shop of ugliness and dullness thrown-up daily here: ‘cases,’ ‘cases,’ in which the actual culprit never stands to be ‘judged,’ and the ‘judge’ is ever duller and uglier with guilt (to an educated intelligence) than any whom he condemns”; and he waited, pacing, seated, speaking with policemen, solicitors, hour after hour, with outlook for a mother who did not come; nor was it until two o’clock, when hope was sick in him that he bolted into a taxi-cab to be at his wedding.

Chapter 23

“Gone . . .”

BUT, AT the Page door before, 2.30, as he had promised to be in his note to Jessie, he was immoderately shocked when Mrs. Page, who opened the door, at once slammed it again in his face with a hoarse “Hoh!” of animus, as one would slam out a gorilla’s apparition in Piccadilly; but pretty soon again opened to demand: “What is it now, Hazlitt?”

“What is what?”—from Hazlitt: “why did you—? Haven’t you had my note? Where is Boz?”

“Oh, you call her ‘Boz’? you have the face?”—now the mother’s countenance convulsed, her red peer reddening to a more reaching reproach.

And Hazlitt: “I am sure I don’t—What *is* it all about? Come, come, let me get in, for God’s sake!”—rushing past her—into the “parlour” . . . No one there, only sister Ada

shrinking from him—the wedding-table white like brides' shrouds, the cake's tower like brides' tombs moonlit.

And Hazlitt in a low tone from his throat's root, concentrated, imperative: "*Where is Jessie?*"

Whereupon the mother, with a casting forth of the arms, flung her distraction upon her daughter's heart, bawling out: "You have killed her! She is gone!"

Chapter 24

"What a Wrong"

AFTER HALF-AN-HOUR in that home of mourning Hazlitt started back for Park Lane, his visit to the street not having been seen by Mary Giddins, who with Giddins was at that hour away "down the down" (i.e. Camden Town) where they had at last discovered a public-house to their fancy, had bought "the good-will," and now were installing themselves; and, on entering his house, the most mystified of human beings that day, the most bent and smitten, Hazlitt had at once his Freddie in his presence to say: "Tell me—why did you not get to Swinton Street until near noon?"

Whereupon Freddie, scant of breath for scare: "Sir Henry, I couldn't help it, Sir. As I was looking for a cab, I met Miss—Miss—the lady that was with you this morning——"

"Miss Radlor?"

"That's it, Sir: and she offered to take me in her motor; then the motor stopped to get some parcels, then Miss Radlor got out, and the other lady came on; but she stopped at the Avenue Hotel——"

"How long were these stoppages?"

"A few minutes for the parcels, Sir, and—half-an-hour, maybe, at the hotel; then the other lady said she couldn't come on, and I went on alone."

"And in the church when you gave the letter, what did the bride—did you hear her say anything?"

"No, Sir, she only read it, Sir, then she took to her heels, Sir, and cried out 'he can't come!'"

"God, how mysterious!" Hazlitt murmured, dismal as at

the lids of the murdered dead on his bed, whose taciturnity blurts no word as to the web that murdered him.

"And the letter, you never let it out of your hands?"

"No, Sir, I never, Sir"—forgetting Máhndorla's wish to see the address—that little incident.

And Hazlitt: "Well, I am not pleased. When the lady stopped long you should have done something: go from me."

"Sir Henry, I didn't know what——"

"Go from me"—and with a bottom-lip pushed toward blubbing the boy moved out, while Hazlitt sat perturbed by a certain oddity in that proffer of the car to the boy, in that meeting between Máhndorla and the boy; and three days later—on the 20th, he on the 19th having waited in vain at "the court" to see his mother come to surrender "to her bail"—on the 20th he made a point of being on a lawn at Henley where he thought that Máhndorla would be, where, seated in a "heat-wave" beneath a beech, she in beige and paille helmet, he in shantung and panama hat and ashen shoes of buckskin, watching a water-carnival, he asked her: "Why did you put yourself out to take the boy in you car on Monday?"—his gaze dwelling on her wrapped there in a shroud of sunshine which showered aslant down the beech-tree, infusing her beauty with such a glory, that the glow she shed seemed to gush out of her own nature's flush and effulgence, she seeming a female angel there, her flesh all informed with gems and dawns; and she answered: "He could not find a cab, and I reckoned that the letter was urgent from the way in which you had rushed from me to write it. On leaving you, I had gone to see Lady Denison, but she was out, and, as I was going out of her gate, Providence took and butted me into the boy, so a spirit of charity and *forgiveness* prompted me"—her fan tapped his hand.

And he, his grave gaze resting on the regatta: "I see . . . But you might have mentioned to your friend in the motor that the boy was in a hurry. She stopped at a hotel . . . Who was she?"

"A Miss Miln . . . How was I to guess that she would stop? I hope it didn't matter—much?"

He winced! "I will tell you: that letter was to Jessie Page, to whom I was to be *married* at noon. As I could not be with her then, I wrote that I would go later, but she was already in the church when she got it, and at once rushed out, then

fled from her home—gone—God knows why—where to . . . So you see.”

His eyes on the river did not see her eyes fly alight in triumph, in brighter hope: for to this moment she had not been sure of the bride's flight, since the bride's pride had not yet consented to visit that “Miss Parsons at the Ritz”; so that Máhdorla for three days had been sitting on prickles of care, *living* at the Ritz; now she was sure of Jessie; and as when an inventor watches his cogs, a perfect cosmos working, and nods his sceptic sconce, saying: “I was right with God, after all, in those days of my life wherein I so groped and groaned,” so her eyes brightened; and good-hearted in her good-humour, she laid her hand on his to say: “Poor! this bowls your middle-stump, does it? . . . But, then, I am not surprised.”

“At what?”

“At that flight! Her second wedding-day; and she, poor girl, in that way.”

He glanced at her. “‘Way’—which way?”

“Well . . . Why ask? Way of all flesh.”

Now he sat there voiceless, pallid, gazing away at the water-pageant which he no longer saw, until he turned again upon her with a certain withdrawal of one shoulder, as when one shrinks from being struck, to say: “Whatever makes you say a thing like that?”

And she: “You didn't know?”—with cynical eyebrows.

“Know what? I! No, nothing of the kind! What makes you——?”

“Well, but I happen——”

“Hoh! nothing of the kind! You have no right—How? how do you happen to know?”

“In this way—almost to know: I saw a letter on the little table—the night my brother caught me with you—right under my eyes—couldn't avoid seeing some words—from which I conjectured; and her flight proves it. Fancy your not knowing. You see, you don't love her, or you would have divined.”

“Ha, ha”—he was on his feet—“forgive me, I must go. She is alive, and I will find her.”

“No, you won't find her,” she said with a hard heart, shaking her face up at him: “but go; I don't mind for the present.”

He made no answer—was away, staring, through the

throng of guests, groaning in himself: "But what a wrong I have done under God's sun!"

Chapter 25

At the Ritz

NOR DID she herself long remain there, for, on receiving in the evening a telegram which gave the news that Giuliva, left at the hotel, had there seen Jessie, who was to come again, she left Henley; and at eleven the next morning was face to face with the runaway in a small drawing-room that overlooked Piccadilly from a fourth floor, where, she on a piano-stool before Jessie in a Berkeley chair, she told how it was that Hazlitt had found it impossible to marry Jessie, he having fallen madly in love, become engaged, entangled . . . the lady a friend of the royal family; and she asked: "You know that Mr. Hazlitt has been a poor man?"

Her hand now against every man, Jessie just nodded "yes," a lamp of watchfulness bright in her right eye, which pondered sideways, with the boxer's silence, upon that freshness of flesh, of costume and ladyship, as of a daisy new-sprung in dews, dear here, cheap there, *chic* everywhere, the hand of the rue Auber in the hat, but cheap the chain of Venetian beads, and crêpe, and corals which studded a belt of copper hung athwart the hips, a being who chucked the chin, writhed eyebrows, pouted rosebuds, proudly tapped the saruk rug under her throne with toes trim in crimson kid.

"And you know, too, that he is no longer poor?"

"I know he is not in difficulties now."

"Diff . . . But you know where he lives?"

"No, I don't."

"Not. How, then, have you written to him?"

"At a post-office."

"Oh, yes . . . He has not taken you much into his confidence. Well, he lives in Mayfair—quite rich—invented a machine—is lifted quite out of his former environment: which, of course, means that *you* are pretty rich, too, for it is Mr. Hazlitt's wish that his child shall be born in a——"

"'Child' " . . . starting forward, one hand on the chair-

arm behind her, as when one draws back the rapier to strike.

“Yes, he wishes it to be born——”

“Which ‘*child?*’ ”

“Well, but concealment between you and me is useless—Jessie—since Mr. Hazlitt tells me everything. You hinted about it in a letter—which he showed me.”

“*Hoh!*” shot out of the depth of Jessie’s chest.

“Oh, don’t mind that—I had to know, since I am to be your protector: so, just before he went abroad, he told me all. He is solicitous about you, still attached to you, though, as he confesses—Well, you may not be exactly a beauty, there may be ladies more awfully corking, so to say, to the male fancy. Still, he is, yes, attached to you——”

Now Jessie was up. “Well, you can keep it to yourself! I don’t believe half you say. Good day.”

Whereat Máhndorla like a dart was away to the door, to put her back on it, with “Nonsense! you can’t go like that . . . Why are you cross?”

And Jessie: “If you don’t let me out, I will ring for help.”

But Máhndorla, not budging, smiled quietly at the cloche hat and tan stockingette, which, just under the collar-bone, left bare a birth-mark like a fern-spray turning coffee-colour in Autumn; and said she: “Come, you must be more responsible, Jessie, since you are no longer a baby, but a baby-maker now, and have another’s interests to think of. Do you mean to say that you would fly off like this on some impulse of resentment, without making the least provision for your future? Then, what is to become of you? Come, sit down like a good girl. You can kiss me—there.”

“*Hoh!*” went Jessie.

“Well, but you must be more——”

“I must *not*. I don’t want to hear anything, I want to go, and I am going, if not through the door, then through the window.”

“Oh, naughty! . . . Now, Jessie, there’s no need for all that, you know. If you have happened to be headlong with a man one hot day, that’s nothing—not nowadays. Why, in Germany now it is considered rather an honour to be an unmarried mother, and you know that the Germans are more intelligent than anybody else, as the war shewed. So that is nonsense about the ‘window,’ since you are not really in trouble, you have friends who are very wealthy, I am just

on the point of buying you a lovely country-house in Cumberland, and when you are there——”

“Yes, *when* I am . . . May I go now, please?”

Máhdorla pondered upon her, and now, darting forward, caught her, to pop a kiss upon her right jaw; but even as the kisser cried “there!” the kissed had snatched at her handkerchief to wipe the kiss off her like paint, and at the same time, was darting for the door. Máhdorla, however, was beforehand, and now, a hand of both on the door-handle, she said: “Very well, go, if you choose to be so ungracious and reckless: but, of course, I must have your address.”

“Will you let me——?”

“No, don’t be foolish”——chin up——“you are a young girl, you can’t be allowed——Your child will have reason to——”

“You can cut that out about ‘*child!*’ ”——with a cocky nostril.

And Máhdorla: “Oh, Jess, once in, it can’t be cut out”——with an underpeep——“we ladies must confront facts, you know. So tell——” But now with a wrench Jessie had the door a little open, and had prettily slipped through before she could be half held, Máhdorla thereupon darting to hiss into another room: “Quick! shadow her!” on which Giuliva swept out to the suite-door, and, pitching down a stair while Jessie descended in a lift, was presently in a taxi-cab tracking a ’bus that carried Jessie to Praed Street, where Jessie had taken a lodging over a sweet-stuff shop: so that astonishment was Jessie’s the next morning when Máhdorla dropped in to stop an hour, more cautious now as to her words, employing guile now to work upon the girl, finding out now that Jessie had “nice eyes” and was “a pretty little thing.” But she had gained little headway in Jessie’s good-graces when, about noon, Jessie put-on her hat, saying that she had to go out——having, in fact, an appointment with Mr. Farrel . . .

Chapter 26

A Bad Heart

THERE IN Park Street she was told by the butler that a woman had come to ask if she was there——her mother, she

concluded; then she was shown into a morning-room to Mr. Farrel, who said to her: "Well, now, what do you want? Sit there"; and she sat like a birch in a whirlwind, uncertain which way to turn and settle herself, saying: "I wanted to know if I can come back to you . . ."

He shut up his Juvenal to muse some moments on that gale of violets going on in the gloom of her eyes, she some distance off on the other side of a fire; then: "But I take it that you are now a married woman?—since you left me to be married."

"No, sir, I——" her voice failed her.

"Not married?"

"No."

Silence.

Then he: "I now have another secretary: so that——"

"Oh, I didn't know!—I thought you might have, but—I am sorry I——"

"Touch that bell: let us have a little wine . . . I was about to say, but you interrupted me, that you must now be content to work with another in double-harness——"

"Oh, you don't need *two*!"

"Let *me* be the judge in this."

"Oh, Mr. Farrel, you are good!"

"Yes, good in parts, like the curate's egg."

"Your *heart* is!"

"Well, no, that is bad: 'leakage of the valves,' my doctors tell me."

"Well—but—if I am only to have half the work, I must only have half the pay."

"The pay is of no importance—to me at least. Let that be whatever it was, to save a discussion."

"Oh, Mr. Farrel," she cried, "you spoil me!"

And he: "This word *spoil* means to take the hair off anything: if you say that I *spoil* you, I answer 'keep your hair on!' "—which frolic, from *him*, was so incongruous, that she was jogged to laugh; after which laugh her fingers were no longer quivering.

"But," Mr. Farrel added, "since I am probably not in England for long, you may presently have to be seeking other employment. I think, though, that you realize this . . ." they now sipping port together; and when he put out his hand to bid her adieu she dipped a kiss at it, and tripped from him to conceal a springing of tears, which had increased to a stream when she went out, to pass down into Park Lane, for Piccadilly.

Chapter 27

Seeking with Tears

THERE, IF she had been but ten minutes sooner, she must have seen, and been seen by, Hazlitt, who had just walked past that spot toward Piccadilly, he now seeking her carefully with tears, little dreaming her nearness to him, then or in the succeeding weeks, during which, having "scrapped" his agent Mason, who had never proved of any use, he had other agents active, seeking his mother, seeking Jessie; and often now in the streets his interest got caught in some skirt of a girl, some grace of gait, or a back's character, that had some trait of resemblance with Jessie's, and he'd be off at a tangent to eye a face that never chanced to be that life-wave which, alone of the ocean-waves dashing shoreless, was related to his fate and nature: dark days in which he hardly attended a party, saw a caller, spent a Sunday at a country-house—days pestered, too, by a pressure that was being at present put upon him to be gone from England: "Buy a yacht, Hazlitt. Get to know Europe. Dædalus"—thrice in a fortnight the order had arrived, and after the third a sharp pinch of money-worry had nipped his nerves a little: for someother than himself had the power to draw upon his banking-accounts, and to render him bankrupt in an hour: and now, accustomed to lordship, and by character fond and enjoying, he shrank from the prospect of the collapse of that régime of pomp, even though there were reasons to believe that his Dædalus was no other than the man who had, or had had, his mother in hand—*Farrel*, he gathered! "Dædalus" was Greek, and Farrel leaned to "the" classics. Still, he did not "get to know Europe," took no steps, had still "a nest's-egg" of money hidden, and the wrong that his destiny had brought him to do to that bruised breast so wrung him, that he brushed off him the order to be abroad while she was being sought. And he waited: day after day: the swelter of that summer's sunlight dull to him, he listless, though the dulcimers of the ministers were winging with "let there be light!" and a stuff, a gilt, lissom like the glim of the ghost of sulphur, was glutting the solar system with the glee of the floods of its fulgor; crushed, listless; several times

he was on the point of going round to Mr. Farrel to repay the £100 of the old woman's "bail," but did not go, his interest only in the angel-visits of his agents, no "functions," no "study," nor broodings any longer upon the truths of physics through long lost hours, sitting on a stool in the laboratory which, little by little, he was building up—that habit abandoned, though only three nights before the flight of his bride he, brooding on that stool in the gloaming, had scribbled in his big note-book these singular ruminatings: "Gravitation = magnetism = motion of matter through a reign-of-force, producing wrinkles, rings, of force. Two globes close together, at rest: no mutual effect; but cat jumps out of space upon A, A moves, and repels B; cat jumps upon B, B and A move together, and attract. But no globe at rest—no cohesion; cohesion, too = motion; nebulae may be at rest, their Doppler spectrum-effect due to *our* motion. Absolute motions in same direction = attraction, hence my weight; relative motions = repulsion: this the law of gravitation, to be stated mathematically in ordinary equations of Maxwell, putting mv for C ? so getting sun's absolute velocity? Planets' motions due to balancing of attraction (sun's velocity through floor) and repulsion (planet's velocity over floor): hence orbits not circular; hence that shifting-forward of Mercury's orbit-axis when, relative velocity speeding-up in perihelion, repulsion is top-dog a little; so with comets' tails in perihelion. Balancing never steady; tug-o'-war; planets, moons, always dropping in, popping out; hence hourly earthquakes; to energy released by drop-pings-in Life due, as Light to electrons'. When suns slow, planets fly off; when planets slow, suns suck in. Must slow: impeded by medium; have reason to think (see p. 1012) that only a million years ago earth's speed greater, year briefer; hence traditions of ancients' age? Enoch's 900 a 'stretch' for 110, which $110 = 100$ now? and, if v was greater, tho' F , too, then r was: hence tendency then to glacial epochs?. Anyway, repulsion, too: hence remoteness of stars, retrograde moons: as currents (i.e., matter) going together attract, going opposite repel (Ampère). So earth's revolution a current, surrounded with rings, as her rotation a solenoid causing her magnetic field. Magnets due to parallelism of electrons' orbiting throughout length: so nonsense about 'two poles' 'with different properties'; only one, or none, say: the illusion of two due to *our* turning round, or bending round, a 'pole': *then*, of course, electrons revolve

opposite, and repel; but no turning, no repulsion, I say: in which case goodbye to old $\frac{M}{d^3}$ and that lot; something comic

in some of them! $\mu = 1 + 4\pi\kappa$, comic, to me; that 4π might make cat laugh (Martian cat). As to iron, what I think now is that they all have retrograde rings, like Phœbe of Saturn (repellent relativity of these causing radio-action), all except iron, nickel, cobalt, copper, bismuth—and then hydrogen, helium: iron rings all in same plane clockwise; nickel, cobalt, in different planes, clockwise; copper, bismuth, in different planes, counter-clockwise . . . So could a tube of hydrogen be magnetized? Fun! I'll see . . ."; and the very next day he had been highly excited, on remarking the likeness to an atom of a tribe of five flies winding in dance above his sofa, tirelessly twining in an orgy of motions shot along the sides of polygons, evolving the coils of some cosmic gavotte, with wild collidings anon, when the eye could not follow the swing of the wildness of their wing, they remembering the old realm and dark before stars and planets roamed, when the atoms, having hearkened to the voice of God, darkly danced gavottes in Nirvana; and he, excited, had decided to colour some of them with dyes, then slow-photograph their merry-go-round, to investigate the rhythm and collisions of their system, and draw vector-diagrams of configuration, displacement, and velocity. But even these momentous things, with which for three days his brain had teemed, failed at present to collect his frittered interest, and only one interest kept him still going on his legs, his ritualism in the perfect service of that church of flesh and pearl-structure entrusted to his zeal and priesthood, he every day doing a thousand things to himself, to be still bettering himself, to be rendering himself worthy of the worlds he swung among, winged and gay like them: doing temple-service to the muscles of his breast, of his eyeballs, of his lips, hips, knees, neck, fingers, and the eye and scent of his mind; he was now at getting to play the piano, and in a month had come to strum out "the heavens are telling the Glory of God"; during twenty minutes he drew quick squares and circles, and sometimes could turn them out as perfect as Giotto; before getting out of bed he lay an hour agaze at a wafer, big as a three-penny-bit, stuck on his ceiling, tears leaking from his fixed lids, and he had grown now to be "greater than he that taketh a city" when with tears

in his ears he lay dead to their tickling, unthinking, unwinking, the nail of his attention fixed in the wafer, "seeing it steadily, seeing it whole," a citizen of the Kingdom of Nothingness, having a happy home in it, moving on and on, and still immutably on, smoothly as the motion of a stone moving in a void without bottom or bound, in which there is nothing but a stone that journeys, and Eternity is the journey of its inertia; until, having attained to carelessness and continuousness, living, yet free of fret, stark as death's rapture, he passes into harbour of Nirvana, and far back of veil on veil is safe within a place of darkness, built of the absolute attar of Space and Persistence, wherein He stares Who is careless and continuous ever, and His years shall know no end: in the ark of which darkness, to whose largeness the arch of heaven is as a shell, he abides awhile entranced, imbibing wine of the sacrament of Romance, experiencing that, if a man ceases and is still, then the spirit of Being rushes-in to flood his vacant chambers, and the man passes through the passion of the taste of bliss.

But to wake to a mystery of miseries—to the consciousness of having done wrong, he who, gentle and generous in blood, loving his neighbour not less than himself, rebelled at being made to cause pain under the sun, who, deep as was the enmity which God had put between him and flies, between him and "lords," always sorrowed to cut short a fly's life of joyance, and his talk of beheading "lords," if his air-boat had been financed, his talk of "putting a bullet" into the simple good people who had taught him "Greek," was probably just talk, which, if he had had the chance, would never have been accomplished, for saying is not doing; and in "the" war, though he knew that war is useful, yet if some absurd person had ordered him personally to hurt a German, he would certainly have burst into derision at the idea of doing such a thing: so that the consciousness of wrongdoing, of sorrow due to him, was intolerable like nettles—little he cared whether he had "*meant*" to do the wrong. His feet had been so trapped in those days of his penury! when, if he had not kept himself aloof and glum in his hunger, his mother would not have been lost, nor would have gone up in the air, nor have so stared in that "court," so that it looked to him now that all sorrows are due to poverty; for, again, if he had not been so hungry on his coming to Park Lane, he might not have consented to be "Sir Henry," nor would that adventure with his Jessie one night of lightnings have taken place, to eventuate in her plight and flight: for it was in "Sir

Henry's" sense of power to marry whenever he would that he had acted immorally; and though it may not often happen that tribal moralities are right, in *this* instance his tribe's morality would have been right, for in fact, he had not "married" when he would, and pain had woefully outweighed pleasure: so that he lived now among nettles and a sense of traps, feeling his feet entangled in fates and in the crafts of intriguers vaguely crowding the air round him—cunnings inferior to his own, no doubt, on the plane where atoms are found out, but cunnings acting on another, lower, plane, where his craft lacked practice to traffic; and on *that* plane craftier than his craft.

Chapter 28

"The Papers"

AND NEVER any tidings of those lost! till the day when he was forced to be at Lord's, and was with a party in a tent in the midst of pigeon-pie and lobster-mayonnaise, when his Máhndorla came also among them, whom for three weeks he had not seen: and their eyes met and met across the throng of idlers.

And presently, having rid himself of his page-boy, Freddie, brought to watch the cricket, he was walking with her round the grounds; and when he remarked: "I thought you were in Italy," she answered: "Was at Biarritz for a week . . . I heard you would be here . . . have something to tell you."

"Ah, yes," he said, "I have wanted to ask you: you were saying (that morning of my—wedding) that you had some knowledge of 'an old woman'; then we were interrupted . . . What *did* you mean?"

And she: "Well, I do chance to know something curious: nothing definite yet—am on the watch, and may acquire news for you: so always keep me informed where you are. But it is not about that . . ."

"Well? Tell me . . ."

She stood still over her parasol, until, shaking her face up at him, she said: "No, I'm afraid, after all, that I can't . . . I will tell you how to find out for yourself. You haven't been reading 'The Daily Telegraph' lately?"

"No, by Jove."

"Well, it is in that: last Friday's; seventh page, third column: I chanced to see it! But, O, prepare yourself—poor old Caxton! I wish I didn't have to hurt you!"—holding his sleeve, her gaze on his face; and now his heart smote him.

"About whom? My mother? About Jessie Page?"

"Yes, her."

"*Tell me!*"

"No, really, I prefer not, Caxton . . ."

No cricket he saw that day: was away in his car, to stop at shop after shop, seeking the paper; then to Fleet Street, where in the office "file" he read it, just a phrase or two in "small nonpareil"; but he could scarcely believe the evidence of the stare of awe that saw it, flew across the street to see what "The Daily News" would say of it: and word for word "News" and "Telegraph" agreed in their view of the grief of it; but, eager still for news, he flew to "The Chronicle," and "The Chronicle" agreed in anguish, word for word, and gash for gash . . . "The young woman's body found in the Thames at Sunbury beside Poulter's Punt on the 14th inst. has now been identified as that of Jessie Page, a typist . . . Page was pregnant . . ."

When he drove to the mortuary it was only to be told that the body had been four days buried; and he spent that night huddled on some house-steps nigh to the railings of the cemetery wherein that dead rested . . .

Chapter 29

"The Road of Sepulchres"

LOVING the sea, it was now that, feeling disposed to obey and "buy a yacht," and fly away, he conned the agents' lists, finally to fix upon a tidy thing of seven hundred tons by Vickers, a screw-schooner of fifteen knots, with saloon and staterooms Louis XVI, engines triple-expansion amidships, two boilers, two steam-capstans; and after himself putting-in new wireless, to be in touch with Poldhu and his agents, he left Cowes, taking with him only a certain Mr. Kirwyn, a Lord Hales, his "Freddie," his new valet; nor was it long before he was fond of that life and of his ship, which had

five tons of ice-capacity, was furnished with search-light, ash-ejector, modernities: and he "got to know" Cadiz, Rome, the Mediterranean coasts, still voyaging, until the yacht dropped anchor in Syracuse harbour.

And Syracuse amused, amazed, detained him. That place!—so famous through the ages, yet such a petty and cosy home, the whole packed on an islet round which he ran thrice every day before breakfast; and on the second day, when he stopped running, was accosted by Lazazzera, a young lieutenant of carabinieri, with whom he became so friendly, that he was the more detained, this Lazazzera being a stoic and Nazarene—no tobacco! no wine! no women!—and though Hazlitt was himself too clear and clean and free to be a Nazarene, he liked that kind of aspiring and pride of aloofness in a youth.

Standing smart in a riding-jacket which had astrachan about it, with spurs and *bande* (trouser-stripes), Lazazzera bent up his forearm for Hazlitt to feel his biceps, enquired as to what *gare* (competitions) Hazlitt had struggled in, expressed admiration for (his idea of) the English, and "*Oh-h-h*, the English books, *Oh-h-h*," he crowed long with a rollick crowing of his throat, "good!"

"Ah, you read English"—from Hazlitt.

"No, in translations—two of them—*Oh-h-h*, good! 'La Capanna dello Zio Tum'—good!"

"Tum, Tum"—Hazlitt pondered—"let me see—Tum . . . Ah! ! yes, I didn't catch—"Uncle Tom's Cabin!"—quite so. Have you really read that?"

"Yes, and then—*Oh-h-h*—'Il Carattere di Smeeless'—*Oh-h-h*, good!"

And Hazlitt: "Now, let me see—Smeeless, Smeeless . . . Ah!!! 'Smiles' Self-help! Dear me, have you really—?"

"Several times I have read it! And you?"

"Ah, heavens, no—not read, but know about: famous book. Well, well: 'Smiles' Self-help'—I never expected to meet anyone . . . Well, you have fine biceps: do gymnastics, of course?"

"Yes, but my duties-of-office—little time! I cannot run like you. Most people go *so*"—now, bent, palm on breast, he set his breath sawing like the sawyers' saw, to illustrate how mortals pant in running; on which Hazlitt remarked: "A question of breathing. As handicraft is the beginning of wisdom, so breathing is the beginning of righteousness. And yet, though man, so far, does not breathe rightly without teaching, teachers do not teach it to the child—teach it

‘spelling,’ the dull people. I hear, though, that the Japanese teach breathing, and that this was the reason why they beat the Russians in the war, because the Russians could not run. People in general never get a breath of fresh air—wouldn’t on the pinnacle of Pisgah.”

“Why would they not up there (*lassu*)?” the lieutenant naïvely wished to know.

“Breathe in pants,” Hazlitt answered. “Air taken into the lungs becomes foul air, and this should be deeply squeezed out, before the next take-in, by the strength of the trained breast-muscles—especially in sleep; but the pant expels not a tenth of it; and the next pant takes-in a pinch of fresh air to mix with the foul: so that there is never a breath of pure air in the lung. Such people never smell gaiety: they think dinner-parties more fun than heaven. But the lowest metazoa have stomachs, the lung being much more evolved, and was born for lofty orgies: for of a thousand million planets singing, perhaps on none is air of so celestial an essence as on this. Lovely here, too, it is—just half-a-heaven lower than the air of March in England. And Man, you understand, is not a land-animal, but an air-animal—or will be. There have been three main events in history, look: when amblirynchi left the sea for the land, when lizards left the land for the air, and when Montgolfier (or Rozier), following that example, dared to go up in a balloon; nor can anything of equal importance take place in the future: for these were the essential steps to the levity of Life, to making Life an angel, a flushed lung, a flying delight.”

Lazizzera considered it, and remarked: “I would wish to hear more of your method. May I——?”

“Oh, yes,” Hazlitt answered, “come and dine aboard”—they pacing now along “the Marina” down by the sea, seeing quite near the yacht’s white ladyship among plebeians, though elsewhere the islet’s sea-wall is sixty feet high at least—this sea-wall retiring in four or five coves, each a snuggerly, within which gulls sit at home as in rocking-chairs, swinging on the waves in their rollick way, like herds of girls who swing in a garden’s wind, and laugh; so down by the harbour-water the pair paced, watching it all choppy that morning with waves at play, which shook with “innumerable laughter” at the sunshine’s tickling, the mass of sea wriggling like Sirius with vigour, with “ἀναρίθμιον γέλασμα!”—the good Æschylus having been actually here to mark it “laughing innumerable,” yes, this was where he marked it,

and his heart smarted; until they got to a pigmy garden of exotics, in it a statue of the good Archimedes, naked-looking, with a tearing beard wind-whiffed, as when he flew screaming "*eureka!*" through the streets: as to which Hazlitt exclaimed: "Of all the statues *pour rire!*—looks more like Isaiah than a scientist; and that mirror-thing in his hand with which he 'burned the Roman ships!'—it should be hundreds of times bigger than the man, not like his Waterbury-watch: so that the statue is as ridiculous as the fiction."

"How! fiction?"—from Lazazzera: "did he not burn the ships?"

"No, of course—had no means: may have dreamt of it, as ancient men dreamt of miracles all day long; but only modern men do them."

"Are we, then, so much above the ancients?" Lazazzera demanded: "I do not think so!"

And Hazlitt: "Well, they were awfully thoughtful, you know, those Greeks and Egyptians, as infants are; but couldn't think. Were in a vicious circle! for only science educates, and only education discovers more science; but they, not having enough science to educate themselves, could not discover science to educate themselves: vicious circle. So they remained childish. They condemned Socrates for scepticism, his scepticism consisting in saying that 'the sun is not a god, *but* a stone'; Aristotle taught them that the heavenly bodies *must* move in circles, since the circle is 'the most perfect' of figures; the earth *must* be standing still, he thought, else a stone flung upward would be left behind; it was insisted upon that there could be no spots on the sun, since 'celestial bodies' can have 'no blemishes'; nor could there be more than seven planets, since things are 'ordained' to go 'in sevens.' We others are made of better flesh and blood than that somehow. I think that Matter, by becoming the stuff of a living body, may undergo some kind of betterment, refining itself somehow every time; now, that body of 'yours' has all of it formed part of many another life, for the weight of the animals and plants that have lived must already be greater than the weight of the globe, each life having a series of bodies—one man in a lifetime has hundreds—and when you say '*my*' body, that is comic, since it will all be gone in four months, and has been called '*mine*' by hosts of other lives; so, if the atoms are refined every time, this is why you are 'better than your fathers,' as Homer says: and this may be the '*purpose*' of Life, to permeate the earths with life-influence, until in some distant eternity they

quicken to consciousness and joy. Already some things—camphor, gamboge—are behaving like life, metals can be ‘poisoned’ . . . But, then, every speculation is more or less untrue, this one, too: what is proved is that, for *some* reason, between Archimedes and Rutherford is the difference between an infant and a stripling. But Archimedes was never infant enough to have made any *attempt* on the ships: the ships would have laughed, or the men on them—if they had ever known; but they never would have known.”

“Càspita!” went Lazazzera: “do not say that to a Syracusan.”

And Hazlitt: “Very well, if the Syracusans dislike truth. Ah, the Syracusans!—dear people. I thought that it was only in England that there are lice, but I suppose that wherever there are ‘lords’ lice thrive.”

“Is that so?”—a little stiffly from Rocco Lazazzera di Santeramo, he being of patrician stock, a “cavaliere,” “laureate in criminology,” nor had learned from the good Smeeless, or Smiles, that high minds smile at the idea of being biassed in respect of truth by their personal circumstances and moods.

“One parasite producing another,” Hazlitt said: “but we in England rather deprecate our lice; here lice become a pastime, everybody picking everybody’s head on the doorstep with just that naïveté and publicity with which monkeys do it—dear people. Last night I saw a little girl seated on the counter of a pizzi-and-sfinge shop, her head an empire all ‘lords’ that sent out colonies, globe-trotters . . . suffered though, as such empires do suffer . . . her face in a constant posture of crying . . .”

For these “pizzi” he had already acquired a passion (“batter” cooked in fat); and presently a passion for “giu-giulena” (a sweet of little seeds); and a passion for the happy boys born shabby there, to inhabit in careless cosiness that home of their own over that ocean of moods and blues, who ran in troops after him when he ran, calling “run hard!” and he cast them handfuls of money; and a passion for the alley of sailors’-prostitutes, there by the sea-wall and the Fonte d’Aretusa, who ran out to trap and stop his run, and he had to dodge them, and tossed them handfuls of cash; and a passion for the ships lying coarse and nigh there in the basin betwixt the islet and Sicily; and for the reefs that lie round the islet for ever white with waste of milk, for they rest not day nor night, saying “Power, Holy, Holy, Power,” milk enough, and then wine of the wine-dark

sea ὀινῶπος, every hour fresh wines and changes of taste, and dyes of Tyre, violets, lilacs, which half-mixed their porphyries in patches with the vat of waters, dyeing them; and at night, crossing the bridge to the mainland, he walked a mile to sit solitary in the Greek Theatre, out there being "the Antiquities," "Antichità"—or "Andighidà" they say down there, as I remember hearing that late "Teddy" the Unsteady speak of "her Majesdy de Guéen"; but he was thinking of leaving it, for Lazazzera, hearing at every meeting with him some cosmic concept exhilarating to a young man's intellect, fluttered round him like a moth, lay in wait for his morning's run; and though Hazlitt liked that house of "carattere," or character, that the Smiles had helped to build, there were times when he found the lieutenant a little heavy; so after a fortnight, on the night before that night of storm when he saw his Máhndorla, he decided to be off—night of storm! wind enough! wine enough! milk enough! he, holding-on his hat, moving round and round the islet, peering outward at the milks, the wines, hearing the viols, the chorus of altos' roar, and in the heights a wild soprano piping, choirs of syrens crying "Ho! come to the waters! and he that has no money, let him come! buy wine and milk without money!" And out, highly excited, walking exalted on the storm, he roamed over the bridge to sit lonely within the stone wilderness of the theatre, then to sit within a burial-cave in a road of burial-caves back of the theatre, he now mixing his mouth with the wawlings of the storm, calling aloud:

"All Power is Thou,
 Thou Omnipresent One!
 Fountain of Being Thou art!
 Spring Thou within my heart,
 Filling each secret part:
 Thou Blessed One."

And now count two minutes: and at the cavern's mouth stands Máhndorla darkling.

Up he sprang from a block to peer and breathe "*You!*"

And she: "Yes, here she is pursuing him. What were you shouting? I heard you say 'thou blessed one!' Some new girl, is it?"

"Ha, ha. Well! you. How——?"

"Been here three days with Lady Darling—started from London as soon as I got your two lines . . . *He* thinks I am

at Bordighera; but two mornings I have seen you from my window running along the Marina like a fugitive without a jacket; and tonight I tracked you from the Via Maestranza . . . See how you are run after."

"My dear Máhndorla! Shake hands!"

That hand of hers was pretty cold, and he kept it, heating it, leading her to a seat on a block of rock (projecting from the excised side of the cave), on which generations of the ancient dead had rested from that effervescence that afresh fretted there in her and him; and there they talked long in the dark, he not touching her at all, until she remarked: "I see that it is no good my trying to keep clear of you," and then he touched her hand to answer: "My dear Máhndorla!—though, of course, for the present you speak to one widowed. Oh, I have been crushed, Máhndorla!"

And she: Poor! yes, I understand. But, then, she is dead: the dead are out of it. Don't you—dream of me still at night?"

"No, I shan't tell you."

"You do and *I* do—defiantly. We may as well be frank with each other; oh, Caxton, we may as well be chums. Caxton, I love you; I *love* you, Caxton. Sweet, kiss me sweet"—this in an impulse that whispered, her hand on his arm, he thrilling at the influence of that richness of her being, which dripped luxury like the honeycomb swollen with honey, and he had to close his lids a little, so as not to giddy, not to fall lost into her as into some gulf's void, not to love more than all thoughts, all things, the sin and power of her mouth's moist softness; yet he contrived to reply: "Sweetheart, no, not now . . ."; then, irritated: "Really, Máhndorla, I can't think you very sympathetic . . . You don't seem to realize that that death was my doing, and that my name is Cain. I, mind! harmless of heart, by God! and my name is Cain . . . Kissing! I am done with kissing, I think." He sprang up. "Come, it is beginning to rain."

A throw of her chin! nation-disdaining—an instant; then a sitting still with fixed lips; then out, to stumble dumbly now through wind and drizzle down a road of lava-rock that has ruts as of cart-wheels stereotyped in it, until he remarked: "Besides, there is your brother, whom you are so full of——"

And she: "Oh, look here, let my brother die slain—there!" Italian that ended in "voilà!"

"Well, but you *are* full of him?"

"I am full of *you*—and will be fuller yet."

This silenced him six ticks; then: "But you love him? And he apparently hates me. What for—God knows. There is something wildly odd——"

"Didn't he catch his sister behind your screen? And he spied us together in Paris. Isn't that enough to make him?"

"No, I don't see . . . He said 'War' to me! 'War' about what? It had something to do with that Farrel-man . . . There is a man named Farrel, to whom I said something about 'monkey,' and it was in connection with this that he said 'War.' So he *knows* Farrel—ran behind the screen to hide from Farrel! Yet he had never before said a syllable to me about knowing Farrel, though it is this very Farrel, ten to one, that has, or had, my mother——"

"Oh, nonsense, *he!*"—she laughed a little. "No, there you are certainly astray."

"So *you* know Farrel, too?"

Again she gobbled a little laugh, from low to high, like a finger rushed across fiddle-strings from G to chanterelle. "Yes, I know him."

"Tell me . . ."

But, as she had promised her brother to tell nothing as to Farrel, she answered: "No, I don't want to . . . But *he*, of course, knows nothing about your mother, though she once chanced to be in his house"; and after five seconds of silence she decided to add: "*I* know now who has your mother."

"*You*, Máhdorla," he exclaimed, "know that? Oh, come! And you have been with me an hour, and not said a syllable——"

"Oh, well," she said, "there are reasons . . . But I *will* tell, if——"

"Yes, go on!"

"Give up the dead girl, and you get your mother—there. Oh, I am frankly a bargainer. You want me, *au fond*: so I propose to you to propose to me; then I will tell. That's fair."

Now he laughed. "Shylock! But you don't seem to realize . . . In a year's time——"

And she: "What do I care about a year hence? tonight's my life . . . You can't want your mother much."

"Not *so* much"—hardly taking seriously her statement that she knew, seeming to see that this about his mother was an afterthought; but, in fact, she had not mentioned it before, because, while tempted to reveal it by love, she was drawn back by loyalty to another love; and she said: "Well,

I am not going to plead; I have already brought my maiden modesty to leap every barrier—this being leap year. Well, perhaps it is best so. I hate you now.”

“A year,” he whispered at her ear, as, wet with rain, they now reached her hotel on the cliff at the back of the Marina; but he would not go in, would not quite promise to luncheon with her on the morrow, and only answered with his yachting-cap her last words, “Don’t you fail to come, mind!”

And on the morrow morning her Giuliva, looking abroad at the yacht, saw alongside it a boat which had brought Lazizzera to say goodbye, he gallant in the voluminousness of a cloak of wonderful woof, woven in England, lined with crimson silk, as to which Hazlitt, standing with him on the shade-deck, said: “How can you consent to wear that thing? Dear me, even in Syracuse—overcoats! I, now, when going out of doors, instead of putting-on something, take-off my waistcoat, if not my jacket, since exercise warms, and I think that nothing in any heaven can be more delicious than chill winds when one is thinly clothed, and is warmer flushed than the winds are chill. But an overcoat!—that’s horror to a light heart. And so ugly.”

“We men are like sheep,” Lazizzera remarked: “the women dress better.”

And Hazlitt: “Yes, that is probably true: for women are less ‘educated,’ as they say, i.e., less wrongly educated, and so have rather more scepticism and inventiveness— independence—their fashions changing yearly, while men’s scarcely change in a generation. In England quite a number of ‘peeresses,’ ladies ‘of title,’ are Socialists, but hardly a ‘peer,’ I think: for wrong ‘education,’ being ‘education’ in conventions, tends to make men ‘sheep,’ as you said, while real education means scepticism, so that everyone when educated will be sceptically *himself*, and not another, Life evolving from homogeneous to heterogeneous, and the result of every life will be some discovery which no other luck than just *his* would be likely to hit on.”

Now mourned Lazizzera: “*Oh-h-h*, si salpa, they lift the anchor. My dearest friend, will you not return? You leave me desolated.”

“Well, I will see”—Hazlitt patted his arm—“for I, too, love, and have high hopes for, you. But, oh, beware! in being a stoic be very careful that you do not become a puritan, since no lower thing ever crept: *he* is the brute, the fool, the atheist, and the tribes that produce him numerously are pretty rude in type: for gross is this glory of the Most

High that smites our eyes, but not grosser than that hide of his, nor than the sightlessness of those eyes, to which the Ineffable Splendour is 'a wilderness,' 'a vale of tears'; and as comic as his commonness is his vanity, he concocting 'a better world' than any of God's—blasphemous little doggie. A 'better world' is one from which *he* is absent, as he will presently be from this. But he has been rather rampant so far, depressing everything: we in England had a Milton who, but for him, might have been a poet. Our Shakespeare, too, thinks it better to be dead than a slave; but *the poet* thinks it better to be a slave than dead: Homer would sooner 'be a slave's slave' than dead, the sun is so fairy and strange, the moon moving in moonshine, and the charm of March winds to run far into, drunk on sacrament-wine, aye, that's well made. Beware, then, my friend, of vanity and tininess of eye, for those are the Stoic's perils."

And Lazazzera: "Little likely am I to forget any of your sayings . . . And you will write? Will not forget me?"

"Not I"—from Hazlitt, between them being quite the dearness of that marriage-tie which was between Greek man and lad.

Then Lazazzera: "The captain directs a look toward me—I go! My dearest friend"—now, seizing Hazlitt, he planted a kiss on each cheek, Hazlitt kissed his, and they parted at the gangway: three minutes after which Giuliva dashed from a window of the Casa Politi to Mähndorla's pillow with the alarm "the yacht departs!" and when the mistress pitched to the window, it was to see the ship's length ripping away, as when the salesman's scissors rips without clipping through the stuff, and a fluff springs from the cutter's running.

Chapter 30

Catania

NOW NORTHWARD toward the (artificial) harbour of Catania the ship's trip ripped continuously along, like the shopman's scissors ripping, until she stopped, and lay still there—Hazlitt and his companions there seeing Santa Agata carried about the town on a trolley that was drawn by a throng of men who wore white overalls belted, and white gloves, for the good Agata was a virgin, a wildness of fire-

works squirting in the church-grounds, and universal fire-balloons rising, with poppings going on, and noise, and much ado. Hazlitt was standing in the thick of a crowd in the cathedral, waiting to see the yearly bringing forth from their secret place of the saint's relics-and-image, when an old woman addressed him, to say: "She is *potente*, yes, she is potent," and went on to tell a tale of sons of hers preserved by the saint through "the" war; till now when her eyes lighted on the image, brought forth garish with gauds behind a railing, her face radiated a pain of adoration, her teeth grinning a little to breathe: "Agata! Vergine! Vergine!"—a worship of virginity which may spring from its rarity there—and Hazlitt's eyes were given up in surprise to that face of rapture, he having imagined that priestcraft was everywhere at present reeling. Most of the others, though, seemed to take the show much less seriously: he saw one rogue in the throng industriously pressing himself against a lady, gazing away at the saint, but not thinking of virginity; also he caught sight of a pair of eyes not looking at the saint, looking at *him*, eyes which brought him a thought of Máhndorla; and, though at once they were lost to him, he asked himself the question: "Can Máhndorla be here?"

After which the yacht left Catania with Mr. Kirwin and Lord Hales for Naples, where Hazlitt purposed to rejoin her, he wishing first to see more than one can from Catania of that Etna, or "Etena," whose smoke goes up for ever.

Chapter 31

Taormina

AND SO, after having been elaborately conducted up to the crater, whose snow never melts, he presently found himself close under Etna at Taormina, high-set over the sea, a "lovely view," which he loved, though not as he had loved the lousy old Syracuse, where the Archimedes, or Archiméde, screamed "eureka!" and went tearing; and here his running was too steep, that imbroglio of mountains and ravines testing the stoutest breast-muscles. Yet he stayed there, and on a morning of storm was walking down a

mountain through forest of pepper and almond, when his Máhdorla found him out, he now in his soaring hour before breakfast, his breast robust from his run, heaven swelling his lungs with floods of love, while yonder over the lowland and over the ocean he saw the shirocco ("scirocco"), wandering along like cosmic dust drawn astray to follow the storm's wayfaring, or like a solemn smoking that roams along, volumes of wind swamping all the forest with song, spitting a little drizzle, and his lids were wet when, his face uplifted, he said "Beloved," and again "Beloved: little understood, ill realized, yet not all unmarked, unloved," and wet when he said "Holy God, holy the sound and sounds of thee; aye, and fresh the smell of thy breath, Lord God, when thou openest thy mouth among the woods," and when he said "Beloved, your lips distill the honeycomb, honey and butter, Beloved, are under your tongue," he at this time spying a solitary donkey cropping among the trunks, and he was stepping to pet its face—so friendly ever, that every cat he stopped to fondle, more polite to lower lives than to men—when he smelled frangipane, and, on swinging round, found with him Máhdorla, hat in hand, her hair led astray like spray of blood, she dressed in a pretence of tussore, but practically naked because of the storm.

And he: "You dear!"

And she, pleased, with her underpeep: "What, crying?"

"Ha, ha, no, not crying. How on earth——?"

"Don't think you are being pursued. I know that one has no right in Syracuse, but everyone has a right to come to Taormina. So——"

"Were you at Catania by chance? I thought I saw you in the——"

She bent, impressing upon her dress to keep below her knees, so he did not see the blush which she bent to conceal. "No, I—stayed at Syracuse, expecting you back. It is all very well to say 'you dear': you gave me the slip—cruel!—I am CEnone, I am Ariadne—You don't mean it."

"Oh, Máhdorla, I do! You look lovely, the wind ravishes you, you are no longer a virgin, you are with child by the Holy Spirit."

"Yes, but no ring"—she pouted—"I like some little ritual to precede 'the mighty rushing wind.' It is all very well to say 'you dear'—so you *do* like me?"

"Now, Máhdorla, you know that."

"Then, why did you run away?"

“Could I help? Isn’t it dangerous for me to be with you, since there are decencies to be observed? Surely you see that. Dear, I am a widower.”

She shook her head. “I don’t see—I never expected—you who always talk about ‘reason!’ The dead have no rights . . . And don’t you want your mother?”

Now he touched her arm. “But stay: do you mean to say that, if you know something about my mother, you would *sell*, not give, the knowledge to me?”

“Yes,” she answered, “because I consider your fidelity to the dead fictitious, and I wish to force you to do now what you intend to do later, because our youth is short. Isn’t that ‘reason?’ ”

And he: “Very good, let that be considered ‘reason’; but, then, it is difficult to conceive how you can really know——”

“What, don’t believe? I fancied that perhaps you didn’t: that’s why I came . . . Well, I do know.”

“*Truly?*”

“Yes”—they now eye to eye: and now he started.

Then he stepped away, considering it, and came back to her to ask: “Where are you staying?”

“At the *Métropole*.”

“Well, I will go to you about noon. Will that suit you? Then we shall see . . . Let us go up.”

Her eyes lightened, and light were her steps, as she climbed by his side to the town, she thinking: “Now I have him” . . .

Chapter 32

To London

BUT THIS was not so: for at eleven he, at his S. Domenico hotel, got a telegram: “News of your mother”—from Mary Giddins, to whom, wherever he stayed, he cabled his address; and since the reticence of the telegram gave him a start, half-an-hour afterwards, having sent a note to Máhn-dorla, he was gone in a road-hog that, like the Gadarean swine, ran violently down a steep place, to Giardini; and so by train to Messina; and thence by train-ferry over a nook of sea overlooked by mountain of Sicily and mountain of Italy,

twin sisters looking at each other and at that nook of ocean-flood between, which rolls in a mood of old moonlights and roamings remote from home, where the oars of Ulysses, world-journeying, burst into virgin surge, and Charybdis brooded, crooning, with Scylla; and thence up through Italy, without stay at Naples, and through France to aeroplane at Paris, and like a racer straight to London . . .

Chapter 33

The Old Woman's Leg

AT SEVEN in the evening he stepped into a public house in a street of cats, brats, cabbage garbage, "down the town" (i.e. Camden Town), and in there stood Giddins drawing a sloppiness of beer by insistence upon handles, and Mary sloppily busy, who exclaimed "Oh, it's *im!* I didn't expect—You ain't got my letter?"

"No, only your telegram——"

"Come inside"—behind "the bar" into a little room that had chairs of American-cloth ranged in order against the walls, a green table-cover, an oleograph of a German Jew blessing little children, fire within a pigmy grate, beside which Hazlitt and Mary sat in male and female easy-chairs, while with rather shy eyes she told her story.

Mary had conjectured that the old woman would be shadowed when she left "the court" on being "bailed out," and that when she did not "surrender to her bail" those who had shadowed her, whose face perhaps she did not know, would say to her "Do what we suggest, or the police will have you," she now in their power. Also Mary had conceived that the captive might then be taken back either to the house at Midhurst or to the house at Chichester: so, as she herself had been all preoccupied with "the ouse" (public-house), she had finally decided to send a pot-boy down that way to watch: from whom, after long waiting, she had got the news that in truth "the tall" and "the short" men were again at the Midhurst place; and as "the ouse" was now on its legs, she had then run down herself to see how things were.

Down there she had taken a lodging "about a hundred yards from the railway-station," she said, "and me and the

boy went out two nights to that Cowley House, spying about, but we didn't see no lights, nor I couldn't get inside the gate. But the third afternoon the boy rushed into my room, saying "She's got away! she's coming!" and when I ran to my window I saw her running . . . It ain't no good what I've got to say, so I tell you straight. Pity you ain't got a nice little wife"—she smiled a little, slyly—"to comfort you up. Tell me why you didn't come to marry Jessie Page that second time? You call that fair? You know she's going to have a baby."

He, sitting pale, with lowered lids, answered: "Never mind about that now; she is dead."

And Mary: "Who is? What makes you say that? Since when is she dead?"

On which he, assuming that the news of it had not yet come her way, said: "Pray go on; tell me——"

"But tell me first," she said: "what makes you say——? Whoy, ain't she and me good friends?"

But he, impervious (in his certainty of the death) to the implication of these words, shunning to speak of Jessie, and keen to hear of his mother, said impatiently: "Oh, I beg, tell me"; upon which she went on to say: "Well, I saw her down in the street, running a little and stopping, with her hand on her heart, and her mouth open, so I called to her, but she didn't stop, and I was down the stairs after her. She was only twenty yards ahead of me, and I would soon have caught her up, for she was out of breath, and I could tell she had had a drop of drink; but all at once I saw that a motor-car was after her—that's why she wouldn't stop for me; that tall one was in it, and another man with him, a parson he is, with a red face and a red beard, and they was close on her; but I ran and stood in front of the car wherever they tried to dodge past me, so they couldn't get past without riding me down, and I called out to them 'you ain't going to touch *er!*' till at last the parson he jumps out, he dodges past me, and he went atearin' after her. She let a screech out of her, seeing him, but the next minute she disappeared in the station; and when me and the parson ran into the station, we saw her fumbling with one of the carriage-doors of a train; the train was just moving out, she was running with the train, afumbling with the door; and she got the door open; and then she made a spring to get into the train; and . . . she fell . . ."

Now her eyes went shyer, she stopped a little; and Hazlitt, his head on his chair-back, looking distantly down at her

from the height of his lowered eyelids, muttered: "Yes, tell."

She for her part smoothed with her palm the arm of her chair, looking at it, not looking at him, saying: "I was a fool to stop their car, I ought to have let them catch her: so it was through me it happened . . . She fell . . . It all happened in a tick . . . I heard her let out a little cry like a cat, as she fell . . . and the next thing I knew, oh, my God, was that her leg had slipped down between the train and the platform . . . I saw her in the parson's arms . . . I can see the pair of them still before me at night, he was as white as milk, and so was she . . . all below her thighs her clothes were gone . . . and when I caught sight of about two inches of the bone of her right leg shewing—below the knee it was—I turned my face away from her to the wall, and I lost myself."

Steadily she smoothed and smother her chair-arm, not looking at him, while he, his head back on his chair, contemplated her from under lowered lids with a certain aloofness, his face pale as the dead . . .

"When I come to myself they was just driving off with her in the car . . . They didn't take her to that Cowley House . . . I never found out where they took her . . ."

Now a little clock filled a minute of stillness with its tick-tacks, until Hazlitt clapped a hand over his eyes to whine: "Oh, dear!" like a child, his lips stretched tense . . .

Soon after which he stood up, and, without saying anything, went slowly out and away, not glancing back when Mary called "Ere! I want to talk to you," not answering when Giddins in "the bar" addressed him . . .

Chapter 34

Toward Wedlock

DURING four days he brooded alone at home like one in reclusion with "a cold"; then, seeing that Máhndorla was back in England, sent her a telegram, addressing it to Lady Darling's in Berkeley Square, asking her to tea with him; and when they were at tea at Claridge's the next day, he said to her: "I understand that some 'parson' with 'a red

beard' has my mother: is that person by chance your brother? You say that you know."

She, taken by surprise, blanched a little, then raised her eyebrows to say: "There must be other parsons with red beards!"

"Well, tell me"—he pretty terse, stern, direct—"you say that you know. Who is it?"

Her chin on the back of her hand, from which hung a glove, she gazed at him under her eyes, weighed him, asked: "Is it a covenant?"

"Yes."

"Honour bright?"

"Yes."

"When?"—a whisper.

"Next week."

"I say, Caxton, what a lark!"—a whisper.

"Tell me."

"My brother has her"—a whisper.

Silence. A waiter placed *turon* on the tea-table, and went. Then he, pale, pale: "You are *sure*?"

"Quite."

"How?"

"Key-hole! my maid listened . . . a man brings him reports . . . And I gather that he himself goes to see her on Sunday nights after the service: something wrong with her leg apparently; goes to see it."

"Where?"

"That I don't know: somewhere 'up the river,' I gather."

"Máhndorla, you don't know?"

"No, believe me——"

"And *why* has your brother my mother? Tell me that."

"Caxton, believe me, I haven't the least idea: I have racked my brains—But I bet I will find out . . . Are you pleased with me? This is pretty treacherous to *him*: I think he'd kill me . . . But it is an ill wind that blows no good: I am going to be married—not next year!—to my heart's fancy. Caxton, I shall always be good and faithful to you, shall always love you, love you. Caxton, you wouldn't believe what beastly mean things I have done to get you"—her voice broke a little—"but now I shall always be good—I shall become a theist and love the good God, like you—that is, if *you love me*——"

And he: "Very good, I will love you"—standing up . . . "But forgive me, I have to be alone, must go—will write you soon." He left her there.

Chapter 35

Jessie in Heaviness

THEN, AT home, in his Amoor Room, he made of his hand a sick-bed for his head, and "that man!" he said; "ah, between that man and me is stress and strain." Now he knew: it was not Farrel, it was Radlor; and, though he *still* suspected Mr. Farrel somewhere, stubbornly *still* felt that *Farrel*, somehow, was mixed in it, yet it was Radlor—no doubt now—deep, deep deceiver of his brother-man that trusted in him. And it was the same Radlor who had put *him* into Park Lane—no doubt of that when he now remembered how on the night of his coming he had found a parson's collar in a trunk, when he remembered that Radlor wished to build a chapel of silver, and that "Dædalus" had written "the Duomo at Firenze is the noblest structure (so far!)"—that note of exclamation: "Dædalus" was Radlor: and Radlor had her, had beheld the nakedness of the bone of her leg unclothed, had sent her gadding in an aeroplane, inexorable breast, hard heart . . . and "Ah!" he said, and "Ah! between that man and me is somewhat" . . .

But the next step? Wary was the word—no fury . . . To beard that man straightway might be so to impoverish himself, as to lose much of his power of action, of battle, for wealth is power . . . Better first discover just where he had her . . . shadow him to her "after the service on Sunday night" . . .

Meantime, he might beard, cross-examine, probe *Farrel*—that other! Farrel, no doubt, was a man hedged about by some essential majesty and mass of personality, which one rather shrank from infringing, attacking, challenging, charging, . . . but that was nothing: it should be done; and remembering that he owed Farrel £100 for his mother's "bail," he wrote a cheque, and took it round to Park Street the next forenoon.

Mr. Farrel was then seated near his morning-room hearth-place, at his left hand a chess-board on a stool, and, as he dictated a letter to Jessie Page seated at a tea-table near the stool, he took minerals from a casket that lay on his lap to arrange them on the chess-board squares, placed pink onyx

beside rose-jade, placed chrysoprase beside goldstone, New Zealand jade beside chalcedony, and he shifted pink onyx to be beside catseye, and he shifted goldstone to be beside bloodstone, and moonstone to be beside thulite, and mused on them; but when, the letter dictated, he became aware that Jessie, though she had stood up, did not move away, he lifted his lids from the minerals, to see that she stood with her head hung, picking at her fingers, as the sick do, and now he said: "Well tell me."

"Mr. Farrel," she answered in a low tone, "I have to go away."

And he: "You have? Well, let it be so. Good riddance. And when?"

"On Saturday, if I may . . . It ought to be . . ."

"Very well, on Saturday. Good riddance of a bad package."

"You don't *mean* it!"

"W-e-ll, perhaps not altogether, since we certainly have our good points, though I think you are to be considered a pernicious influence—Φθειρονσι ἤθη χρήσθ ὁμιλίας κακαί—which means 'bad companies corrupt the best ethics' . . . And yet I feel impelled to ask the reason of this sudden release and relief."

Low her head hung—no answer—her fingers picking themselves; and he, eyeing her, said: "Sit down again."

When she had let herself down on her chair, he said: "Now, something is obviously wrong; and I think you may do well to tell it me."

No answer, her mouth now working as when toffee is uncertain at the point of boiling, and stirs distractedly to random tortures. And he presently: "I think you have no father?"

"No"—a sob!

"You have a mother . . . Your mother is no doubt aware that you are leaving me?"

She sobbed "No, I am not—with Mother now."

"With whom, then, are you?"

"By—myself."

Now first his male observation observed her figure un-girlish, her face drawn a little gaunt by the burden of her loins, and he said with some sternness: "Well, but how is that?"

No sound came out of her, her mouth, like worms tails cut off, working on its own account.

And presently he: "Come, better trust me; tell a friend."

On which she was at him with a rush, to kneel and bury away her face in his left sleeve, a Rhone of sobs now broken loose to gobble with struggle through her swollen throat; and when this river ebbed, still a succession of sobs continued to twitch her body with a clock's periodicity, as when, a shower over, spouts still toll gulplings and goblin sounds that sob like gongs, while in broken bits she gave up the story of how she had gone to be married, but he had sent a letter—could "never marry her"—and how she had fled from home . . . and why . . .

He, meantime smoothed her hair, saying "Well, well," and "Never mind," "You have been a naughty girl, for the reason that we all do wrong things, I no less than you, and the sage La Rochefoucauld says, 'il n'y a guère d'homme assez habile pour connaître tout le mal qu'il fait.' which means 'there is hardly a man wise enough to know all the harm he does.' Let it console you that you have been more sinned against than sinning: I think I never heard of so brutal a man——"

She sobbed: "Mr. Farrel, you don't know him—there was something he couldn't help——"

"Well, if you persist in thinking—But this 'Miss Parsons' to whom the man directed you—what does she now propose to do for you?"

"She is always wanting to put me in a 'country-house,' she says, or 'a flat,' but it is she herself he got entangled with—anyway, *she* wants me to think so, though she doesn't say it outright—sick in love with him she is: Mr. F-Farrel, I'd rather starve ten times than touch a penny——"

"Well said, well said"—he patted her. "But, then, have you any money of your own?"

"Yes, sir, I have £26 saved up."

"You have? What a hoard! Never mind, you are by no means fatherless and forlorn; *I* will be your father."

Whereat out again gobbled a struggle of sobs that brokenly throated "Oh, Mr. F-farrel, sir, Mr. F-farrel!" in the midst of which—a rapping at the front-door near; and now voices out there, to which Jessie, seated on her heels with arrested tears, bent an ear of interest: and now a rapping at the room-door, and that moon-faced flunkey coming in pale to say: "Sir Henry Beresford to see you, Sir!"

A name that had no meaning for Jessie . . . ! As for Mr.

Farrel, he frowned at it, answering: "Request Sir Henry Beresford to communicate his business by letter."

At which answer Hazlitt, on being given it, raised an angry voice to say, "What, afraid to face me, is he?" and that voice Jessie knew.

She had sprung up at the flunkey's rap, and pallid-struck she now stood, until suddenly she was tripping on tip-toe to pry at the window, Mr. Farrel looking with surprise after her.

Hazlitt was now in the street, going, and her wide eyes saw his back quite near: if he had glanced behind, he might have seen . . . ! for more and more outward she peered: and suddenly her face convulsed at him, her tears gathering to drip upon the sill, and drip again, until she let herself drop upon a sofa near her.

Now Mr. Farrel rose to stroll to her, to sit with her, to say: "I think I see how it is. That man once called here to see you when you were absent unwell, and this interest of yours in him now makes me conjecture that it is he who is your betrayer. Tell me if this is so"; and when her buried forehead nodded assent, he added: "My curiosity was not impertinent nor idle: I wished to know, in order to free you from any ache of tenderness which you may be suffering in respect of this man: and I say now that he is a person unworthy of your affection in more respects than you may know: a—yes, a thief. That is why I did not receive him."

Now she lifted her face to him. "Thief? No, Mr. F-farrel."

"Well, but by his own confession: stole a jewel of mine."

"Oh, my!" she cried, covering her eyes.

And he austerely: "I see that I did well to open your eyes to his true character, though they should have been open before—Jessie—considering that the rascal left you forlorn at the altar of marriage for the arms of another, after spoiling you of all. I never heard of such—I require you now to root him utterly out of your mind, if you value my approval; never more honour the man with one thought——"

"Oh, Mr. Farrel"—she shook her face upward at him—"believe me there is something . . . Mr. Farrel, I knew him when I was f-five . . ."

But he: "Now, Jessie, you make me cross with you"; on which her eyes fell, and they sat silent, until he said: "Well, Miss Simmonds will do the letters; you go home; and come back to me two weeks hence at nine in the evening."

Chapter 36

Vine-Gods, Rye-Gods, Christs

So SHE left him; and before stepping out of the house peeped down the street, half-thinking to see Hazlitt's steps still there!—though he, far enough away, was then driving to Doctor's Commons on the business of a license to marry; which done, he drove to Clarkson's to buy a beard; and three nights afterwards, with this beard on his face, jumped of a bicycle in front of a chapel in North London, just as they were singing "a hymn" there to finish "the service"; then when the people had streamed out he lurked to see Dr. Radlor appear; but, not seeing him, peeped within, and now found that all was not yet over, since a group still filled the three front pews, these being still lit up, though the back of the chapel was now in gloom; and soon Dr. Radlor, coming in from behind a platform-pulpit, stood at its base beside a table which had on it four candles alight, and a chalice covered over with a snow-white nap. There, after kneeling in silent "prayer" awhile, he stood beside the table to read from a book with rueful eyelids: upon which Hazlitt, slipping within, sat in the halfdark, far back, eyeing the rite, eyeing the reader with the leering of an evil eye, thinking within the dark of his heart: "Ah . . . preacher . . . teacher . . . deep deceived . . . When a man is artful and dark, ah, that's bad, that's sad; when a man is addicted to himself, that's sickness, and lays a snare for his neighbour, aye, that's ratsbane, that's drastic, that's rank. What are you after with me, man? What is wrong between us? What are you after with *her*? Ah, dark the thoughts of that heart in you, and the coils of that falsity; well may you pray 'cleanse me with hyssop,' yet not with hyssop, but with hysoap, Pears hys soap. To hug a man, and have a dagger, Radlor, and be two, and double, and lie by smiles, that's blasphemous, that's bad"; but now that face at which he ogled was hidden when the group rose to lift the voice in a song of love and sorrow:

If Thou should'st call me to resign
What most I prize, it ne'er was mine,

I only yield Thee what is Thine:
Thy will be done;

which sung, the front pew moved out to bend the knee on a cushion which lay along a step before a rail, while the sacred officer raised the cloth, to pour wine from the flashing chalice into a couple of cups which flashed silvery in the candle-light; then, taking a pair of plates that contained cubes of bread, he moved to present the food in them to the bent heads, two by two, the ritual in its nook of glow looking remote and recluse, like a group doing Eleusinian things in some grove of mystery; and lugubriously brooded those eyes of the hierophant, sorrow sitting on those raw-looking lids lashed with jasper—no “deep deceiving” *there*, since no actor could ever feign such ache of sadness, he, as with priestly deed he fed the kneelers with flesh of bread, breathing to each pair phrases of bereavement . . . “take, eat, this* is my body . . . do this in remembrance . . . Christ died for you . . .”; and, next, cups of the god’s blood were proffered in such an awe as sobs . . . “this† is my blood . . . which was shed for you” . . . most sacred, strange . . . and though Hazlitt, watching it, at one moment muttered “African” to himself, he meant the form only, having for the meaning of the form a deeper reverence, probably, than any of those kneelers, realizing that here, *here*, is the seed of that tree whose leaves will yet reach the skies, here the idea of Society, of Sacrifice, one resigning for many, depriving, denying, himself, dashing himself to death with that generousness of blood, that eccentric trait of orbits, which, above all, gives to Life the title “son of God” and “chip of the Old Block”: so the Stoic said “Deus est mortali juvare mortalem.” And, even as to *the form*, Hazlitt’s second thoughts should easily have recollected that, in fact, this is no more African than it is Aztec, or Saxon, or Kamskatkan, or Hindoo, or—human, the thing having been everywhere done among men three hundred thousand years ere the name “Christian” had been uttered, as, linked to reason, it may continue to be done many a hundred thousand years after that name has ceased to be remembered, so inherent, deep, its meaning: for when mounds of marl (“barrows”) were (*are*) heaped upon the dead, to keep them down, in order that they might not “walk,” but “cease from troubling,” and when, too, fruit-offerings were put on the

* This bread, *corn*.

† This wine, (“*fruit of the*”) *vine*.

mounds as bribes to quietness, the fruits' seeds sprouted, as they sprouted nowhere else (since the mounds were free of weeds). And now—*Agriculture!!* glad discovery! given *two* things, fruit on the ground (seed), and brother's-flesh buried beneath, we live! wither not away in Nature! lo, there are forces that will work to float and nurture us. So, now, a victim yearly about Easter Equinox, Good Friday, when the dog-star rises at the sun's going down, his flesh to be distributed through the village (though a bone of him shall not be broken), and each shall bury flesh of him in a field: by miracle of Spring-time he shall rise again, again shall smile in sprightliness of rye, in fire of vine, sown in corruption shall rise in glory, he like a god recurring as the suns return, for he is "very god," vine-god, corn-god, sun-god, though son of man, since none but God in him can do these miracles that *he* does. And since the sproutings on the mounds were *free* gifts from the buried, so he, too, must be a *willing* victim, freely pouring out his soul unto death, perceiving that one man must needs die, so that the whole people perish not. But he is young, look, nor has nine lives, only one, and for us he lays that down: how shall we not wildly love him, crying "huzanna!" from our knees when our king moves meek among us, seated on an ass, the foal of an ass? for upon him God has laid the frailty of our need, the flaw of us all, with *his* weals *we* are healed. Is it nothing to us that his countenance is more marred than any man? marked for massacre? death's leper? death looking out of the mortality of that mild eye—behold the man—*he* is the man that has known affliction—O, man of sorrows, thou. That such dispensations should be innate in the vein of Nature! bound-up in the Counsels of that Dark Architect! that it should please God to bruise, and be ruthless to the flesh which He has made nervous and infirm, mutilating His own yearning work! Oh, here is pity of tragedy, and terror, wringing the soul to reproach. But, as for him, perfect king, servant of God and victim, see, he opens not his mouth, as a lamb that is led to the shambles, as a ewe that before her shearers stands mute, aye, he opens not his mouth. Love? yes, love enough. Many women follow him, all the girls go erring after, haggard they go with their love-hunger, for very woe and delight they sigh, their dove's eyes die away, they cannot *stand* the plight of their pining, they clamour "Thammuz! Thammuz!" Down where the thread of path is wound through the forest they follow him out to the mounds of the dead, where he likes to sit on

that highest mound to see the vines, the fields of rye and wheat that ripple-out in the winds, and on the mound he speaks sermons to us in words most sweet and weird, as of one nigh to die, sweet and weird and wise, for he is fey with kens, with beckings of the beings, with sibyl inklings, instincts, intuitions, the grace of God rays from his forehead, and his authority is a god's, as great as his benignness and grace being his pride and right, "God" he calls himself, the man rants, he is rank with grandeurs, for God intoxicates and exalts him, God is in all his thoughts; and "*I am the rye!*" he cries, "*I am the vine!* blessed are ye, if ye be my branches: *I die for the tribe, live you for it; you lose yourself and it, if you live for yourself, and not for it.* For Society is Divine, miraculous, a sacrament; and, as God is a gift to you, be you gifts to Him-in-Society. Look, that sky, that light and life in the rye that ripples, the windy wheat, the lilies—O, look, as I with dying eyes wistfully look—they weave not, spin not, yet Solomon in all his pomp flaunted no cloth like one of them . . . Father of good! . . . Do you know by what travails of Force you were thrown-up to have pleasure in these heavens, and to frolic in the forest? by what star-nails of Calvary, star-coronets of sorrow, cosmic Golgothas, agonies of galaxies? No, you do not know, the vulture's outgoings have not found the road of His groans . . . Father of good . . . Papa, Thou . . . Father of good . . . A universe of giving you owe to Him; and add dances of thanksgiving every day, forgetting not all His benefits: half of all, though you had heads vast like huts, you could never remember; almost all you *must* forget—know not of; but, oh, forget not *all*, forget not all . . ." And always at his words our hearts burned within us, our love still grew, until that great and dreadful day in the *awna* when he said "my God, my God," and we saw him fall. Ha, ha, it was well then for the high-priest who inflicted that wound that he took quick to his heels at our shriek of execration, and our race to reach him, else, by heaven, we should have rent him to shreds: —not very rational, no, but men are but men, have not hearts of stone. Then was distraction, woman with man rushing to and fro, wrenching out the hairs of their heads, throwing up lids of reproach to Thee Omnipotent, for pity of it, for bleeding pity bleating . . . That afternoon the sun seemed to darken . . . that day seemed the last of days . . . we tasted his flesh . . . our lips sipped the blush of that blessed blood which was shed for us, that we might partake

of his nature, and be ever ready to resign, to die, for the tribe . . . his garments we parted among us, upon his vesture we cast lots . . . we wept and we wept, till no wet was left to well in us . . . it was finished, his lids lay shut and wet, he was cut off out of the land of the living, all over now and done, the sun went down upon our love . . . Then down in the forest's dark we gave all the dark hours to orgy and carouse, which the owl ogled at through the groves where the mangoes grow rank, where the glowworms and fireflies spangle the glooms, and the brooks carry-on their nightlong gabblings, and the grasshoppers cry and cry; there the rabbits came to pry through every brake of every glen at Priap and Bacchus dancing mad that night, for all the gods of forest and of dingle got into us all, giving us glimpses of the madness of their glammers, so that when memory glances back at the moods and doings of that day and dark it is like the remembrance of some trance transacted in starry tracts afar; and you, Ada, little sister, sedate Ada, dainty, dearest of my sisters, neat Ada, innately aristocrat, strict, and if anyone kisses you, or just touches you anywhere, you wipe it off privately, Ada; yet how riotous that nightlong, when the flood of the tribal emotion smote down and drowned the individual, how corybantic did you carry-on down in the bowers, abandoned to carousing, in philanthropy, in boundless hospitality, powerless to say no to man or brat: for in all your thoughts was *he*; and always still you, and all, think of *him*; indeed, there are many years, to each year its vine-god, and wildly we weep them all, yet never year saw vine-god like that dear year in which Jesus died.

If Thou should'st call me to resign
What most I prize, it ne'er was mine,
I only yield Thee what is Thine:
Thy will be done.

Anew the song was sung in love and sorrow, the second pew trooped out and knelt, and once more the words of woe were sung, the third pew walked out, knelt, ate, and all were fed.

And now, full of that food, they moved out satisfied, pensive, Hazlitt, too, as they stepped his way, slipping out to wait by his bicycle at a corner, until in five minutes he spied Dr. Radlor come out, dive into a motor-brougham, and drive off; and he leaped the bicycle to follow.

Chapter 37

Up the River

HE HAD selected a bicycle for its silence, but, though he was light-clad, without jacket or waistcoat, belted, his shirt open, it was no easy task to keep near the car, and he arrived perspiring at Brook Street, where for a quarter of an hour he lurked at the corner of Claridge's, observing a house into which the doctor had gone; until again the doctor came out with a box, got into the car, drove past Claridge's—pretty close to Hazlitt's back: and Hazlitt, springing on, was after him.

Hammersmith, Chiswick: Hazlitt becoming so hot, though drizzle was falling, that he slipped his beard into his pocket, since the motor seemed all unconscious of him.

But in passing over Kew Bridge, he saw a head put out of the car to look backward a little; some minutes afterwards the speed of car rather seemed to increase; and now, with his highest gear on, he had need to ply his wheeling feet, and lean to it. But, not intending to be left, he kept up that scorching all along the Richmond Road, until the motor shot into a road to the left, and he lost it a little, then saw it, lost it, saw it, lost it, as it now careened through a crowd of not-long villa-streets, eastward, southward. But when he next pedalled into sight, a sigh of fruition left him, the car now standing still at the end of a street of "villa-residences" that ran north-and-south: and he felt that *there* was she he sought.

Doubt, however, took him when he saw that the motor may have stopped only because it *could* not go on, since three barrier-posts stood at the street-end, and near beyond them three elms: and, as Dr. Radlor was not now in the car, the possibility that he might have gone farther on foot, sent Hazlitt pedalling on.

As he passed the car, its chauffeur addressed him with "Hi! what street is this?" but, without answering, he passed on between the barriers and elms, wheeling eastward there, a waterside now on his right, on his left a "terrace" of cottages, all meanly alike, along which he scorched, and past a bridge of the canal, peering keenly ahead through mist

and drizzle; then back to the bridge, and across it, to a region of hedge and field, and the solitary horse cropping; and presently, his light now out, he saw the doctor eighty yards ahead plodding without haste along a lane: so now Hazlitt softly dismounted, hooked-on his beard, and, after putting his bicycle to lie by a hedge, followed afoot, keeping to the shadows, though the doctor appeared unconscious of him: and so they proceeded, till the doctor disappeared round a hedge-corner to his left, whereupon Hazlitt quickened a little; but when he got to the corner could no longer see the doctor—the doctor having apparently started into running! If that was so, his invisibility was explained by the bends of this path, and its shadedness under hedge-elms: and Hazlitt himself bent into running. If it was a question of running, *he* was the victor; but when, soft and swift, he had run a long way, still no sign of the doctor; and finally he stopped, conscious that he had been bested.

Back then he started, keeping sharp eyes on the hedge on each side; but no sign of anyone: here men seemed to be dead, to have left the scheme of things to mist and to the mood of a smear that was the moon. And so he got again to where he had left his bicycle: but no bicycle any longer, the bicycle gone. On which it entered his head that all this jaunt on foot might be just a ruse to decoy him off, that his mother was really in that street of the barriers, and that the doctor, having dodged across-fields, had cut back to her on the bicycle: so at once he was running anew, back across the canal-bridge, along the row of cottages, back to the barriers . . .

But now no car was there any more; his bicycle he found lying half-way down the street.

Now, anyway, he felt that he knew the neighborhood, perhaps the street, in which *she* lay—"Seymour Street," a street of new houses, three "to let," a few unlit . . . He had an impulse to knock now at all their doors, but was soon scouting this idea, realizing that waiting and wariness was the thing: so he picked up his bicycle to ride away, and early the next morning—his third wedding-morning—sent an agent to keep watch round about Seymour Street, meaning, if this proved fruitless, to manœuvre differently on the coming Sunday evening.

Chapter 38

A Third Wedding-Day

BY ELEVEN he was out buying a wedding-ring—for he would not use for Máhndorla the ring that had been for Jessie—then was in front of a house in Kensington High Street, waiting until Máhndorla arrived smiling in a car, and now he found himself dropping the improbable remark: “Well, here we are”; whereupon they stepped up a petty stair into a room too little for its contents, and there sat at a table before a man, who, when he had married them, gave to Máhndorla a “certificate,” and solemnly shook hands with them—causing Máhndorla to laugh! though Hazlitt had no laugh in him; and when they had kissed on the stair and descended, they stood and looked into each other’s eyes, she with a certain smile of lips-turned-down which meant: “Now I have you.”

But this was not so . . .

Before anything had been said, Hazlitt noticed a man on the other pavement getting into a taxi—his old agent Mason: and since he now had no doubt that Mason, while pretending to hunt for his mother, had been Radlor’s man, he asked himself if Mason by chance could be acting for Radlor as a shadower of Máhndorla: for there Mason was; so he said to Máhndorla: “What next? I was about to ask you to luncheon, but since you care whether your movements are known—I don’t care—I may mention that I just saw yonder a detective well known to your brother.”

This killed her smile. “Oh, no, no luncheon—no hotel or anything—you must let me be the man, and arrange. Tonight at Lady Darling’s—bridge-party: you come, stay late, and it will occur to her to ask you to sleep. But she doesn’t quite know yet of what we have done today, and I daren’t break it to her suddenly, I think—she is rather chums with Harold. So you will sleep sequestered, unless by chance—you cannot.”

At this her underpeep saw his blood rush to a lovely blush, and she kissed her ring-finger through her glove, adding: “I am dining there; you come at nine.”

“You dear,” he said, meditating upon her; then sud-

denly: "But tell me—you have not even yet found out where my mother is?"

"Even yet?" she said: "had no chance."

"Well"—about to mention his last night's tracking, he checked himself, and changed it to "I am depending upon you."

But she rather threw it off her, saying: "Oh, well, when I can," adding at once: "So at nine. Now we part, m'sieur. Oh, I am in the Maelstrom, Caxton, this day! mad as a March hare, *au fond*. And you? Love me?"

He nodded; and then asked: "How about that mole?"

"Still extant—for you. How wildly do you?"

"Like a March-hare."

"'Voir, then. At nine."

But at nine, when he was at a card-table in Berkeley Square, no Máhndorla; and Lady Darling, an elderly staleness, ghastly with paint and garnitures, came to say behind his ear: "I can't think what has become of Máhndorla! She did not come to dinner". . .

He could scarcely attend to the play . . . no Máhndorla . . . ten o'clock . . . half-past . . . But before eleven she was there with a certain urgency and radiance of face, as of one who has surged up in victory through a sea of difficulties; and the hostess, after a talk apart with her in a cosy corner, managed for her a whist-partnership with Hazlitt, to whom she presently manœuvred a pencil-note among the cards: "Something suspected. Been 'in detention.' All right till tomorrow: he thinks me in bed! Always bet on your wife of sugar"; and presently, discovering his toe under the table, she pressed with her toe, sending sudden blood to flush his face; and presently he pressed, sending floods of blood surging to hers, as when, on a button being pressed, electricity springs like a spirit, and is present: and so until the company of ten moved out a sit-down supper; after which Máhndorla in drunken bravado slipped-on her ring for anybody who liked to spy, and fiddled tarantellas of Darius Milhaud, then recited Swinburne things in her strong contralto, a voice sexual, velvety like violets and viol-tones, but arrogant, braggart, her throat throwing off as from some throne of authority "Thou art smitten, Thou God, Thou art smitten, Thy death is upon Thee, O, Lord"; then, nigh on two in the morning, with her underlook of raillery she formally gave good-night to Hazlitt, up on a landing, in the hostess' presence, and among them there was bed-time separation, that day done now, its record

written in a Book. When her white door closed behind her, Hazlitt saw that she had let a rose-bud drop for him, with which he went behind his own white door on the opposite side of the corridor.

In there he took off his shoes, threw himself on his bed to rumple it, then reclined by a fire, to wait some time, and not look too tumid. But now a thought caused him rather to start; and, to measure its depth in puffs, he lit a cigarette: it had come into his head that, if he could contrive to repress his admirations until the wife had discovered his mother's whereabouts, that would be tactics: for, though he hoped to discover her on the Sunday next, he might fail, in which case *the wife* was his resource: and celibacy might press her to effort and discovery . . . She had bargained with him; *he* might bargain with *her*, and use this screw: for she loved her brother—might not discover, or tell, without use of screw. But he laughed: "No, too monstrously impolite!" and he breathed with a certain furtiveness of the burglar's leer: "*Could I? By God, this is no common or garden peach*"; soon after which he was moving out, palish now with agitation, owing to the two motives' contention in him—out in his socks into a corridor now dim, to creep fifteen feet; and now his hand was out for her door-handle—when it paused: once more policy stopped him; he thought: "No—only a week—I *will* wait; and this is final."

But it was not so "final": for five minutes later, in his chamber, temptation afresh assailed him, indecision; and he then, seeing paper, seized it, to scribble: "2.30. My dearest, I am bound to go home, and we may not meet for a week. *There is a reason*, dear, that will keep us apart until the day that I discover my mother. Wire and write to me. I keep the rose-bud to kiss into a *viola del pensiero*. Sweet dreams, sweet. C."

This he pushed under her door with some fuss, that she might hear, then immediately, having his shoes and a "pipe-lighter" alight in his hands, escaped down the stair, and out.

Chapter 39

"15 Seymour Street"

NOR, THOUGH each day they wrote to each other, could she contrive to acquire sight of him throughout that week, dur-

ing which he awaited news from the agent of his who was keeping an eye on Seymour Street; but in vain: so on the Sunday night before nine he was himself there, hiding behind the three elms at the street's end, all eyes for what might arise . . .

As yet he did not see his agent, who, however, should have been about; and forty minutes he watched alone, chilled, the night cold, until monotony awoke to life, he seeing a motor, *the* motor, drive into the street . . .

Now he hung motionless, suspended, while the motor drove to a house not far on his left, a board marked "To Let" in its front-garden; and now a man left the motor, to stroll toward the barrier-posts and elms, and come pretty close: whereat Hazlitt slipped a little round his elm; nor did the man seem to see him: for, after looking up and down the canal-road, the man called out to the motor: "All clear!" then strolled back, and, with Dr. Radlor and the motor-driver, went into the house, whose door Hazlitt saw the doctor open with a key; and the door was slammed.

Instantly now, shivering with eagerness, Hazlitt darted, meaning to get somehow into that house, feeling himself, though weaponless, the equal of many.

He ran up four steps to the door, and now was about to bang on it, when, with happy surprise, he spied that the slam had not fastened the door! and in he slipped . . .

Inside, darkness; a sound or two of footsteps overhead; but no sign of light; so that he was barely aware of a stair—struck on it—then stood looking upward; and "steady," he said, "no haste": for till some ray showed somewhere, it seemed well to wait, to discover how the land lay; and during five minutes that seemed ten he stood straining ear, eye—no sound now either of footsteps or of speech, he seeming alone with ghosts, whose home is gloom, and they see unseen; until now again a step sounded above, a booted step, loud, that came to the stair-head and commenced to descend; whereupon he retreated inward, until, meeting the vacancy of a doorway in the stair-side, he stepped within and drew the door, leaving a crevice to peep through; but the footsteps on the stair were hardly half-way down, when the door was roughly banged, throwing his head backward, and he got the consciousness of a key being turned, heard a chest give off a gasp—of half-laughter, of satisfaction . . .

Bloodless now he stood in stone, cold-struck, drowned in ruin, conscious now of voices talking, of footsteps moving

toward the front-door, and the front-door slammed after them . . .

Now he understood that it was by design that that front-door, slammed on the arrival of the three, had not fastened; understood that all had been planned; that the man who had called "All clear!" at the elms had really seen him; that he had been lured and noosed, the enemy being more cunning than he on *this* level of activity, and could "beat him in a deal."

Moving now to grope and explore his prison, his fingers came across a switch, whereupon light shot from a glow-lamp, and he saw that he was in a water-closet five feet long and wide.

Next he drove his strength against the door; but soon gave that up . . .

And now the dreadfulness of his case struck him in the face: Radlor was inexorable; "never forgave"; Radlor had said "war, man"; and now, if Radlor had found out about Máhdorla's marriage, as looked likely, he had another motive, beside Hazlitt's mother, to hold Hazlitt: so that, if Hazlitt was not starved to death, he might remain incarcerated weeks . . . years: no means of suicide, since 200 volts only kill the sick; so what on earth could rescue him? probably nothing but Radlor's relenting—or Science might save, the Saviour of Life from all Life's plights . . . provided Life has enough of it . . .

Now he dived into his pockets to find out what he had: no penknife! and though he often carried, because of its wit, a nickel "pipe-lighter" that lights by friction on a flint, that he had not now: expecting his agent's coöperation, he had not come prepared for outrages, which, moreover, were outside the bounds of his mental habit; he had five shillings, a beard: by means of which, had he science *enough*, he knew that he could fly through that door to Libra and Arcurus; but what could a man's tiny science do with them?

Next he set to bellowing, calling "Blake!" to the air, calling "Mam! are you here?"—Blake being his agent, who might now be outside somewhere, though it had entered his head that Blake might have been "got at" by big offers; nor did he bellow long, having little hope—he so buried there, the villa so detached.

Dropping now upon the floor, he thought that on the morrow he would not be running, nor breathing those holy breezes that he adored, his body would suffer loss of excellence, and so his soul also, step for step, he going off

ong, from an uncommon man becoming a common man; and he thought of his mother who would lack him, of his wife who would want him—a wife who, in fact, at that hour, defiant now of risks, was presenting herself at Park Lane to see him; and in the next days her perplexity at his silence waxed wild, panic now striking her at the fancy that he might somehow have discovered Jessie Page alive, and left her for Jessie. So one afternoon she drove down to Jessie's new home in Chiswick, which she knew of, since Jessie, unable to shake-off the self-indulgence of hearing Hazlitt spoken of, at present revealed her addresses to Máhndorla; and, glancing out of her parlour-window, she saw a car at her gate, and Máhndorla walking up the little garden-path of dalles, between privet hedges, to a pretty little door which had in it patterns of glass, whose colours looked nice and gaudy at night in the glow of the hall-lamp: seeing all which, and perfect furniture inside Máhndorla's heart was all an alarm, for she thought "he has bought her his!" till to her question, "Is this house yours?" Jessie answered "Yes, my employer bought it for me."

And Máhndorla: "Employer . . . for whom you do type-writing?"

"Did. I don't go now."

"Well! that seems generous. Oh, Jess, young man?"

"No, old. You can cut all that out."

"Very well, cut it out, it will come, for I know you are a good little thing, except in midsummer when you have night-dreams." Now she sighed her relief and her care, "Ah, well!" then, with animation: "Jess! News for you! I have been through it—look," drawing off glove to shew ring: whereat Jessie, pale-struck, rose from her piano-stool to go peering nearer at it in the evening-glow from the window, and a hard voice of animosity remarked: "Oh, I see, that's what you came to tell . . . You have married Caxton?"

And Máhndorla: "Oh, Jess, you should not call him Caxton' now: he is mine."

"Pooh"—from Jessie flaming—"he is *mine*."

"Oh, well, if you choose to be far-fetched"—Máhndorla pouted her tit-bit, war and a sword between them *au fond*—"he happens to be mine: the ring is round and has no end; *look, girl*"—she twisted it at the foe.

"Yes, I see it"—Jessie's lip shivered—"you can keep your ring, and you can *think* that he is yours, and he can *tell* you that he is, if he is such a liar, but *he* knows, and I know——"

“Well, he does tell me, Jess, and it can hardly be a lie, I think the man won’t let me be . . . Well, one likes one’s husband to be devoted, but *he*—it is too much—leaves his poor wife no peace——”

Stepping backward now to sit again, Jessie stumbled against a hassock, her attention was so riveted on this fiction; and when Máhndorla went on to describe in hints and synopses the roaring lion of her husband’s uxoriousness, using sly smiles, lowered tones, a plying of eyes, silent sat Jessie, fascinated like bird by serpent, a victim pinned, drinking it in willingly-unwillingly, the half of it that she believed being more than enough to make an aching in her heart; and the moment she was alone, she mourned out “*Oh-h-h!*” collapsed, and clamoured a deluge of lamentings.

But on the next occasion that Máhndorla came she came in another mood, mourning, and Jessie then had some comfort and vengeance; but that was not for some weeks, Jessie meantime still increasing in plumpness, like a pumpkin that still increases from plumpness to plumpness between May and September, like a row of bowls of increasing capacity in pattern-books of the dealers, like a set of scale-weights that step by step still increase, like toe-nails and toes that still increase from pigmy-pig to big-pig, so that now her roundness had the dimension of the heads of men a million years hence, and now it had the dimension of heads *two* million years hence, and now of heads *three* million years hence, her development a series of prophecies and promises—and of histories—she ever representing an age of Life, and the tale of Time, from protozoon to over-over-over-man. As her villa was hardly fifty yards from the river, just there where the Boat-club is and the Yacht-and-Yawl Builders, her young motherhood had become a familiar thing to the river-side natives on “The Strand,” where, loose-clad but fetching in a Breton sailor-hat of velour, she walked daily, marked the barges’ drawling, marked the motor-boats, bow aloft, poop down, shooting furiously through the Age, shouting “*I promise! I promise!*” fed the two swans: for a Dr. Burroughs, her accoucheur, a rough customer, but bonhomme underneath, who, living near, anon visited her, had enjoined it upon her that she should walk long and often, yes, and run, too; moreover, a Mr. Percival, a clergyman, visited her; and every three weeks Mr. Farrell came for twenty minutes; and a Mrs. Furley, too, a portly soul, who was to be her withwife or wise-woman in that day of her labour, would turn up; moreover, she had the company

of her girl-servant, being well-to-do now, since her old salary was still given her; and Mary Giddins, written to by Jessie after months of dumbness, came in haste—came on that same day that Máhdorla came again, was, in fact, chatting with Jessie, just telling Jessie the news, recently come to her ears, that Hazlitt had actually gone to marry Jessie after two o'clock on that wedding-day, when Máhdorla's car arrived.

Chapter 1

Máhdorla and Mary

WHEREUPON Mary, as was becoming, retired before the lady, to sit mum by the fire at the inner wall, while Máhdorla in sables and hat talked with Jessie in the bay-window—those houses, all joined together, being a succession of bay-windows in gables that look upon oblongs of grass, upon a path, and upon two hedges, in Jessie's oblong being a chestnut, swinging that day in the winds with a whispering of children playing conspirators in heaven, whispering *sh-h-h*, in the sky clouds like scouts flying flushed, flushed in the sunset-lights; and at once Máhdorla plunged into her subject with "Jessie, tell me the truth; do you know anything about Caxton?"—talking softer because of a stranger present yonder: a vain thing, since Mary had cat's-ears.

"How do you mean?"—from Jessie, all smiles at the bright tidings just brought by Mary.

And Máhdorla: "No, you don't know—how should you? Jessie, dear, Caxton has vanished, no one at all knows where to—probably is—dead . . . Jessie . . ."

Her forehead dropped, then dropped upon Jessie's shoulder, while Jessie, with a white nose which showed-up her five freckles, breathed: "Since when?"

"Three months! nearly . . . Jessie, I know someone whom I have suspected as likely to know something of it, and I have braved and faced him; I said, 'Harold, what have you done with Caxton?' but no, I don't think—unless he is the most wonderful of actors . . . And yet, mind, he never quite denied . . . he may, he *may*, know. Anyway, no Caxton now—it is for sympathy, I suppose, that I have come: we are both in the same boat; but *you* bear his child, while I . . . Jessie, that was all a lie I told you about his uxoriousness—only to make you mad—there's been nothing, nothing—a kiss on a stair the day we married: from that day I didn't see him for a week, and then he ceased to write" . . .

Now was glee of heart and balm of Gilead Jessie's, but she spoke comfort, saying, "Never mind, perhaps he's only gone yachting again . . . Did you know that he came to marry me at two that day of my——?" but she stopped at a

breath from Máhndorla which said "*O God!*" upon which, following Máhndorla's gaze of awe, she saw Mr. Farrel opening her little gate, and in the same moment was aware of the hiss of Máhndorla's whisper: "Mustn't be seen—don't say anything of me—I'll come back on Thursday," as Máhndorla whirled her skirts away out of the room; and when Jessie hurried out to open to Mr. Farrel, it was to get a glimpse of Máhndorla vanishing away up the stair; nor had Mr. Farrel been three minutes in the drawing-room when Jessie near the window got a glimpse of Máhndorla fleeing soft off along the garden-path to her car.

He, meantime, was saying: "Well, you did not expect me, and my stay will be momentary, especially as you have a guest"—again the dignity of his neck condescended lingeringly to Mary—"my object in coming being merely to bid you goodbye."

Jessie breathed, "*Goodbye . . . ?*" staring at him, paled . . .

"Yes, from today you see me no more——"

"Mr. F-farrel . . ."

"Well, but you knew, Jessie, that my stay in England is temporary; and since I now seem to have failed in the mission on which I came, I go back to my home."

She suddenly covered her eyes, and he said: "Well, well, well, no tears, no tears: 'æquam memento servare in arduis rebus mentem,' which means 'still keep an equal mind in trying times.' I regret that you will lack the comfort of a fatherly presence at the birth of your babe, but—I think it must be so. As to money-matters, you are no doubt sure that your income will continue until such time as you yourself, say three or four years hence, decide to discontinue it. And now—be of good cheer. Trust in God and do the right. I counsel you at all times to shun the man who so wronged you; and, as soon as your bashfulness abates, you should resume relations with your mother. Now I go from you. Goodbye. Give me a kiss."

Jessie's forehead and sobs were on his shoulder, her broken outcry: "Oh, Mr. F-farrel, you are all I have . . ." and he had to put her from him to get away.

But now Mary Giddins, too, was at him: for, as he was opening the front-door to go, she tripped out to him to say: "Begging your pardon, Sir, but could I go and see you at your house?"

His eyebrows lifted. "Well, I hardly—— What for? I am leaving England in four days."

And she: "I can go on Wednesday. I wanted to talk to you about"—her lips lifted to his ear—"Hazlitt."

This, she saw, made him pale.

"Who is this Haz——?" he began to ask; but then, suddenly lifting his hat to her, he said: "Let it be so, then: about noon on Wednesday," and went, Jessie still after him, to wave farewells from the gate.

When she came in again she asked Mary: "Whatever do you want to see him about?"

And Mary, again seated near the grate: "Whoy, ain't he all mixed up in this ere about Hazlitt, and you, and the old women? Didn't you say that the man who first told you about Mr. Farrel wanting a secretary was after knowing the old woman's address? If the man was Mr. Farrel's agent for a secretary, ten to one he was Mr. Farrel's agent in wanting the old woman's address, too: for wasn't the old woman in Mr. Farrell's kitchen afterwards? You think that that was just a chance? not likely."

Jessie was all astonishment. "*She* was in Mr. Farrel's kitchen?"

And Mary: "Whoy, wasn't it in going to her through a window that Hazlitt got his arm sprained? and didn't Hazlitt live just behind Farrel's in a great mansion——?"

"Caxton lived?"—Jessie stood astare.

"Yes, ain't I been to it? Didn't Hazlitt come to my pub three months ago from Italy about his mother, and say that you was dead——?"

"That *I* was!"

"So he said; then he walked out before I could ask him what he meant. I wasn't sure whether he meant you was just dead to *him* like; but about two weeks afterwards—listen to this—Mrs. Simmons from Swinton Street came into the bar one Saturday night, and she told me your mother was in mourning for you. She said your mother had gone down to Finchley to see a cousin, and the cousin had shewed your mother an old newspaper that had it to say you had drowned yourself——"

"That *I* had? Oh, poor Mother!"—Jessie was all a stare—"It must have been someone else named Jessie——"

"So I said, too"—from Mary—"but Mrs. Simmons she said no, it was *you*, because your mother shewed her the paper, and the paper said 'Jessie Page, a typist, of Swinton Street': so it was *you*. So the next day, the Sunday, I went to your mother, and she was in mourning, and I told her it wasn't true what the paper said, because you had wrote to

me, as you promised you would, and I had been to see you only a month before, and your mother fainted away: but I wouldn't give her your address, because I promised you I wouldn't. And then your mother told me how Hazlitt had come to marry you after two o'clock that day: so I took a taxi, and went to tell you about it, and you was gone from the sweet-stuff shop, they didn't know where you was gone to; and these two months I've been waiting to hear from you, and you never wrote. So the same Sunday night I made Giddins write to Hazlitt's post-office address, to ask him what he meant by saying you was dead, because you wasn't, for I knew now he must have seen it in the papers, and I didn't get no answer; so didn't I go and find out Mr. Farrel's house in Park Street, where Hazlitt had told me Mr. Farrel lived? for I knew that Hazlitt must live at the back of Mr. Farrel's, where Hazlitt's arm had been sprained. Then didn't I go to see Hazlitt? but he was gone, nobody knew where he was gone to. It's only today I hear that Hazlitt is married, I didn't know then, so I wanted to make Hazlitt marry you, because he was sure you was dead. If he hadn't been sure, he would never have married that—'Miss Parsons': because Hazlitt ain't bad. So whoever had a reason for wanting him to marry was the one that put that news about you into the paper. But *ow* did—she? because it was a *she*, yes, and I could tell you which *she* it was, if I chose—didn't I reckon her up in three ticks the minute I squinted at her just now? But *ow* did she? If the news was in only one of the papers, may-be she had a friend on the paper who put it in for her; but I'll bet it was in more than one paper, because Hazlitt was *sure*, and Hazlitt ain't a feller that'd swallow the first thing that comes along—no, I don't think—not Hazlitt. So *ow* the devil could—she—have got it into the papers? But wait: I'll see that paper that your mother has this night, and p'raps I'll know more before tomorrow's over. That woman's got me on her back now, and, by God, she'll have a job to get me off it, because all I have I owe to Hazlitt, and it's you Hazlitt wants, not the likes of *er*, flash as she is."

"But—he is—married to her now!" Jessie exclaimed.

And Mary: "Oh, that ain't nothing; he ain't ad *er*, she said so herself."

"But—he can never marry me now!"

"No, he can't marry you, but he can ave you."

"That he won't, then—never!—not if he's married to somebody else."

"Oh, well, if you choose to be stuck-up like that . . . Whoy, ain't it just as well for anybody to be reasonable?"

Staring into the flame, Jessie mournfully muttered: "I might have written to him now I know that he did come to marry . . . but he is gone . . . may be dead."

"Dead, no"—Mary stood up to go—" 'tain't likely. Don't you know who has im?—that woman's brother: she called him 'Harold.' "

And Jessie: "How can you know that she has a brother?"

"Whoy, ain't she the spit of im? Wasn't I telling you about the old woman's leg getting crushed, and about a parson with a red beard that carried her off? The one that had Hazlitt's mother has Hazlitt: his name's 'Harold.' " . . .

Now Jessie started. "Mr. Farrel has a son named 'Harold'! and he is a parson—and a daughter . . . But they are in America."

At this Mary gradually sat again, to gaze meditating at the flames, and presently muttered: "So that's why she ran to hide from him just now: *he* thinks she's in America . . ." She sprang up: "I'll go, I got a lot to do and think about . . . see you again—so long—cheer up! P'raps I'll soon be stepping into that room where that parson has Hazlitt"—a prophecy that pressed for fulfilment, since, in fact, Hazlitt was even then shaking himself to pieces with cold, no "waistcoat" or "under-vest," he sleeping bent-up on the floor with one elbow up on the seat of the cell, for in one corner a cupboard under a lavatory-basin prevented him from extending his legs that way—his sleeping being in the day-time, since what he was doing to escape was done at night, lest it might be spied by those who fed him.

Chapter 2

Sparking Hairs

As to food, he had been kept two days without any, until, on some plaster-grit drizzling down upon him, he had glanced up to see an auger-point intruding, then, in the hole made by the auger a key-hole saw had intruded, to cut out a disc from his ceiling; and through the hole cut out had then been lowered a strawberry-basket containing mutton and potatoes—no knife nor fork.

And ever his food was the same—mutton and potatoes—though, from the fourth day, a second basket containing “sago-custard” and a wooden spoon began to come, and with the mutton and custard a “tumbler” made of “carton,” such as they keep cream in, which contained muscat-wine; and from the hanging vessels he ate and drank, their strings being fastened to something above, until the vessels were ready to be raised; nor did he ever see any face through the aperture; and, if he halloed up anything, no answer.

As to water, he had all that he wanted, there being two faucets over the basin, with “hot” and “cold” on their porcelain tops; also there was a lump of pumice-stone and a wafer of soap, and an old nail-brush, with which he cleaned his teeth.

But he was so ruined and undone, and so preoccupied by the pressure of the cold upon his attention, that it was three weeks before he even attempted anything to free himself: for his only cutting-edges were two nickel clips on his braces, they too narrow to be used with any strength, and, as to the hinges of a medicine-cupboard that hung on a wall, when he attempted to wrench off the doors of it he failed—impotent; nothing in the medicine-cupboard; nothing in the cupboard under the basin, save an old towel hanging on the conduit-pipe from the basin’s bottom; no chain to the plug of the basin-bottom. When he attempted to dissever the chain from the porcelain pull-handle of the “flush” he failed—impotent: not a tool, he just so much like a monkey now as a man who, having tools, lacks the cunning of hand to use them. When, to get a cutter, he attempted to crack off a fragment of the basin’s porcelain by banging at it with a boot and with his lump of pumice-stone, he failed—impotent—wonderfully like a monkey in his powerlessness over Nature. And with his jacket-collar up round his ears he remained there, hugging the gushes of his shiverings as a mother hushes her infant, seated on a piece of carpet that lay over part of the floor-linoleum, his teeth running races with his fingers in twinkling, he acquainted now with the shade of the varnish which stained the dado of match-boarding; acquainted with the tiling, squares of blue-and-white, above the dado; acquainted with a stain of wet on the ceiling that came to seem an elephant’s face: acquainted with his glow-lamp’s shade, tinged pink at the edges; and with the zig-zag pattern of the lamp’s filament, steadily aglow there over him like a Polar sun that does not set.

Here, anyway, was electricity, and he an electrician—fruitful rendezvous. Moreover, he had in his pocket a beard, and a handkerchief—silk!—non-conducting; also he found behind a lapel of his jacket a pin; and, by using the edge of a shilling as a file, he contrived to cut the pin into two; after which he was for some time engaged in plucking hairs out of the beard, to tie them with neat fingers together; and, on getting two strings of hair, he tied an end of each to each of his pieces of pin.

Then, when he divined that it was deep in the night, and his watcher or watchers asleep, he took off the switch-cap, and, holding a hair at two points, tried to push it between the switch-contact and a terminal: but the hair broke every time—no space; so now he switched-off the light, and, having his fingers covered with silk, attempted to place and keep his two strings of hair against the two terminals while with his teeth he drew down the switch-contact to fix the strings. But though he stubbornly stuck to it for hours, again and again essaying it with mania, in this he failed, his fingers quivering beyond the scope of his control; and at last, on a finger chancing to become uncovered and to touch the brass, instantly the fangs and gnash of a shock sprang out upon him, heeling his staggering away upon the seat, where he lay routed, groaning in sorrow “Oh, God, Oh, God” . . .

Yet the next night he was at it again, trying now to bind round the terminals a trifle of wire that he had from the beard: and this he contrived to do; but only to find that now the switch-contact would not come down, nor keep in contact—the wire too thick: so that now he would have no light. Whereupon he abandoned wire, and set to trying *hair* round the terminals—a work that tried his handicraft five nights: for to tie the hairs at all in that dark was pretty high human doing, such as no “Prime Minister” or “Chief Justice” ever dreamt of achieving, or Cæsar, or Epictetus; and, if he tied them tight, they broke, while, if he did not tie them tight, one or the other slipped off before he could bring down the contact to fix them, he doing it in that gloom through the contact of silk with fingers which ever shivered; and when he finally contrived it, great was his self-gratulation, for only a hand trained to a most radical dissimilarity from an ape’s could ever have come near that finesse and feat.

But pretty brief was his victory . . .

The hairs now fixed, the light anew on, he held his two

pin-ends vis-à-vis, bringing them nearer, to ascertain the "striking"-distance; then the sparking-distance; with a shilling-edge he scraped in the door two depressions, into which he inserted his pin-ends, that the sparking might pass through the wood between; and so he kept on, scraping pairs of depressions, and sparking between. But since the sparking-distance, even in air, was pitifully short, he had hardly been at it fifteen minutes when that ataxic shivering of his fingers chanced to clash the two pin-ends together, whereat his string of hair shrivelled, fused, vanished; and he had the whole to do anew.

But when he now scratched at the wood between the depressions he found that, though not consumed as by sparks of fire (these being lightning-sparks), the wood, "blighted," came readily away: so little of it, however, that at this rate it must take him months to make a hole round the lock-case spacious enough to enable him to remove the lock—this being his aim, for he knew it to be useless to make a hand-hole, since no key was now in the lock outside; and now he was so down-hearted, that during the two nights following, when there was a frost, he threw-up the enterprise.

But he resumed it, though with less enthusiasm; and, in spite of many trials, of several fusings, stuck to it two months; and since the lining of his jacket was of the same shade as the door's varnish, with a rag of it he covered his growing hole by day, sticking the rag with his two pin-ends.

Nevertheless, Mary Giddins' hope of "stepping into the room" where he lay immured was opportune, since, like any life deposited in the hell of some foreign element, he every day tended more toward ineffectiveness and death.

She, however, was urgently at work, and, during the Tuesday before the "Wednesday" on which she went by appointment to Mr. Farrel, travelled a long way about London, throwing now the business of "the bar" to the winds, and discovered much, as she remarked to Mr. Farrel, seated near him in his morning-room on the Wednesday afternoon: "Hazlitt ain't bad, Mr. Farrel; you told Jessie Page never to have nothing more to do with him, but Hazlitt ain't bad, I've got things to tell you."

Chapter 3

“Valve-Leakage”

His judge’s-eyes dwelt with meditation so long upon her, that she sat abashed under the shadow of that dignity, as of some great rock, until he said: “You should, however, explain yourself; I do not know who this ‘Hazlitt’ is; my counsel to Miss Page was to shun a certain Sir Henry Beresford——”

“It’s the same, Mr. Farrel: Hazlitt took the name of Beresford, I don’t know why he took it.”

“Hazlitt took . . . I—I see . . . ‘Beresford’ becomes ‘Hazlitt.’” Again he meditated behind eyes which steadily surveyed her; then: “Do you happen to know the Christian name of this Hazlitt?”

“His name is Caxton, Sir.”

Suddenly now he leant to peer deeply at her awhile, as an old tailor peers at his needle’s eye; then, letting his head drop back upon his chair, sat silent, palish.

And Mary, bending toward him: “No, Hazlitt ain’t bad, Mr. Farrel. I was a poor girl, Sir, and Hazlitt gave me and Giddins a thousand pounds apiece, just because we gave the old woman some cheese and some bananas: Hazlitt ain’t bad. Jessie Page says that you told her Hazlitt stole that jewel of yours, but that ain’t ow it was, Sir: if Hazlitt told you he stole it, he said it to screen the old woman, because——”

His lips moved to say low: “Stay: he once told me that old woman’s name is also ‘Hazlitt,’ not ‘Hammond,’ as I was informed. Is that a fact?”

“Well, of course, Sir: ain’t she Hazlitt’s mother?”

“Caxton Hazlitt’s mother . . . And she was here . . . in this house . . . How—came she here?”

And Mary: “That I don’t know, Sir; but I can tell you who does know—that man with the small-pox marks who let me in to you, because I saw him at the house near Chichester where they had the old woman after they kid-napped her: he was there, I see him there, just before she came here, so e’d know. That was where they put the jewel in an old drawer for the old woman to take, because

they wanted to get the old woman into prison to hide her, and the old woman took it, and gave it to me to give to her son, because she thought her son was hard-up, but he wasn't. So Hazlitt never stole it, Mr. Farrel; no, that ain't right. Nor he ain't done no wrong to Jessie Page, though he *has* married a lady who calls herself 'Miss Parsons,' but he thought that Jessie Page was dead, because Miss Parsons got it put in the papers that Jessie was dead, for didn't I find out all about it yesterday? didn't I go to the mortuary at Fulham, and find out? Some girl had drowned herself, but nobody didn't know who the girl was, the papers said: so Miss Parsons went to the mortuary where the girl was, and identified the girl as Jessie Page, a cousin of hers, she said, because she knew Hazlitt wouldn't marry her unless Jessie was dead: and it was this Miss Parsons done it, because the mortuary-officer remembered about it, and described Miss Parsons to me yesterday. And, as for that wedding-day——"

"Oblige me by opening that cabinet"—pointing with a finger that visibly shivered, his breath now venting from his nostrils in a fan of rather rough puffs audible to her—"a medicine-bottle and a glass there . . ." on which she was up to get them, poured for him, gave him to drink, saying: "I can come again, Mr. Farrel; may-be I'd better not tell——"

But he: "Yes, continue—I am a little overcome . . . 'Miss Parsons,' yes . . . But that lady cannot be considered dainty" . . .

And Mary: "Nor that ain't all she done, Sir, because that wasn't true about Hazlitt writing to say he couldn't marry Jessie Page when she was at the altar. Jessie she says that the letter was in Hazlitt's hand-writing right enough, but she was a fool to tear up the letter. The letter was brought to Jessie by a boy, so I got to see the boy one day when I went to tell Hazlitt that Jessie wasn't dead, and the boy he said that a lady like 'Miss Parsons' was in the motor with him when he took the letter what Hazlitt gave him for Jessie. The boy said he never let the letter out of his hand, but he must have done, because Hazlitt went to marry Jessie after two o'clock, and Hazlitt told Jessie's mother then that he never wrote to tell Jessie that he couldn't marry Jessie, he wrote to tell Jessie he couldn't come at twelve o'clock, because his mother was at the court, but he'd come after two—Jessie's mother told me afterwards what Hazlitt said; but by the time Hazlitt got

there to marry Jessie, Jessie had run away. So Jessie never got the letter what Hazlitt wrote, she got another letter in Hazlitt's hand-writing. Whoy, ain't it clear enough who wrote the letter Jessie got? wasn't it the one that was so mad to marry Hazlitt, that she went to the mortuary and made out that Jessie Page was dead? She's pretty tricky, but there's others just as tricky as what the likes of *er* is. She was a fool to go to the mortuary in a motor, she ought to have gone in rough clothes, and disguised herself . . ."

Two of Mr. Farrel's fingers moved across his forehead shaky as a succession of pats, he now saying: "You tell me strange things, Mrs. Giddins, which, nevertheless, have the ring of truth . . . though it is all but incredible that any lady . . . How strong must have been that motive! And she succeeded in her aim, you say? actually married Caxton Hazlitt?"

"Yes, Sir, so she told Jessie Page, and I except it's true, she is so cut up about Hazlitt being lost; she don't know where he is, but her brother knows"—now she hesitated a little, eyeing aside at the listener before deciding to add: "her brother's name is 'Harold': *he* knows, because ain't it im as has Hazlitt's mother? and your man outside with the pox-marks, e'd know, too, Sir, because ain't he mixed up with the brother, and don't the sister know you, Sir, seeing as she ran to hide from you at Jessie Page's?"

Now again, like one who thinks of Space and Time in a fix of perplexity, finding a contradiction in Nature, and like a close old tailor who peers at his needle's hole, Mr. Farrel leant to peer at her; he muttered "man outside . . ."; and he asked: "Do you know the Christian name of that 'Miss Parsons', the sister of this 'Harold'?"

"No, Sir," Mary answered; and again she eyed weighingly aside at him, before deciding to add: "but I can very well guess why it came up in her head to call herself 'Miss Parsons'; that wouldn't be her real name, but her brother Harold is a parson, Sir, because I saw him one day, he has a red beard, and his eyelashes is kind of whitish-like."

"You tell . . . I cannot . . . Here—in England—you saw him?"—he was, evidently now, perilously pale; but she, not realizing where his weakness lay, risked, wishing to get it over, and replied with downcast eyes: "Yes, Sir, in Sussex it was."

"But—when?"

"That was in August, Sir. The old woman was running away from the parson to the railway, and, as she made

to get into a train, she got her leg crushed; then the parson——”

But now she regretted her grimness in risking the disclosure, for now that dignity collapsed in an open confession of helplessness, his left hand holding his heart, his nose a porcelain nose stuck-on, colourless for Polar cold, a moan coming to her: “I think—I am dying . . .”

Out she flew with the news, soon was helping two men to bear him up to his bed, and presently, when a doctor was there, saw the (quite visible) aneurism of his heart: for he would not let her depart, held her hand, whispered her “*stay with me*”; and even when the attack was passing off, kept her, so that she had to send a telegram to Giddins, had dinner there in state with two nurses, then returned to sit mutely with him in a dim-lit room, until at nine in the night he sighed to her: “I have a desire to *see* that Miss Parsons: does she often visit Jessie Page?”

Mary answered: “I heard her tell Jessie Page she’d be there ‘on Thursday,’ Mr. Farrel—tomorrow, that is—in the afternoons she goes. But, you know, Sir, you won’t be fit——”

“We shall see,” he said; and the next day could not be kept from going, he and Mary in his motor getting to Chiswick near four, where Jessie, with a stain of chocolates round her mouth, received him with an exclamation of glee “Well! you haven’t gone” . . .

He answered: “No, and not going before your babe is born. Now take Mrs. Giddins and me to that bed-room there, then leave us; and if you happen to have a guest, do not mention our presence.”

Chapter 4

Peeping

So up in the bed-room Mary, having made a fire for him, took her stand behind a window-hanging to spy, while he within sat dumbly watching, like a rock that judges the frivolities of a fire with a strong forehead, until Mary tripped three steps inward to hiss at him: “Here she comes!” whereupon he was promptly up to lean and peer at Máhdorla getting out of her car, stepping up the garden-

path, while his bush of moustache and beard shook at her, as when a bird in a bush stirs and works; and when he again sat down by the grate his head fell dead, his hands compressing his temples in an agony of meditation, until presently he held up fists which shivered together, casting up a glance, groaning: "She has married him! Oh, God! so inscrutably are brought about Thy retributions!"

Behind him Mary meditated awhile on him with that divining light of her eyes' grey gaze, and presently said: "Not that she is properly married to him, Mr. Farrel, in a manner o' speaking, seeing as he never had nothing to do with her after they was married."

Now he twisted round to her. "Do you say that? How can you—know?"

"Didn't she tell Jessie? And you may bet it is a true word because she and Jessie is jealous of one another like dog and cat, and she'd more likely brag of Hazlitt to Jessie than give Jessie the satisfaction of hearing that Hazlitt never went with her; but she was down in the dumps about Hazlitt being lost, so she let it out to Jessie as ow Hazlitt was lost before he'd went with er, because I was here and heard er, and it is a true word."

And he: "Well! You tell me that! Well, well"—gazing still at her in silence some time, as one still gazes after a meteor has disappeared, then turned again to gloat over the grate; and presently she heard him murmur: "Well, well: 'sua mercè!' 'His Mercy endureth for ever.'"

Some minutes after which the door below was known to be opening, and once more he was up, to step on tiptoe, to lean and peer at Máhndorla's departing, as when one hears an aeroplane and trips to a window to see that thing in heaven; then he descended heavily, his hand on Mary's shoulder, to say to Jessie in the passage "Well, how are we getting on? Come to a father's arms and kiss me . . . that is well, that is well. Now write me down the addresses of your doctor, of your nurse, and of that clergyman who comes to visit you."

"Come and sit down, can't you?" Jessie said.

"Not today: write me the addresses"—and when she ran he followed to the drawing-room door to say: "I desire you to have a telephone, so tomorrow men will come to you to see to it"; then he asked "Do you happen to know Miss Parson's address?"

But she shook her bunch of hair, saying, "No, I am sorry——"

"It is of no importance: I can discover it. And now I have to tell you, Jessie, that there was no truth in my unfavourable conception of that 'Sir Henry Beresford' who is Caxton Hazlitt. I have wronged the young man. His motive in confessing that he stole the stone was the noble one of screening his mother, who, too, was innocent of stealing it—from me. Here, you will say, is a good son. Nor did he wrong you on that wedding-day——"

"I know, Mr. Farrell!" she eagerly cried with her girlie-girlish eyes aglow: "Mary has told me——"

"Ah, you know. You see, then, that the young man is not unworthy to be the parent of your babe—a babe, I may tell you now, who, in some respects, will be one of the most fortunate ever born—a prince; and, as I now hope, not a nameless prince. I hail his mother."

Her pretty child-eyes, with a hint of "cast" in the left, went wide at him! "Mr. F-farrel! I don't understand——"

"No, but you will. Only hold yourself prepared to do whatever I may bid you. Goodbye: be of good cheer! Come, Mrs. Giddins."

Chapter 5

A "Certificate"

AND, as his car started, he said to Mary: "Are you sure that Caxton Hazlitt is much attached to Jessie?"

"Yes, sir, I am sure," she answered: "wasn't they boy-and-girl sweethearts together? Grown-up people fancy they're in love, Sir, because they want something from one another, but it's only boys and girls know what it is to be in love."

And he: "Well—yes—I agree—yes: first love, you think, as the poet Byron thinks: yes, *that* is the love . . . I will say now that I look upon you as a most shrewd woman, and have come to depend much upon you . . . Here I get out . . ."

This was at a Dr. Burroughs, from whom he came back to Mary within fifteen minutes, and next was driving to a Mrs. Furley, a wise woman, close by, then to a clergyman's, on returning from whom he said to Mary: "I think

it will work: this Mr. Percival undertakes to procure for me a Registrar's certificate, and also a certificate from the Archbishop, which, he says, is necessary to permit the marriage to take place at any hour, or in any house. God only grant that Caxton Hazlitt be unearthed a day, at any rate, or two, before the birth . . ."

At this Mary, though built too strong atop to be 'law-abiding,' moved uneasily on her seat, and she said with shy eyelids "But, Mr. Farrel, you know that Hazlitt is married; he can't very well marry Jessie Page, Sir, not legally; they'd arrest him, if they found out."

Fixed as nickel his face now went for a moment, cruel-grim with rigour of decision, and he said: "The thing shall be done! Say nothing—say nothing—for the present."

Chapter 6

Drawn Blinds

SHE went to settle a pillow behind his head, and he reclined with closed eyes, until the car came to Park Lane, where Mary stepped out to ask at Hazlitt's door if he had come home: but now the house drowsed, its blinds down, no reply to her rap; and she remarked on reentering the car: "They won't open, though there's people in there, because I heard two different steps."

"Anyway, he is not there," Mr. Farrell said: "and now our task is to discover Caxton Hazlitt. What is your suggestion as to this?"

And promptly Mary answered: "Let me once have the address of that 'Harold,' and I find Hazlitt in a week—or two."

"You yourself?"

"Yes, I myself."

"Well, you shall have the address presently. I admire your assurance; but, oh, be speedy in what you do, for Jessie's doctor informs me that her event will be within twelve days. . . . Has your house a telephone?"

She said no; and he: "Tomorrow men will go to you to install a set, so that you and I may be in touch"—they now getting out in Park Street: "Now go to the drawing-room,

and wait till I summon you"; and to that moon-faced butler he muttered at the door, "Come with me, Selfridge," and walked into the morning-room.

There he seated himself in the spaciousness of his chair of green leather, to gaze some minutes into the grate, until he muttered to the butler, who hung there suspended, pale: "Let me have Mr. Harold's address."

Ghastly at once, with the glaring pallor of corpses all gashed, went that face of Selfridge; and he said: "Address, Sir? Not in Borston you wouldn't mean?"

Now thunder broke out, the other's finger pointing, his voice lifting to thunder: "An attitude of contrition becomes you, sir! Down on your knees!"

The man took two cubits from his stature, his brow bowed down . . .

"I know all, Selfridge," Mr. Farrel now calmly remarked: "but, seeing you on your knees, I refrain from cutting you off from your old relation with my household. Understand that from Mr. Harold henceforth you have no advancement or great emolument to expect; you will soon gather that this is so: for I have reason to be extremely angry; and it was a bad stroke of business that you did for yourself in electing to be loyal to another and disloyal to me. Moreover, you have let yourself become no less than scoundrelous in accusing an old woman of stealing from me what you yourself had taken . . . Was that by Mr. Harold's orders?"

The butler broke out: "Mr. Harold's motives are good, Sir!"—in a poignant voice strained toward tears—"Mr. Harold is the best man in the world——"

"Silence, sir! except in reply to questions. You have forfeited the right to express yourself in my presence . . . Was it by Mr. Harold's orders?"

"Yes, Sir."

"And you and Mr. Harold schemed to tempt a poor old woman to—" He stopped; then: "Do you know that that old woman's leg has been crushed?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Do you know if that leg is getting well?"

"It is, Sir."

"Where is she now?"

"I don't know the name of the house, Sir."

"How is that? Let there be no more lapses from truth and rectitude—at your peril, Selfridge!"

"She is up the river, Sir: I don't know the house."

"And that old woman's son—tell—where is he?"

"That I don't know, Sir—on my honour."

"On your dishonour. Say it."

"On my dishonour, Sir."

"It is Mr. Harold who has that young man a prisoner, is it?"

"Yes, Sir. Mr. Harold's motives are all good: Mr. Harold is the best and bravest——"

"Silence, I say. Does Mr. Harold know that Miss Máhn-dorla has—married?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Rise from your knees . . . Now, Mr. Harold is not to know that I know of his presence in England—beware! And tonight you will give me a full account of his actions and yours in England. Now tell me his address."

Selfridge told it.

"Now request the lady upstairs to come to me."

Chapter 7

Tangerines

PRESENTLY, then, Mary had the address, and two hours later was engaging at Claridge's two bedrooms that looked upon Brook Street, one for herself, one for a potboy of hers, who, from the next morning, took turns with her in watching Dr. Radlor's house, and at all hours she had waiting about the hotel a cab, in which to shadow every exit of the doctor; but five days went by without result, during which time the young mother was ripening pruriently to her crisis of maturity, as fruits do in Fructidor, while Hazlitt, for his part, was effecting his own escape: for, though at this date his hole in the door was still far from made, he doing it half-heartedly, owing to the remoteness of his hope and to that insistence of his shivers, yet on that fifth day of Mary's vigil strange riches fell upon him, when with his mutton, his custard, his muscat-wine, there was lowered to him a fourth food—owing perhaps to some ruth for his coldness and lonely doom—a basket full of "tangerine-oranges," Christmas cheer, Christmas now here: and he was now so accustomed to woe, bowed under the habit of

calamity, poor in hope, that he could not believe his eyes at the sight of that benison presented him: for each of the tangerines was enveloped in "silver-leaf"—and the leaf was nicer than the fruit, the silver finer than the gold. *Now* he was free—or nearly: for here he was on *his* plane of cunning, on which plane his cunning compared with the enemy's was like angels' cunning compared with men's, or men's with apes'.

But during two days he did little, waiting to see if more tinfoil would come to him from that hole in his heaven, and more did, so that soon he was a millionaire in tinfoil—more than he could use! whereupon a fury of impatience ruled him—to be out of it! running free! and in that mood he committed the imprudence of doing the thing in the daytime, never having chanced to catch any eye spying on him, though he should have conjectured that he must sometimes be inspected.

Anyway, he presently had a condenser, made of layers of tinfoil vis-à-vis with layers of silk, which, neatly torn from his handkerchief, he had smeared with mutton fat, clipping the whole together by the clips torn from his braces; and, though the condenser's capacity was petty, because of his poverty in silk, and of the small span of his clips, yet, the voltage being considerable, considerable also was the energy of discharge—which varies as the *square* of the voltage: so that his sparking-distance was now enlarged quite five times. Now he was free—nearly: for now he only needed to eat away with his shilling-edge a two-inches' depth of wood on the whole, millimetre by millimetre; moreover, when he moistened with water the string of hair which connected the condenser-terminals with the switch-terminals, this enlarged the sparking-distance; and when he could afford to wind and tie ribbons of tinfoil round the hair, this afresh enlarged the sparking-distance.

But on the third day of the work when he was kneeling keenly in the thick of it—near six in an evening of winds it was—he heard the first voice heard by him for months, an outcry of protest from above: "I say, what are you up to there with that door?"

He flung a flying eye up, described something like a face at the hole overhead, and, without replying, wildly now he focussed his whole vigour of soul and finger into that excavation, knowing that it was a case of now or never—"wildly," since not without hope, for now the lock-case lay quite wobbly in the hole.

And wildly, too, the man over him was flying—to the telephone, to cry out: “Mr. Radlor, Sir! Beresford is doing something to his door!”

“Doing what? Quick!”—a rough throat.

“He has fire, Sir!—burning the door with fire!”

“Fire! Whence has he fire? From heaven?”

“The thing beats me, Sir! but I distinctly saw fire.”

“I am coming. Nail quick some boards over the door.”

Two minutes more, and the doctor was 'phoning to a mews: “The motor quickly!”, within fifty he was racing through Chiswick—over Kew Bridge—and, racing after him, Mary, and racing after both, Máhdorla veiled.

But fifty minutes before this Hazlitt had been aware of footsteps, that ran, then aware, through voices of storm, of a nail being hammered into his door, and had noted, as still he scraped away, the door's splintering a little where the nail's tip ripped inward; then ten seconds of stillness, until a second nail outside was placed, was tapped upon; now, however, his chest gave out “ha, ha,” on a gasp, as his wrench got the lock-case dragged away: and now like a cat he skedaddled, and was out.

“Ha, Ha,” he went.

Now he saw that horse headed ex-John of his (valet), and “ha, ha,” he went, as he dashed his palm upon John's chops with: “Make haste—that old woman . . .”

Upon which John, who, though half-a-head the taller, had gone staggering, replied from behind his elbow: “Don't you strike *me*, Sir; no old woman here, Sir.”

“Come on; switch on the lights, as we go”: and together, he hugging and hushing his shivers under his jacket's collar, they went through the house: but no old woman there; nor, he understood, had she ever been, for except one bed, table, and easy-chair beside a fire, with kitchen-things, the place was an emptiness: so he was presently spurting away, at first with some distress, but then with freed feet running light, throwing away mile after mile, as the salesman, measuring, throws yard after yard away; and with laughs of love he flung glances at the moon, going “*old God!*”—a darkling moon draggle-tailed, like some darling strumpet struggling drunk one obstreperous day of brawling, for north-winds brawled—drizzle, mist, gloom, cold; but he, soon flushed, soon had his jacket flung away to cover some wretch's shiverings—what was left of it, some bits having been rent out in the business of the escape; and presently, as he ran, he was saying: “Now, Radlor, you and I; you and I, Farrel!”

Chapter 8

Bleak House

IF THE evening had not been so bleak and dreary, he might have seen Dr. Radlor—or Mary—or Mâhdorla—in their cars: as it was, they passed him unseen, unseeing, in a street; and when the rain became heavy he sprang into a cab at Kew, crying to the driver: "Brook Street."

But at Brook Street, no Radlor; nor was his Mâhdorla in; so he drove to Park Lane.

With living in Park Lane he was now done; done with all that opulence which, for reasons unknown to him, had been heaped upon him "by Radlor, or Farrel, or both"; but, as he needed some money, clothes, and many things that he could consider his own, he went "home."

That home, however, he now found closed to him, its blinds down, not a shine showing, no reply to his summons: and there some time he remained, sprayed by rain, with a sense of expulsion, of vacancy under his feet, homelessness, cold, as when one comes to his own, and his own receives him not. "Well," he muttered, and went back to pay the cabman, who, however, said: "Here, this is no good—five shillings," and there was some vexation, until a stud which was given settled it.

Now he stood there against his old gate, whence he was accustomed to be "seen off" by an assembly of menials, but now stood downcast, not knowing what next, while a cab or an umbrella went past him in haste through rain and inclemency, he now blaming himself for having flung his jacket away, blaming himself for not having anticipated that during his months of imprisonment the household would be demobilized, the house closed; now he stood there poorer by a jacket than on that afternoon when he had originally come to Park Lane: for, having been a little pinched in his banking-accounts when purchasing the yacht, he had disbursed on her a certain stockingful that he had apart in bonds and French rentes, she with her two boats and motor-launch having cost twenty-five thousand pounds, and had proved more costly to run than the house.

Now, too, on becoming conscious of poverty, he remem-

bered with distress that he had never paid back the hundred pounds paid out by Farrel for his mother's "bail"; and, with this care on the brain, he presently started out, partly to arraign Farrel to his face, partly to let the man understand that that sum should "some day" be paid, for still in his pocket was the afterflush of riches and the paw and pomp of a rich man; and his pride took fire, now that he could not pay, at being under any species of obligation to that Farrel whom he deeply believed to be in league with Radlor in the kidnapping of his mother, in the imprisonment of himself; and intenser than the stress between him and Radlor was the stress and strain between him and Farrel.

But his sense of his dirtiness and *déshabille* tended to deter him from the visit, and when he was near that door where Farrel had once before refused to receive him his feet paused, stopped—tragically for him! tragically for Farrel!—and he thought: "No, Radlor first; and from Radlor learn of Farrel's part in it."

Now, cold again, he decided to run to Camden Town, to get from Mary Giddins money for that night's needs. But, then, Mary was not at Camden Town, was at that hour away westward, watching Dr. Radlor's red hind-light in Seymour Street, peering from afar with her keen-seeing optics at Radlor jumping out, at his running still forty yards forward, to enter a villa; upon which she whispered to her potboy; "*That's* the house, look, with the tree in front; run hard, now, and tell that bobby we saw near the post-office that there's a man imprisoned, see if he'll come."

Chapter 9

Mound House Huguénin

THEN, as the pot-boy started off, Máhdorla's car also dashed round the corner to where Mary's was, at once stopped, and Máhdorla, jumping out, went trotting to peer and peep at the villa where the doctor's vehicle had stopped—the wrong villa; but while her peeper was at its keyhole a bang that resounded down the street caused her to turn her eyes that way, and they surmised, descried, through the murk that it was her brother who had banged a door in wrath. So when he opened an umbrella and walked away from her, she followed, careless if his chauffeur recognised

her under her veil and sables, as she passed near: for now she was desperate and fired, and meant to have Hazlitt that night of her life, certain now who had him interned, inasmuch as her Giuliva, with an ear on the *qui vive* to hear, had heard her brother say at the telephone "whence has he fire? from heaven?" and had heard "nail some boards over the door": so Máhndorla was there, fired, defiant, this night.

But as she went following, she saw herself with Mary, who also was following the doctor's umbrella; and presently Mary remarked: "We'd better change hats."

"Change . . . Who are *you*?" asked Máhndorla.

And Mary: "Whoy, wasn't it me in the other cab? Aren't me and you after the same thing? Don't you remember seeing me at Jessie Page's?"—passing now between three barrier-posts and three elms, to wend left between a canal and a terrace of cottages.

And presently Mary again: "Yes, change hats; he'll look behind, and any little thing may remind him of you . . . Pity we ain't got no umbrella."

Rain wetted their hair while Máhndorla took off her elmetto, Mary her sailor-straw, Máhndorla not saying a word, panic now occupying all her soul at the thought that this sudden woman sprung upon her this night might get at Hazlitt before her, and let Hazlitt know that Jessie Page was living . . . Sudden calamity sprung upon her head! for this revelation, she knew, would at once set up a wall of division between her and Hazlitt, and "One week! One night!" her heart cried out within her.

There beside her, half-a-head the taller, walked the sudden peril, a most "common woman," yet an equal, a leader; and presently Mary: "I'll talk natural, let him hear me talking, then he won't think we are following him. He has two houses: that one behind he has Hazlitt in, or he has the old woman in it, and now he is going to his other house where he has the other one: we'll soon know which is which, if he don't spot us. I should go back to the house in Seymour Street, if I was you, there's a policeman coming to it, and let me track him to this other house."

But Máhndorla went on without answer; and, as they passed to the right over the canal-bridge, Mary remarked: "When I told you to go back, you think I didn't know that you wouldn't go? I know you're afraid that, if Hazlitt is in this house we're going to, I may tell im, before you can get at im, that Jessie Page is alive: and then you'll never ave im. Whoy, you think I don't know?"

At this a surge of venom burst-up in Máhndorla as far as her lips, which, trembling at its pressure, blocked its exit; and she did not speak until she could say with some calm: "You need not be absurd; Mr. Hazlitt is my husband."

Mary laughed with a hard heart. "Yes, you're pretty tricky, but you're a bit too tricky, and you aren't tricky enough—if you can make it out. They're going to marry Hazlitt to Jessie Page the minute they find im, so I tell you straight, because they don't want Jessie's child to be born without a father—that's if we find him tonight, because the child will be born by tomorrow very likely. Anyhow, Hazlitt ain't for you, so don't think it. I know more'n you, you see. All your work's been thrown away."

"Which—'work'?" escaped Máhndorla's pale lips.

"I know more'n you think," said Mary: "you're pretty tricky, but you ain't tricky enough. But don't take no notice of what I say, I'm only talking for im to hear me talking. I'll tell you about my pub: I've got a pub, it was Hazlitt gave me the money . . ." she went on talking in an ordinary voice which reached the ear in front as a droning, mixed with wind and rain, of some unrelated wayfarer—an invention so efficient in its chloroforming effect upon suspicion, that the doctor, cautiously omniscient as he was, walked unconsciously on quite a mile, his mind all preoccupied with his prisoner's flight, night and thunder-storm tumbling within his bosom, until he issued out of country-lanes into a street—houses on his right, on his left higher ground, wooded, an iron gate, a flight of steps behind the gate, and inscribed beside the gate "Mound House, Huguénin."

There at the gate he glanced aside along the road he had come, but did not see Mary and Máhndorla, who were now behind a tree spying; and he spurted up the steps between urns to a landing, and up another set of steps to an avenue of yews, and to a Tudor mansion forty yards up the avenue.

Admitted into the mansion by two men, he immediately proceeded to step into room after room, every one of them a separate work of art, though some were then undergoing repairs, he examining them to select one as a prison—for Máhndorla; then to the telephone to ring up Brook Street, to ask if Máhndorla was at home; and, on having the answer, "No," to ask: "Has a man called at the house tonight?"

"Ten minutes ago, Sir; man without a jacket, Sir; asked for you, then asked for Miss Máhndorla."

"Had the man any braces?"

"No, Sir."

"Was Miss Máhdorla then in?"

"No, Sir."

"Good . . . I am at the telephone-number 'Sheen 87': ring me up the moment Miss Máhdorla comes home."

Máhdorla, meantime, with Mary, was hasting back to Seymour Street: for Mary, having crept up the flights of steps after the doctor, had pried upon his reception by "the tall" and "the short" ones, men whom she knew as the warders of the old woman: so she had assumed that the old woman was here, and the old woman's son in Seymour Street.

There they arrived to find Mary's potboy before the house, who told them: "He's got away! Me and the bobby's been inside . . ."

But Máhdorla, not satisfied with this, banged in masterful mood at the door, until the horse-headed John opened, to whom she said: "You in England, John Gibbs? . . . Take me through this house": and through it the seekers' invading feet were conducted sounding, like house-buyers conducted, the ladies' hair now looking pendulous and stringy with wet, to see in the lavatory the relics and traces of the escape, the condenser with its strings and clips, the cap off the switch, the prisoner's braces; and Mary exclaimed: "He done it with the electric!—see them strings? He burned this here hole with the electric. And *there's* the hole in the ceiling, see, that they fed him through. Nor he ain't long gone, that's why your brother banged the front door like that, because he's only just found out. This man saw Hazlitt burning the door, and telephoned to tell your brother, then he started nailing that board there across the door, but Hazlitt got out while your brother was coming: that was how it was."

Chapter 10

To Park Lane

MÁHDORLA was saying to John: "So you had a man in this den for months, you brute?" when Mary said: "Here's off—I'll soon ave im now," and was away, Máhdorla after her, determined to fight, determined to be the first to get at him that night: so their two cabs drove close together all the way to the Park Lane gate, when Mary tripped inward to rap, Máhdorla after her.

But no answer: and there they stood, lingering, hankering, uttering nothing, careless of the spray which the wind's swoops threw at them under the porch, not seeing the moon's smear fleeing, like Lucifer scooting through Chaos in escape from the face and gaze of God, Mary given up to pondering, thinking: "He ain't here—found himself locked out no doubt: so where's he gone?" and in some minutes she was saying in her flippant manner, not without malice: "Au river! I believe he's gone to my place to sleep, because he ain't gone to any hotel, his shirt must be black with dirt . . ."

The question "Where is your place?" leapt to Máhdorla's lips, but was repressed by pride, since Mary might decline to tell; moreover, Mary was at once away, and there stood Máhdorla, her shoulder on the door, staring, corroded with care. When she started at a thought which goaded her to follow Mary, Mary's cab was gone: so Máhdorla was off to Brook Street near, to telephone to Jessie for Mary's address: for her Giuliva had a note of Jessie's telephone-number, having recently been sent to see if Jessie's child had arrived.

Chapter 11

To Camden Town

As SHE entered her house, Giuliva rushed at her with: "He has escaped! came here——"

"He *came*?" Máhdorla breathed: "oh, he came? Came for me! And I not here . . ."

"Yes, I saw him!—no jacket he wore——"

"Then he probably *has* gone to that woman's——"

"But how you are all ghastly and draggled! You seem to have thirty years——"

"Don't stop to talk; get me Jessie Page's telephone-number"—pressing upstairs; but before her at the telephone was a butler, and when she cried to him "Get away!" he replied: "The Doctor, Miss—one moment," and stuck to it, to say to the transmitter: "Miss Máhdorla come, Sir"; and then to her: "The Doctor to talk to you, Miss."

And she: "Yes?"—receiver at ear.

"I want you to come"—a voice strong and raw . . .
"Where have you been?"

"At Lady Darling's."

"False, Máhdorla! Ah, Máhdorla, false! I rang her up—not there, Máhdorla! Where—have—you—been?"

"Don't ask now: I'll invent something later to tell you . . . Ah, don't bully me, Harold, my blood's up, Harold!"

"Do not despair, it will come down: ah, you will bend, Máhdorla, you will submit yourself, Máhdorla, to chastisement and walloping. Listen! I have something of very pressing moment to disclose, and, as I cannot go to you, you come to me. I am at a house named 'Mount House Huguénin,' at Mitching, near Sheen—not far: will expect you at 9.30. Start now."

Her lips just budged to mutter, "Va mmorí ammazzato, go die slain"; but she was in such nettles to be away in chase of Mary, that she said, "I will come," and in a minute more was ringing-up Jessie . . .

To be answered by a certain Mrs. Furley, a wise woman, who told her: "Yes, her time's come: tonight it will be," and, on getting the address, was away for Mary's, who herself about the same time was telephoning to Jessie, having stopped her cab at a tobacco-shop; and, on having the wise woman's reply: "Yes, it will be tonight," drove smartly home.

And "Here you are," remarked Giddins, as he entered her "parlour": "ain't it a night? You're all wet——"

And she: "Hazlitt not here?"

"No, but has been—funny thing, without any jacket, dirty shirt, no braces——"

"Well, where's e?"

"Said he was going to Rowton House—borrowed five shillings——"

"Oh, Lord God!" Mary mourned in reproach at him; then, flashing tantrum-red: "and you *let* im go? you lent im five shillings? im that gave you every penny you've got? Now, if this ain't——! Well, I'm damned!"—she dashed down a glass to fragments, she stamped—"Rowton House! Five shillings! And he the richest man in England tonight! Whoy, I'd be ashamed of myself, if I was in your place."

And Giddins: "Now, Mary, where's the good carrying-on? Could I make a man stop, if he wouldn't? Could I force money down——?"

But she was gone flying—for Rowton House . . .

Chapter 12

At Rowton House

THITHER Hazlitt had in truth gone as to a second home; first, before going to Giddins, had gone to his mother's old room in Acton Street, but, the door being locked, the woman away who stayed there for him, he had then gone to Giddins, had borrowed, and now at Rowton House stood before one of the smoking-room fires, surveying the roomful of men, some playing draughts, chess, with knots of others watching the play, knots vacuous, fatuous, leprous with dulness, precisely as he had left them nine months before, other men, but the same phenomenon and Time-spirit, he muttering: "Men may come and men may go, but the brook of dukes goes on—no, not for ever . . . not for long . . . for a time, and dull, dull, the inhabitants of the earth whose birth happens among those dull vermin . . . Yes, here again . . . Rowton House . . . a slave, a 'landless man' . . . must 'get work . . . not for Man's glory, but for two men's guts . . . mad as March-hares, after all, the little Asiatics that make 'laws' for the place, ha, ha, their enormous incompetence. I was better off in the lavatory . . . oh, no, the cold; this is nice, this fire. But no jacket . . . this shirt . . . tomorrow I go with tools, and get into Park Lane for my things . . . Better if I'd never gone there!—nine months of that false life in the clouds. Now I am married . . . Máhn-dorla! my wife . . . there's a chin, an inch above the will of God when she pitches it, sleek Venus, aye, there's something sweet between us two . . . But motherless now . . . My little Jessie, my heart's half, gone down in dark disaster . . . through *me*, my God . . . and now the task of Radlor on my hands . . . to interview . . . to quell . . . and that Farrel, that man . . . for, though still I have her not, I will have her, if she has outlived . . . Mam! face stamped on my heart . . . dear face . . . dear hand and heart . . . near, dear, like breath and thumb, and the milk of her breasts is thicker than honey . . . Ah, there goes the old bed-bell . . . same old——"

But now "Hazlitt here?" a clerk came calling aloud; and out in the hall Hazlitt found Mary . . .

And at once, with pressing breath, she was at him: "Come on! You've got to get married tonight!"

And he: "Ha, ha, to you?"

"Go on! to Jessie . . . I've found the old woman!"—her themes competing to peep like puppies which push to look out of a hole, and now one snout's out, now another.

And he, distracted between her pillar and her post: "Found . . . ? Where?"

"At a house named 'Mound House Huguénin': at Mitching it is, near Sheen. . . ."

"Money! have you any?"—he had started toward the door, she after him . . .

"Here's money . . . But—where are you off to like this? . . . Don't you! not now! the parson may be there, and them two, they'll have you again, they'll lock you up again . . ."

"Ha, ha, we'll see"—now, ten pounds in his hand, he was out, running south, she running after, the storm pushing their backs like the palm of a chucker-out, she calling: "But listen a little, my goodness, can't you? Ain't you got to get married at once?"

"Oh, nonsense"—casting up his arm to a cab passing—"I told you that Jessie is dead."

And she: "Whoy, ain't it just as well for anybody to be reasonable? Would I tell you——? Haven't I just telephoned to her?"

This gave him pause! and with one foot up on the cab's foot-board he stood looking steadily at her, paling, paling, while she said: "Dead, no: ain't she going to have her child to-night? and don't they want you to marry her before the child is born?"—English words which were to him as giddy and turgid as the insurgent mob of winds that robbed them from her lips; but his ears heard them, and, "Ha, ha," he went—half-a-laugh, not free of reeling and hysteria—"you seem moonstruck . . . She is alive? *Jessie*? You say that in your senses to me?"

"My goodness——"

"Where, then?"

"Ain't she at 24 Grove Park Terrace in Chiswick? You can go there, but *stay* there, don't go away, until Mr. Farrel——"

"*Sheen!*" he cried to the driver—"through Chiswick," and was in, she at the door pleading: "Oh, don't go yet—I ain't told you not half . . ." then, as the deaf cab started and left her, she tripped three steps to catch it, to get in, too—but too late.

And "Extra pay for quick going!" he called; and then, "she says so," he said, restless as a sparrow, as he went, now standing up for nothing, sitting now in front, now behind—"seems to be so, if I am awake: Jessie! murdered, but sent back to be in the world with me! And having the child tonight, she said, and I—married . . . Not that that matters: one can marry in three days, I think—if that would do good . . . but too late: 'tonight,' she said, which is madness, since they won't marry one at night, without 'notice' "—which notion that one cannot marry at night (for he knew nothing of archbishops and certificates) kept him from driving straight to Jessie, not "the law," respect for which was quite foreign to his mental habit, as he had written in his pamphlet "Causes":—"the 'law'-makers can only make 'laws' for their equals or inferiors, if they have any inferiors, not for their superiors, since that would be pretty topsyturvy if philosophers are to be guided by village-minds, adults by child-minds, Europeans by Mongols"; but, though he supposed that marriage "that night" was a mad notion, yet, pining just to see her, he actually stopped the cab in Chiswick to enquire the whereabouts of her street; but, on hearing that the street was a mile from the High Road, drove keenly on for Sheen, his mother once more coming between . . .

Chapter 13

Mary and Máhndorla

MEANTIME, Mary, left by him in the street, had looked round, seen all shops now shut, and no telephone near: so back she tripped to Rowton House, to entreat "the office" near the door to let her telephone thence; and when this was conceded, she was presently speaking to Mr. Farrel . . .

" . . . Hazlitt is free, Sir——"

"Well said——"

"He's just left me . . . I passed near your house just now, but I didn't want to tell you he was free until I was sure of finding him . . . And I think I've found his mother, too. . . . No doubt you know that Jessie's time is come?"

"Yes, yes, I know . . . Where, then, is Caxton Hazlitt now?"

It was now that Máhndorla entered Rowton House, hav-

ing been told by Giddins at "the pub" where Hazlitt and Mary were; and she, at once seeing and hearing Mary through "the office" window, stood listening behind Mary's back, though not divining who it was that Mary was speaking to; at the same time, too, in Park Street, the moon-faced Selfridge stood near the morning-room door, his ear cocked to hear Mr. Farrel's talk . . .

And Mary in answer: Hazlitt went tearing off, Sir, the minute I told him about his mother: I ain't sure whether he's gone to his mother, or gone to Jessie."

"Oh, but you should have held him at all costs!"

"Sir, I couldn't!"

"Where, then, is his mother?"

"A house named 'Mound House Huguénin': in Mitching it is, near Sheen."

"Mitching—Sheen—Mound House Huguénin: yes. Goodbye. I will see to it."

Now Mary's eye-corner, as she put-up the receiver, caught sight of Máhndorla's heels fleeing out, and she called after Máhndorla: "*No, you don't!*" understanding that Máhndorla had now learned from her words where Hazlitt was to be found; and, not intending that Máhndorla should "get at" Hazlitt before Hazlitt had been told who it was that had routed his marriage with Jessie, who it was that had "drowned" Jessie, out she dashed from "the office," to cry to her driver, as Máhndorla drove off, "Follow that there car!" and the pair of vehicles went racing westward through the raving winds and rains of a cyclone of close-packed isobars, a Beaufort 10, its "low" over Poland . . .

Chapter 14

The Butler Tells

MEANTIME, in Park Street, the butler Selfridge had snatched up an umbrella while Mr. Farrel was still at the telephone, talking now with Jessie's doctor; and out and round to the Park Lane house he dashed through shower, gave there three rings—an agreed signal—said "the telephone!" to one who opened, and was soon speaking with Brook Street: for though his terror of Mr. Farrel's resentment had kept him loyal to Farrel's orders ever since Farrel had warned him,

yet Dr. Radlor remained the man's hero and pet; and, on hearing that Hazlitt was actually at last on the way to the old woman, the conspirator could not resist the goad that pricked him to give notice of it to his own . . .

Hazlitt was then racing west through Oxford Street . . .

But "the Doctor" was not at home, the butler was told by the Brook Street butler, was at the telephone-number "Sheen 87," where he was awaiting Miss Máhdorla: so Selfridge rang-up "Sheen, 87"—at a moment when "the Doctor," in a back-room of Mound House Huguénin was down on one knee, winding twines of lint round the old woman's left leg, within which gaped a gully now cicatrizing, she enveloped in a dressing-gown of camel-hair, seated with a patient face held sideways on a bedstead, from whose top, high aloft near the ceiling, dropped ponderous draperies of red velvet all round, which the whiffs of the storm waved a little, as it waved the faded tapestries of Arras on the walls—this mansion having been the home and hermitage of an old family of Alsatian birth, its men and women musicians, antiquarians, of an æsthetic waywardness of temperament; and, as he put a safety-pin into the last of the lint, he flung a kiss at it, and stood up, saying: "There—soon be well."

Now he deposited iodine, oil-silk, liniment, scissors, upon an old coffer of oak in a corner, while she said: "Oh, dear, hark at this wind."

And he: "When you pray tonight, say 'O, hear us when we cry to Thee for those in peril on the sea.'"

And she: "I'd prefer to say 'O, hear us when we raise our prayer for those in peril in the air': for I never was on the sea, but I know what it is to be——"

"Kiss me!"—with the sharpness of a captain's "Charge!"

And she wearily, with a wheezing chest: "I don't see why I should keep kissing you: it's you that has brought all my troubles upon me, with your fagáries; you know it was you sent me up in the air on that fandangle thing, and I'll never get over it to my dying day; this leg is only through you; it's through you I haven't laid eyes on my son since——"

"Never mind your son: love *me*."

"What, not my own son? Go along with you! I'd liefer give you a hit with this crutch——"

"Kiss me!"

Now, he stooping to her, she putting up her lips to him, they kissed; on which he "Don't sit up late; and don't drink more than is good. Good-night."

And off with his masculine forwardness of walk, broadcast by an arm akimbo, he marched, and had just locked her door upon her, when the "short one" came in haste to tell of the telephone calling; and when he had descended four steps from the old woman's door, to walk along a corridor that had a mouldy odour, hung with old armour and Gobelin, he got to a stair-head where the lugubrious glimmer that brooded through these rooms made crimson a porphyry group representing the rape of Proserpine, then to the left along a second corridor, and down three steps to yet a corridor that led to a telephone within an alcove, a black den built of slanting timbers; and now he was hearing: "It is Selfridge speaking, Mr. Harold: to tell you that Mr. Hazlitt is now on the way to Mound House Huguénin: at least, so I—gather, Sir."

Silence. Then Dr. Radlor: "How? How do you gather?"

And Selfridge: "That, Sir, I don't care to say."

At once Radlor's face changed to whiteness, as faces of the wounded do; and he said: "*Tell—quickly!*"

"Mr. Harold—please——"

Out now from that alcove ran Radlor ten paces, bent down, staring, his hand clapped over his mouth, panic at a surmise of destiny come to birth in him, and his left forefinger he wagged at heaven, glancing that way: then back again to the telephone he legged, bent, and now his fingers were whipping away the leaves of a telephone-book, as when eggs are beaten up, he seeking a number; and soon he was speaking with the local police . . . "This is Mound House Huguénin . . . There is here an elderly woman who, I find, failed to surrender to a bail at Marlborough Street on the 19th of June last—named 'Hammond' or 'Hazlitt.' If you are coming to arrest, you should make haste, since a relative of hers is on the way to carry her off. Bring an ambulance—her leg is injured."

"Right!" came the reply: "we will 'phone at once to Head-quarters for particulars."

Chapter 15

The Police

THE DOCTOR put down the mouthpiece to walk actively off with a certain loftiness of stalk, like one at war, when the

moment of the rattle of battle is come and the blowing of trumpets; and in a room opening upon the main (cross) corridor he summoned to him two men, who stood before him with their backs to a table of black marble, on which lay a row of four sarcophagi containing mummies, four music-stands standing round it; while he, seated on a duet-stool in front of an organ, talked low but strong, in brusque telegrams, impressing upon them directions in respect of Hazlitt . . . "If the mother is then arrested, let him enter the inner hall: then have him; if she is not yet arrested, have him as he steps into the avenue . . . tie him up, bring him . . ."

Hazlitt was then racing through Bayswater . . . high of heart, as always when a storm blew, higher this night, though somewhere in him at some moments something drew back, foreknew, boded . . .

When the men had bent their heads at the doctor's orders, and had gone, at once the doctor dropped upon his knees at the organ-seat, as at an altar, to pray there, his face raised in a strain of supplication, bathed in a crimson glimmer from a globe as in blood of woe, as when the Galilean prayed agaze in Gethsemane, and knit his fingers, sweating great drops; which done, he stood up, went out, slower now, with a bent head, round into the stair-corridor, and so to the old woman's room, to find her wrapped in her camel-hair in a great Dogean chair that had a canopy and glimpses of old gilts and colours mixed with its carvings; and at her hand was an ice-cake on a priedieu of ebony and ivory, a tumbler, too, of black liquid that had foam on it, of which she sipped, and nibbled the cake, and stared into the hearth's cavern at a flame of apple-wood that prattled in spasms of the kettle-drum, and was like a "desk" in that cosmic concert of the storm's orchestra, fitting in with the symphony; but all at once the doctor was with her, and when she started up with "I thought you had gone," he said to her: "Now, listen: the police here know about you, and are coming to take you—"

Now her mouth opened at him for a howl to sound out . . . he banishing her clamour away with wavings of his palm, his face in pain, saying: "No need! no need! Three days! then I will get you free . . . Tonight I cannot help you, except by tipping them to treat you——"

And she: "God Almighty! you told me they should never get me, else you would never have got me back!—I was free——!"

Her fright frightened him, her wide eyes; and, with a fling-up of his fingers, he got away from her, locked her in, started off along the corridor, but, half-way down, stopped, hearkening, uncertain whether he heard her outcries or heard the voices of the storm that wawled down that corridor like crowds of mouths howling together in the hell that ghost-cats go to; then on he went to the stair-head to wait there awhile, restless, his eyes questioning the oracles of heaven, thievish of feet, his ear cocked, impatient for the police, waiting for Máhndorla, waiting for Hazlitt . . .

Hazlitt was then racing through Kew, coming . . .

And Máhndorla was three miles behind Hazlitt, in Chiswick, at Jessie's villa, Mary not far behind Máhndorla; but Jessie's villa was in darkness, and when Máhndorla ran and rapped, no answer.

This Máhndorla could not fathom, having been told that Jessie was in travail; anyway, since Hazlitt was not there, he would be at Mound House Huguénin: so, knowing that Mary was with her, and would now be bound that way, she set out for Mound House Huguénin, prepared to brave her brother there; and she made no answer when Mary, now ten yards ahead, looked backward to call out: "Where's the good? I'll be there before you!"

Chapter 16

Pangs

BUT THIS did not happen: for, on coming to the filling-station at Gunnersbury, Mary's cabman disgusted her by stopping to get petrol; and Máhndorla's fixed lips, as she shot past, smiled a little triumph—though they would hardly have smiled, if she had known of what was moving a mile before her—two motor-broughams—one carrying Mr. Farrel, Jessie, a Dr. Burroughs, a Mrs. Furley, in the other a Mr. Percival (a clergyman), and a little girl whom Mrs. Furley had had to bring with her: for Mr. Farrel, on being telephoned by Mary, had at once rung-up Dr. Burroughs to ask if Jessie could possibly be taken to Sheen, and though the doctor had said "jolly risky," he had yielded to the knees of entreaty in Mr. Farrel's voice; whereupon Mr. Farrel had started out for Chiswick, half-expecting, hoping, to find Hazlitt at Jessie's; but, instead, had found all

waiting ready for the journey to Mound House Huguénin, the clergyman there with his certificates, the wise woman and the doctor with their bags and blankets, the little girl thick with wraps, Jessie thick with wraps, and thick without, she not even clear what it was all about, conceiving now that it could not have been true that Hazlitt had married Máhdorla; and at once, on Mr. Farrel's coming, all were bundled in haste into the broughams, and away westward, Mary and Máhdorla still a mile or two eastward: for, though they had started out for Jessie's rather before Mr. Farrel, he had started three miles nearer her: so that by the time Mary and Máhdorla arrived, started again, and Mary stopped to get petrol, the travail-caravan was going through Kew, Jessie on cushions in the front brougham, Dr. Burroughs beside her, the wise woman beside Mr. Farrel on the front seat; and there were minutes of ease and gossip in the grot of gloom in there, and minutes, *Oh-h-h . . .*, of groans and gripping, as He looked in, or flew out, volatile, frolicking round the car, playing cat-and-mouse, preliminary to the final spring and ravening fangs, Jessie pretty serious when He came, but in each nice interval making light of Him, forgetting afresh the taste of His strenuousness, the rigour of His sphinx-gaze, His 'Ernst ist das Leben'; Dr. Burroughs, too, jocund, a bluff soul, he, a bowl of brow surrounded by a fringe of tow, jovial, but testy, most irritable, no respecter of men, offended at something every three minutes; and Jessie lamented: "What a pity!—after all I forgot the box of chocolates."

Whereupon, "You light-minded thing," Mr. Farrel said, "in an hour so solemn to be thinking of chocolates."

And Dr. Burroughs: "Pooh, solemn no: not a disease, sir—natural function. She won't suffer much—only seventeen; and, if she had had the wit to have the child four years ago in disdain of the little Lord George, she would have had no pain at all. That's the age for a first parturition."

"No, nego, nego, doctor"—from Mr. Farrel: "too young, sir, too young."

Upon which the touchy Dr. Burroughs flushed-up, saying "Oh, well, if you know God Almighty's business better than He knows it Himself, you should do a jump, and take His place. Just understand, sir, that some few doctors—even in England—are scientists, and that scientists are men who have no opinions: they just know God's truth by digging in His well, by the sweat of their brows, and when they utter it they expect the ignorant to shut up, and go down on

their knees in adoration and gratitude, not say 'nego nego.' ”

And Mr. Farrel: “Well, Dr. Burroughs, no offence was——”

“That’s all right, sir”—from the doctor—“that’s all right . . . But stay: when you said ‘nego,’ were you negoing the truth that natural functions, normally performed, are not accompanied by pain? *Pain* is the wages of *sin*—somebody’s sin—and *sin* is *ignorance*, this poor child’s pain now being the result of her sin in accepting the ignorant notions of a nation of grocers, Quakers, ‘lords,’ and lawyers, ugly, dull people, like beer (made of vegetables); it is the child-mother countries that produce beauties, geniuses, Jesuses, Helens, like wine (made of fruit), Jesus’ mother fourteen, Helen’s twelve, Napoleon’s, Hasting’s—” but now, *O-h-h* . . . , like a Harpy He was in again, she with her palms grooming her reins with groans of rueing, remembering afresh, with each fresh Harpy-visit, that night of lightnings at Brentford on the towing-path, feeling that, as she sowed then, so she must even reap now. . . . But when Mr. Farrel anxiously asked, “Is it better now? Is it better?” she laughed, forgetting His savour and gaze, answering: “Yes, it is all right now! It isn’t so much, Mr. Farrel—like a pin-prick . . .”

But all in the bowels of the air was latent an answer of One whose house is the sea-shell, and an echoing of the voice of His shouting gossips like soundless gongings, and like noisings of æons gone, upon the void of the cockles of the ear: an answer that meant: “Is it not much? I am not done with you, I remember Brentford, the night of lightnings, *I* never forget, and am coming again, am coming, coming, *come*,” and now, *Oh-h-h* . . . , in He rushed afresh, charioting His feet on the wings of the whiffs of the winds, and was with her Whose name is True and Faithful, she, as she rued with groans and groomed her growth, thinking how cumbered to be a girl, how free and easy to be a man, thinking how men must chuckle within themselves to have their rollick and then go scot-free, thinking that God must be a man, or He would not have put it all upon the girl, would have made the man to have half the babe, the girl half, the halves to be fastened together after; but now again she was laughing at the anxious “Better now? Better?” declaring with fresh surprise, “Yes, it is all right now!” while Dr. Burroughs remarked: “A sufficiently harumscarum expedition, this: we don’t even know on what bed the girl is to lie—or whether the man is actually there——”

“That will be well, I think, Doctor,” Mr. Farrel said comfortingly, “that will be well”—a faith that was not unjustified, for, in fact, Hazlitt had just then jumped out of his cab, and was running up the *perron* of Mound House Huguénin, unconscious of the two men waiting for him at the *perron's* top, they hiding there in the storm, one on each side of the avenue—he “unconscious,” but all eyes, all ears, all plots, ready for events, the storm in his hair and in his mind; and though, when he had run four paces up the avenue, a rope rose-up across it before him, so that he dropped flat, and the two were at him to have and to hold him, yet it was like a sparrow that he dropped, and was up with a hop, so that the tall one had only just touched his shirt when he was spurting away, they in chase.

Chapter 17

The Old Woman Screams

Now, if it was a question of running, he felt confident of dropping them both behind him; and, since the night was not quite deprived of light, for there was a moon flying somewhere, his eyes could guess that such legs as the tall one's would easily leave behind the short one, who was a mass of fat: so, on reaching the mansion, he did not run into it, but, to separate them more, fled to the right, then to the left, along a foot-path at the house-side, where there was a sort of moat or “area,” and a footpath between the moat and woodland; and, as soon as he found himself at the house-back, round he swung for battle, his fist at a run thrusting the tall one's chin upward with such force and justice, that the brain, shocked, was robbed of strength, as the fellow dropped; and three turns of the rope had been whirled round this one's shins before the short one's heart, that came panting, was met by a fist that ran, Hazlitt making of his right fist a cannon-ball thrown by the cannon that his left toes were, and the short one dropped shot; then back to the tall one to finish the tying; then back to the short one to strike him down again; then to tie the two together, and drag them to lie in an outhouse out of the night's violences.

And he had not rested a hundred seconds when he was

away afresh, running for the house-front; and in he rushed.

Fleeing before him, unseen by him, went Dr. Radlor, who had been hanging about the stair-foot in the inner hall, waiting for the men to bring a prisoner; but now, hearing the single footsteps pelting on the gravel, coming, sudden panic got the doctor at the consciousness that the old woman's door, facing the length of the stair-corridor, was an obvious door—the first perhaps that Hazlitt would turn to; and up the doctor flew, and furiously along the stair-corridor, to the old woman's door, intending to rush her into another room more recondite, where she would remain undiscovered some minutes at least, during which the police, looked for now each moment, might appear and seize her.

But in the same instant that he turned the key of her door, he saw himself caught—Hazlitt's head pelting up the stair: and he was away, feeling that, he once seen there, that would immediately lead Hazlitt to that room: so, stooping, he flew to a near door that stood open, skedaddled, and vanished, just as Hazlitt with wild eyes dashed up to the corridor, and—dashed the wrong way, his chest raucously calling to the storm that wawled like swarms of damned cats through that corridor: "Mam! where are you?"

Doubling now at that corridor's end to the left, he ran along the main (cross) corridor, upon which opened four front-rooms, each corresponding to a gable of the frontage: and on these doors he began methodically, opening, peering in, panting, "Mam!", and so came again to the stair-corridor's end, passed by it, while Dr. Radlor, for his part, ran through the doorways of that block of rooms into which he had dodged, until he came to a main (cross) corridor room, an end-room, where he knelt at a key-hole peeping, awaiting the coming of Hazlitt, a finger on the trigger of a revolver, his other hand holding the door-handle; and, as Hazlitt opened the door opposite that door, to pry into the end front-room and cry "Mam!", Radlor fired at the floor: upon which Hazlitt, his wits blown-up by that bomb's bump just under his consciousness, dodged into his own doorway; and, before he could spin, the doctor's apparation was out in the corridor, had clicked the door, had locked him in.

However, seeing a doorway that framed a glimmer, Hazlitt at once flew through it into the next front-room, making for the next corridor-door: and there was a race for that door.

The doctor first got to it, but had to draw, to slam it, for

Hazlitt had left it open; and as he slammed, Hazlitt was tugging at it: and they struggled; but only for some seconds, for the doctor had now got the consciousness that the key was inside: and, suddenly letting go the door, so that Hazlitt staggered backward, he slipped within, quickly locked the door, pocketed the key; and they stood confronted, like apparitions that pant, crimson in a glimmer given out by a lamp of malachite, a big thing supporting a pagoda of silk, roof over roof, dun now with old dust.

For a minute nothing was said, Hazlitt, his eye fixed on Radlor, working aside toward the further partition, to try its door; but, on finding it locked, came back to say: "Now, Radlor, tell: why have you my mother?"

For answer Radlor drew back his elbow to send into Hazlitt's face the blow of a piston, which pitched Hazlitt backward upon a bedstead Henri IV—a ponderous square of carving, draped with tapestry that dropped from a tester, this standing in the corner formed by the corridor-wall and by that other wall whose door was locked; and there on the bed, touching some crimson which now mixed with the rain on his face, Hazlitt panted: "I don't want any fighting . . . but try not to strike me . . . I am the master here . . . unless you have trained hands specially trained in fighting."

Now Radlor, as dreadfully red as faces in hell, caught his revolver from a pocket, and like one rapping-out telegrams, and like spasms of kettle-drums rattling, said: "You are a burglar. I intend to quell you. Lift a finger, and I shoot your legs."

"Oh, I am not frightened"—from Hazlitt; but he was, for he liked running: so, edging toward the bed's head, he suddenly snatched a pillow to fling, and, as the pillow touched the doctor's eyes, he, too, arrived, to wring with tricky handicraft the revolver from the doctor, and to toss it to a corner.

With a face all chalk, venom shivering in his lips, his beard, the doctor now looked about him for thunderbolts to throw, while Hazlitt panted at him: "Now, Radlor, tell—have to: such as I are your rightful lords—you shall know it."

But just then a screech reached his ear, and he was away to a window, where, flinging aside a window-leaf of diamond-panes, kneeling on a window-seat, he peered into a scene of rain mixed with sea-pain and dimness reeling: and suddenly a howl "*Mam!*" exploded out of his heart.

No answer . . .

Yet she was really out there in the reel; for, on hearing her key turned when Radlor, on Hazlitt's appearing, had turned it, first she had fled away beneath her bedstead, believing the police come to take her; then in three minutes, when no one came, she had crept out to investigate, had found her door unlocked, and now, in her horror of "constables," as water runs downward, she had caught at her crutch and sum of money, and was off hobbling, soft but intent, to be anywhere, anywhere, out of that house. . . .

As she had approached the stair-head, the report of the doctor's revolver shot at the floor had shocked her, had further urged her crutch, and down she had hurried, and out, into the whirl of winds, until she was half-way down the avenue, when all at once the horror dropped upon her—a bull's-eye looked at her—two constables come . . .

She stood and screeched at them . . . ! and this reached to her own in the house . . .

They had "a warrant," she and her crutch "answered to the description": they "took her in charge," one saying: "Come, mother, I'll carry you," picking her up.

But her screech had reached to other ears than her son's, and now with her were Mr. Farrel, Jessie in Dr. Burroughs' arms, the wise woman, the clergyman, the little girl; and Jessie cried out: "It is Caxton's mother!"

Mr. Farrel said: "Tell me officers: what is the matter here?"

Now the bull's-eye illumined his face, of his voice the old woman was aware, and all in the halls of her heart called voices of response, far harp-strings throbbing, so that all at once she bawled out afresh . . .

"Arthur!"

And he: "Well, Phœbe, we meet, you see, in an appointed hour."

"You, my God?"

"Even so . . . Let *me* take her, officer . . . You are conveying her to the station, is that so?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Then, let us go in my car. She is now known to be innocent of the alleged offence against me—for *I* was the plaintiff—and I think I can settle the matter at the station . . . Phœbe, where is Caxton Hazlitt?"

She, all involved in the imbroglio of a dream of deep-sea troubles, answered: "Caxton is in London."

"He is probably now in that house," Mr. Farrel remarked

. . . "Here is the ring, Mr. Percival: pray hurry-on the marriage, not awaiting my return. Come, officers"—he moved toward the *perron*, her face convulsed on his bosom, while the others walked toward the hall, the glow in whose portal brooded ruby-red in the gloom like an oven's mouth that glowers, and had a mood of sadness, like remote lights of homes on moorlands to the night-traveller's fantasy.

Chapter 18

Agony

AND, as they entered, Dr. Burroughs called aloud "Hazlitt!" and again "Hazlitt!": but Hazlitt was now far too occupied to answer—or to hear—for, on hearing that screech, he had spun inward to rush, to pant "My mother—out in that— *The key . . .*"

Dr. Radlor was too white to reply!

"Three ticks—Radlor—I give you——"

But the gift was declined, for within one tick the doctor's fist decided to fire: and at once their two souls poured themselves out into effort, living only for the moment, devoting to it the total of all that God had willed to give them, filling the room with the agony of their antagonism, each seeing in the other an object risen monstrous in importance upon his consciousness, each bent upon one only blessedness, to prove his force the stronger force, to prove Good stronger in the Scheme than Evil—naught else true and good but only this, to uproot the obstacle, to scotch, extinguish it, that the suns should go on their way, and Being be saved.

For, unexpectedly, the doctor proved a hard nut to crack—no trained handicraftsman, evidently, but jolly strong, and, by mother's-mood, very shrewd and achieving in a deal with men: each time that he contrived to touch his touch butchered; and though thrice his life went dancing away backward to the brink of hell's abyss with a white visage wild as some mad dancer's washed in a light of dancer's-joy, yet he ever came on, and came on, and when his final try at a blow struck only air, too feeble to reach, and Hazlitt feebly punished him in the gullet, he dragged Hazlitt's shirt to rags, as he bent his head and fell, to be a bed for his foe, who tumbled over him.

Chapter 19

Interrupted Nuptials

BUT Hazlitt was quickly on his legs again, and, on getting the key from the prostrate pocket, tottered to the door, in opening which he was conscious of one outside calling "Hazlitt!" and out he darted, to see as through crimson glasses the vision of the marriage-group standing there in the main (cross) corridor, at the angle where it met the stair-corridor—Jessie!—his stare saw her stare—yet all that his chest panted at her was "hello, Jess," as on he dashed, no stoppage, though, just in time, he was snatched at and captured by Dr. Burroughs, who said to him "You Hazlitt?"

And he: "Don't! Let me go!"—struggling.

"What, are you mad, man?" the doctor asked.

"No, damn you, let me go, I am not mad!"

"You *are* for the moment—shew all the symptoms, old man. Had a fight, then? But listen! Where are you off to?"

"My mother!"—a scream—"By God, let me go, I say!"

"No, wait! listen! your mother is all right: you've got to marry this girl——"

"Girl be damned! She's out in this storm——"

"Yes, but come, be good, now—pull yourself together—listen—listen to reason: your mother is safe; Mr. Farrel has her——"

"*Farrel has her? that man!* By Christ, I'll break his blasted neck"—his struggles now growing frantic; but, as his breath was gone, as his strength was turned to feebleness, the clergyman and the doctor together easily got him pinned against the tapestry, where, with lips agape, he stood gasping as in the article and grasp of death, looking in his rags and gashes such an apparition as springs from the gates of lunacy, his hair sticking out in rays, his stare a gaze at vacancy, and up and up struggled his breast, agasp after breath, suddenly to collapse, like ray-me-far *doh*, and ray-me-far *down*; while Jessie, with a light pouncing upon him out of her eyes, with a cry-cry convulsion of countenance, wiped his red wet, saying: "Caxton, *look* at me!—don't you want to marry me, Caxton? There isn't much time——"

"Hello, Jess," a wry smile sobbed, "hello."

Now her mouth worked toward weeping, her gaze given up to him. "Caxton, *don't* let your mother—— Your child, Caxton—— Your mother will be here——" but now, *Oh-h-h . . .*, upon her pounced Alpha, with "*I first, I chief,*" and now the doctor said: "Get her to bed, Mrs. Furley—— nobody seems to be about——first bed you come across—— then look for coals, gas, water . . . *We'll bring the man*"; on which the wise woman, herself heavy with child with her mass of blankets and baggage, and the little girl heavy with child in her thickness of garments, gadded away with Jessie, to investigate, to catch sight of a fire in the room of the fight, to go in there, and, though Dr. Radlor made no movement when she shook his shoulder, she took possession, gowned Jessie like a wrestler for her joust, couched her within the big bedstead Henri Quatre, planted the little girl to sit by the basket-grate, trotted out then with a copper kettle to prospect for lavatory and water, and, on returning, found the clergyman and doctor now there, they having now coaxed and forced Hazlitt to come, and removed Dr. Radlor to a sofa in the next (end) room.

Hazlitt, still panting as for life in his nerve-crisis, his countenance like a Turner's sunset, now stood nigh the bed's head beside the cleric, who read from a book, while Jessie, half-sitting with her shoulders on a pile of pillows, held Hazlitt's hand, a pinch of a smile just lighting her lips, lighting her eyes that gently judged him, and hung in love on his face, Dr. Burroughs strutting a little to and fro at the bed's foot, his fists bulging his overcoat aside; and the wise woman was now bustling about like a house-wife preparing a dinner, when a new presence was there within the room, one who looked amazedly about, and asked "*What is this?*"——Máhdorla, all unkempt, bedraggled: for, thinking to save some minutes, she had driven to Seymour Street, to walk on from the barrier-posts there through the storm; and, stepping near to the priest at the place where the bed-draperies opened in a festoon, she cried with half a laugh: "But is this a marriage? *You, Caxton? You do this to me?*"

"Ha, ha," Hazlitt panted, while the priest, who had ceased to read, half-presented his austere length of face to Máhdorla to remark: "Pardon me, Madam, there is need for haste here."

"But the man is my husband!" cried Máhdorla, half aghast, half alaugh.

Whereupon up went the parson's brows, and down went

the graveness of his owl-gaze at a corner of the carpet, while in the seconds of silence that went by Jessie snatched her hand from Hazlitt's to cover her face.

Then the priest, drawing taller his tall strip of body: "How of this lady's statement, Mr. Hazlitt? True or untrue?"

And Hazlitt on a pant: "True—but doesn't matter!—not in this case——"

"What, sir! A flagrant breach of the law——"

"Local 'law!' Most men don't——"

"But *you*, sir, I take it, are an Englishman?"

"Oh, nonsense—philosophers—aren't villagers . . . Máhndorla, forgive! . . . Jess, forgive! . . . They said—you were dead" . . .

"So you are a *philosopher*,' sir," the priest sneered: "and do '*philosophers*' not consider it well for a man to have only one wife?"

"Yes!" Hazlitt panted—"in general. But 'law'-making is childish—because—'law' is rigid—and life infinite in variety . . . Depends on the case, man! . . . In this case—the 'law' is bad—don't you *see*?"

"No, sir, I do not see"—he closed his book—"for I thank God, am no '*philosopher*,' but a Christian English man, bound to consider such conduct as yours most reprehensible——"

"Pooh, Parson," the bluff Dr. Burroughs broke in, "what the man says is reasonable enough: you are old enough to have found out—if you ever find out anything—that lawyers' laws may be harmless in four cases, but are harmful in six. And it was we who dragged the man——"

"But he consented!"—the churchman shewed his palm—"he uttered not one word about being a married man!"

"It is *her* fault"—Máhndorla pointed at Jessie—"she knew—she pursued him here——"

And Hazlitt: "Now, Máhndorla—how could—she know? Be generous, Máhndorla!"

Upon which Jessie sobbed behind her palms, and Máhndorla bent far over to her to say close: "*He is mine!*" while the parson remarked: "Most irregular, this whole business! I have been brought here on a fool's-errand," and while Hazlitt, holding up his tatters, which ever fell off his left shoulder, asked: "Won't you—marry us? So where is my mother this—night? Can I go now?"

"Marry you?"—the churchman turned sharp upon him—"remarry you, say. Of course, I will not remarry you. An let me tell you, sir, that you may consider yourse

lucky——” but now he was interrupted by a new presence in the room—Mary—less mauled by storm than Máhndorla, for she had come, not walking from the barrier-posts, but in her cab by the *détour*, so gaining three minutes; yet her hair seemed to smear her face with streaks of ink, as she tripped to the group at the mouth of the cave that the bedstead was, saying in her flippant way: “Hello, Jess, there you are, then,” and, “Hello, Hazlitt, so where’s the old woman? They paid you, then? I told you they’d pay you, if you came”; then, turning to Máhndorla with sternness: “You are right to turn white when I come, because I told you he ain’t for you, and all your work was throwed away”; and next, turning to the clergyman: “It’s all right, Sir, you can go on marrying them, because this lady ain’t his wife in a manner o’ speaking; he *did* marry her, but she ain’t his wife, not lawfully, in a manner o’ speaking, because she is his sister.”

Up and up now rose the brows of the parson, whose spotless paw had never been in such a mess, and in an angel’s dismay he breathed: “Married *his sister*?”

“Ha, ha,” went Hazlitt.

And Mary: “That ain’t nothing, sir! because they didn’t know they was brother-and-sister, and they ain’t never had nothing to do with one another: so you can marry——”

Now Máhndorla laughed, and the clergyman turned to her to ask: “May this possibly be a fact, Madam, that you are the sister——?”

“No, of course, the woman is mad,” she answered, very blanched, but nonchalant in manner: “my husband is an Englishman *pur sang*, his name is ‘Hazlitt,’ my mother was an Italian, my father is an American, and my maiden name is ‘Ricchi.’”

The clergyman turned to Hazlitt.

“Do *you* say that this may possibly be true——”

“No, not true,” Hazlitt answered; “but what does it matter——?”

“It *is* true what I say,” Mary broke in: “whoy, do you suppose anybody would come and say such a thing? Wasn’t it their own father told me? He ought to be here—where is he? Don’t her brother, the parson, know that she is Hazlitt’s sister? That’s why he locked Hazlitt up, to keep him from——”

Now Jessie whined in childbirth and “writhed her all convolved,” whereupon Dr. Burroughs came with brisk decision to say: “Look here, it is now or never, Parson. This

woman seems to know what she is saying—in fact, putting two-and-two together, I guarantee her statement: so you'll incur a responsibility, if the child is born out of wedlock.'

And the clergyman: "I never was in such a . . . You say you guarantee——?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I will: I will venture——"

At this Máhdorla's mouth opened to say "You wouldn't dare," but without uttering any sound, something suddenly arresting her—memories, deductions, a dawning upon her of knowledge; and, instead of speaking, her hands went out a little toward Hazlitt, with a murmur, to keep him, as when a pearl is sinking into the sea, leaving the world worthless and one yearns and murmurs toward it; then, as the clergyman afresh commenced to read "the service," she cut a face of disdain at Jessie, before moving slowly away, musing within her bent head, toward that window of which Hazlitt had opened a leaf when the old woman had screeched which leaf, freed among the winds, was still rioting amuck like wild arms swung, no one so far having had time to fasten it: and with a knee on the neuk-seat she stood looking out, thinking of things, little heeding now the whips of weather that the winds wielded at her face, living there in a dawn of knowledge which clearer and clearer dawned upon a black orb drear to her, though she had hardly been there two minutes when she drew sharply inwards, seeing in the off-shine from the hall-door Mr. Farrel just coming in, bearing on his bosom the old woman, whom he had "bailed out" at "the station": so away darted Máhdorla to hide herself somewhere from the sight of his eyes, since she had no right to be privily in England; and, as she got opposite the wedding-group, spurred to do an ill turn to Jessie, to distract Hazlitt's mind from the rite, she cried out in her flight "Your mother is just coming!" and was out of the door.

And almost as quickly as she Hazlitt's feet were twisting fleetly out of the door, he calling "I'll be back!"—just when the clergyman had been turning toward him to ask: "Do you take this woman . . . ?" and just when the wise woman, like a wolf of Alaska, had her nose uplifted, wrinkling it with sniffs, whispering to herself: "Yes! that's labour! I smell it."

In half-a-second Hazlitt's feet were speeding past Máhdorla, who had hardly expected an effect so tempestuous to leap from her news, she throwing at him a "*here!*" as he flew past her, while Mary, too, who was racing after him, threw at him a "*here!*" in vain; and round the corner to the stair

corridor, to the stair-head, he darted, whence at last his eyes rested on his mother in a red light—coming up—she and a crutch coming—on the breast of “that man” Farrel.

Chapter 20

Homicide

THIS scene arrested Hazlitt’s career a little, caused him to pause there at the stair-head—how long? the tenth of a second, say . . .

Yet in that trifle of time a whole series of psychic unrollments, like smokes rising up from a sea of smokes, as in dreams, rose up out of the sea of Soul that seems to underlie Life, to underlie Being—rose up like smokes of Notion to present themselves to his brain; or half rose up, half to present themselves: for to *some* extent there did come to him, seeing his mother thus hugged by Farrel, the memory of a man whom long ago, before he was four, he had mistrusted, had been wretchedly jealous of, had cast a child’s evil eye at, a man who had had far, far, too much to do with his mother to please him . . . Within the instants of that species of dream there came to him the memory of a chamber in a city by the sea, a square chamber, in which he had slept in a crib, the man and his mam on a bedstead; and in the silent night-time, whose silence seemed to scream to the ear-drum rumours of cricket rituals and of revels of elves, there had been hours when he had found himself on his feet beside his crib-rail, keenly histing to a mystery of business, whisperings of conspiracy, sighs from her, moans, abstruse ordeals, inscrutable troubles, due somehow, he knew, to the man, he standing there ached with care, rueing it with a face screwed toward crying, his heart darkly asking of the night the dark enquiry: “Lord God, what *can* the man be doing there to my mam?”, and his hankering to guard her, to drag her from that dragon’s-grasp, to meddle, to cry to heaven his own exclusive rights in her, had scarcely been restrainable—she such a little dear, made of sugar and spice, and the brute such a bull at her, going through some ogreish rite of Night and Orcus, monstrous *orgia*, such as could draw sighs from her heart there behind the veils of the dark and solemn night . . . And *this* was that man: on lightning’s

pinions the revelation came, as his eyes lit on her there on the stair wrapped in that man's arms: *that Farrel!* whom a first sight, some nine months before, his instincts had liked but ill, who had certainly somehow been mixed-up in the mystery of his mother's internment: and always at the thought of the man something fundamental in the mood and guesswork of his gall had moved, and called "that man! ah that man!" . . . There she was now in that man's clutches: and the old viper's-eye of jealousy and vengeance, the old hankering to have her from him, to snatch her, dashed him down at her—and at the man.

Too roughly, though; in a torrent of intolerance and ownership all too reckless of its effects: no, this was not just homicide, but manslaughter . . . In seven steps, with excellent exactness and knack of hand, he had her snatched; but below were twelve steps: and the shock lost the elderly man his balance . . .

During some fraction of a second that venerable head curved backwards in an earthquake of incertitude, vacillated, his palms cast aloft, as when the drowning call out upon the power of God, but backward was dragged, all that mass, and still backward, until now the decision . . . goodbye and down . . . the row of it . . . the thundering crash and racket of his tragedy . . .

A shriek in the son's ear: "*Caxton!* Almighty God, you have killed your father!"

A shriek behind—two—from Mary, from *Máhndorla* . . .

"Let me *go!*"—from the mother to the son, she pushing his face away, escaping him who so long had sought her, her thoughts not of him, her thoughts of the foreigner . . .

Chapter 1

Travailing, Travelling

THAT night the voices of the storm were long like voices of those that mourn over obsequies and closed eyes, such as in Babylonish vaults of old bawled *nenia* of teen, coronachs of bereavement, with clamours of shriekings, haunches distorted, arms of distraction, *alalas* of ah and calamity that flap the tongue-tip to tattle la, la, and to tattle la, la, la, on some day of storm-winds wawling despairs and orgies or desolation, those of Southern Italy whose steps follow the corpse calling out (as does that dead-march in "Saul") the poignancy of three long voicings that call Oi, Oi, Oi, and that call Loi, Loi, Loi.

But for over an hour Dr. Burroughs continued to hope that "compensation," which had been "ruptured" by the shock, might reestablish itself: for through the hypertrophy which the right ventricle had long since undergone (in "compensation" of lesions of the mitral valve) was quite visible, and quite audible some blowing sounds at the apex-beat, still, the heart is a hardened thing, having an addictedness to ticking—persisting in ticking hours after death in some animals: and, as the doctor had strychnine, and had despatched Mary Giddins to get digitalis, he was not in despair—given complete peace, and sleep.

But precisely peace was not easy to acquire: for even as the dying man had been borne by doctor and clergyman, by Mary and Máhdorla—for Hazlitt would not touch him—had been borne into the end bed-room, there had come through the doorway communicating with the neighbouring room the canticle of one new-born into Europe, a little larynx that cackled a cantering of amphibrachs—the rhythm of the hymn of Man*—a short-long-short—that cackled "for ever and ever and ever,"

Nor was this song all: for anon, somewhere not far off, a locomotive-engine would pass along on its journey throwing off a verse or two of puffs in trochees—a long-short—which uttered *puff*-pff, and uttered *puff*-pff, hobbling deliberately along like halt horses that dip, and like Vulcan

* Used, too, by guinea-fowls.

sawing timber; moreover, from a school-room in the row of new houses that now faced the mound of Huguénin House were ever and again blown as it were smoke-puffs of cheering, an election-meeting going-on there; while from the upper floor of a public-house just over against the Huguénin-gates a jingling of guitar and jig could be caught, like a gipsy-mob jingling after the march of the storm's army—which it was that had chased the coy and delicate Huguénins from the cloister-shades of their ancient domain; and out from the school-room, about ten-thirty in the night, were blown loudly to the sinking life sounds of that thing which some Englishmen still sing:

Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign o'ry us,
God save the king;

while that window under which was the bedstead rattled continuously—an Elizabethan bedstead, low, four-square, like that at Chatsworth, its head within an arch formed of half the thickness of a wall, over the head being a canopy hanging black velvets with moons interwoven, while on its foot leant four planks for making repairs; and shavings and wood-rubbish were strewn about the floor, in one place a square of emptiness gaping, into which anyone might have stepped in that vague glimmer radiated from a lampas of Greek pattern, wherein were concealed some glow-lamps long ago gone effete, this lampas on a pedestal of ebony at the bed's foot shedding a blood-red sheen directly on those cheeks on the bed, as did the red of a flame that Mary had made on the hearth not far from the bed's head—reds not red enough to abolish the cyanosis (or blueishness) of that nose, which was wanner than porcelain, wanner in contrast with the spots of red on the bandage that lay aslant across the forehead, livider than the silver of the moons that twisted within the raven velvet of the room's draperies whenever they moved to the whiffs of the winds; and anon he coughed—an ominous thing—a guffaw of mockery at the doctor's hope—his breath snorting short and heavy upon the mass of moustache; but still the majesty and mass of aspect, commanding homage like a carved rock; and still the heart trotting on, clocklike, as the doctor, when he cocked his ear to it at "God save the king," could hear it still ticking away, ticking the rhythm of the gait of Time, the rhyme of the

pilgrim-gait of Life, with *sys diá*, and *sys diá*, *stolé*, and with *sys diá*, and *sys diá*, *stolé* . . .

At the same instant puffs of breath at the lips were blowing up the mass of moustache in puffs, and Dr. Burroughs, hearkening near, could hear him utter dreamily: “Χειμερινὸς ὄνειρος ὅτε μήχισταί αἱ νύκτες” . . . upon which the doctor’s face softened, he regretting now having said to that greying head that men must not say “nego, nego” to those who know . . .

But now through the door of communication, which could not be induced to remain closed, came an outcry: “Oh, gook, Mrs. Furley, he is moving his little toes!”—from the little girl, who could not be got to separate herself from the baby; whereupon Dr. Burroughs stept on tip-toe from bed to door, to send out the whisper: “You might make that kid shut-up”; adding mechanically the parrot-phrase: “Mother all right? Baby all right? Breasts all right?”

“All right, Doctor,” replied the wise woman, moving spryly about; and back to the bedside the doctor stepped, with him in that room being only Mary and Dr. Radlor: for the parson had gone away, and, as to the old woman, when she could not be induced to stay away from the death-bed, Dr. Burroughs had suddenly plucked her up, to transport her beyond the corridor, and to pop her bottom upon an ottoman plumb, as when Columbus tapped an egg’s bottom flat; and Hazlitt was in the travail-room, seated on a mass of tapestry that lay under three planks leaning on the wall in the corner opposite the bedstead corner, he hugging himself, shuddering steadily, holding up his rags against his naked shoulder; and Máhdorla was seated in an easy-chair in another corner, adjacent to his corner: for she could not bear to see her father’s face, and the fingers which she had forced to touch him, in lifting him, still flinched and shivered, some nerve in them cursing their contact with the horror of the foreignness of eternity. And in there taciturnity reigned. But when she observed Hazlitt shake his ten fingers a little, as if to sprinkle off them dribbles of blood, she flung at him a whisper of pity: “You couldn’t help!” knowing that he had not looked at all at the infant born to him, nor spoken to its mother, nor lifted his head, but sat there on the tapestry under the planks averted, as in a hiding-place, afraid to stir, with shiverings; and thrice she could see him make that little gesture of sprinkling from the finger-tips, he whose wish it was to have hands washed in innocence and be harmless in the history of being, who had ever disdained

as bumpkins men who love their neighbours less than themselves, to whom, too, as a mechanic, death was tenfold catastrophic, because of the wreck and havoc in mechanism that that breakdown is, when the hair-spring of the fairy eye-string breaks, that could descry sky-blue, and gilts, and scenes of green, and Iris on the flapper of the flying-fish flashing, before the mainspring-train is stayed, and the escapement no more persists in ticking the rhythm of the gait of Time, the rhyme of the pilgrim-gait of Life, with *sys diá*, and *sys diá*, *stolé*, and with *sys diá*, and *sys diá*, *stolé*.

And always, at the slaps of the storm, tear-water washed lavishly down the panes' faces, while out in the dark was streaming hair and laughter of Atalanta shrieking "catch me for a lark!" and Asahel darting laughing after, with wrangling garments, to ravish the agile darling, sometimes sounds as of thundering muttering grum in the trumpets' mouths of the uproarious gloom, the hearth's hollow all haunted with noisings, voices, vowels, song without words, burdened with such yearnings as the shores of Devonian oceans knew, which mourned and mourned before the moon was old; and when the mansion trembled to its base at the arrogance of one grander gust, Dr. Burroughs raised his gaze to roam round the room, muttering to himself, "Hallo, I hope the old shanty is insured," at the same moment catching afresh through the uproar the baby's canticle from the neighbouring chamber, a canticle of amphibrachs that cantered a Banbury cantering, cackling, "for ever for ever for ever," and cackling "for ever and ever and ever."

Now, too, he could see fuffs of lip-breaths afresh blowing-up the mass of moustache in puffs, harkening close to which he could catch a mutter:

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, shivering, household-shelter crave
From midnight rains which drench his grave";

three minutes after which, from out of the next room again an outcry: "Oh, gook, Mrs. Furley, he is moving his little fingers!"—from the little girl, who could not sing the l of "look," like the nice Huns, who say "gucken" when they mean "looken": whereupon Dr. Burroughs stepped afresh on tiptoe to remonstrate, to bid her shut-up, and to enquire of the wise woman, "Mother all right? Baby all right? Breasts all right?", but in the midst of this was conscious of a crutch coming, of a fumbling with the handle of the corri-

door-door, upon which he darted masterfully that way, and, afresh catching up the old woman, as she entered, bore her, in spite of protests, fighting, crying, across the corridor to the opposite room, whose door this time he, with a nod, locked upon her.

But while he was away someone else, springing up from within the chimney, went with swift unsteady steps to bend upon the bed—Dr. Radlor—an object of sorrow—his beard wobbling as when the she-goat's jaw chews askew, deeps of lugubrious meanings peering out of that red gaze of grief, his mouth tugged agape toward howling, like tragedy-masks which howl through slanting gaps of anguish, on his beard a stream of gore that had guttered from his nose, and "It is I, Sir," his bosom sobbed; but without response from that block of chalk to which he called; and again: "No, do not harden yourself at this last! for you know, what God knows, the mass, Sir, of the calamity, the load of ignominy——"

But now two hands were pulling at his arm—Mary's—who said to him: "No, you ain't going to kill *im*: you heard what the doctor said——"

"And you know"—half of him pulled away, but half still addicted to the bed—"that you should have taken counsel with me, Sir, aye, you should have——"

"But you ain't going to kill *im*," Mary put in, pulling, while from that wrenched jaw of sorrow came out: "But you were dark, Father"—his head wagged—"nothing said of that other son, better loved—hard, Sir!"—his head wagged—"that's deep, aye, that pierces—no man wounds me with impunity, Sir—another son—who has bruised that dear head now—contracted gruesome marriage with your darling—aye, the grim Finger, Sir——"

"No, you ain't going to kill *im*"—from Mary again: "whoy, you should be ashamed——"

But half of him persisting: "And now you go, forgive . . . as I forgive . . . you go, and my broken heart, Beloved, goes with you . . ."

Now, however, arose the protest of Dr. Burroughs, re-entering: "Why, what is this?" and now Mary's pulling prevailed, she and her captive stepping back to seats within the chimney's cone-shaped cavern, whose bricks rose step-wise to a roomy tube, through which the tempest spat in passing; and in there Mary, who was very envenomed at the night's events, leant to fling a whisper across the box of copper on a lazuli block that carried the fire: "Whoy, I should be ashamed, if I was in the place of the lot of you.

What do you call yourselves? His daughter near killed im when he heard about her, and now his eldest son has killed im—Whoy, I should be ashamed . . .”

But no answer came from the huddled figure of grief; and Mary whispered: “*You* needn’t want to kill im, you ain’t going to get any of his riches when he’s dead, because last Thursday he left it all in his will to his eldest son, who has turned round and killed im for his kindness: I should be ashamed . . .”

But now “*Sh-h* there” was sent daintily from Dr. Burroughs, who was anew listening to lip-breaths that blew-up the moustache of the dying; he could not, however, quite catch what was said, and presently beckoned to Mary, who came, listened, and could hear: “Let me see Caxton Hazlitt”; whereupon he, and she after, stepped into the next room, and when he asked “Hazlitt here?” and Máhndorla pointed to the pile of tapestry behind the planks, he walked to it to say crossly—for no one was well disposed toward Hazlitt—“Come on, he wants you.”

Hazlitt raised his face from his knees, which he had been clasping, to gaze at Burroughs as at a ghost, and then vigorously to shake his head, saying “No, no,” and to shake his head, saying “No, no, no,” and again, “Say No!”

“Well, but you *should*, my good sir,” Dr. Burroughs said.

Hazlitt shook his head vigorously at him: “Say No!”

“Oh, then, go to the devil”—the doctor walked off.

And while Hazlitt’s face went back to his knees, Mary said to his right shoulder: “Whoy, I should be ashamed . . . You mean to say you won’t *go*? Your own father? The best man in the world? that’s left you millions on top of millions of money in his will—and you kill im for it—and when he wants to see you a minute, you won’t go? Whoy, I’ll never speak to you again: you can have back them two thousand pounds you gave me . . . *Come* on, come with me”—she touched his shoulder, but his shoulder shrank and rejected her; and now a voice that languidly called “Mary!” so Mary went to the bed, whereabouts iodine and a carbohydrate smell still reigned from some chloroform-whiffs which had been brushed across the travailer’s nostrils; and there Jessie, who had gathered what was going on, whispered to her: “Ask him, Mary, if he will go for me”: with which message Mary went back to Hazlitt; but he made no answer to it, only his shoulder which she touched shrank and rejected her; and she went away back to the death-chamber. Upon which Máhndorla, for her part, left her corner to come to

him, shuddering as she rose—her clothes damp on her, the fire remote—and, standing averted by his side, with a sulky eye askance at that low head, she muttered in Italian: “Go die slain . . . to invent being my brother . . . nice brother: brother-of-the-two-moles . . .” then put out her hand to rumple his rumpled hair, then knelt on the mass of tapestry, to put an arm round his neck, her cheek on his, and to say to him: “Go to him, will you?” but when he responded not at all, she said: “Don’t take it so heavily! you couldn’t help”; and when his shoulder shrank and reacted uneasily to her she sent into his ear an incestuous whisper: “Don’t you love me? I still love you,” the hot sirocco of her breath, blowing that secret into his ear, having the potency to send a trill of electricity trickling along some string of him from his right ear down to his left knee; but no sign of being alive he gave, and she then said: “Go to him for me, and I will give you a kiss”; but now he shook his bent head, and she went away vexed, to sit and shudder in her chair.

Meantime, in the other room, Dr. Burroughs had said over the bed: “Hazlitt, Sir, is not here—gone away: may be coming back. Try to sleep, try to sleep”—the dying eyes now lying closed, the cyanosis of the nose now very pronounced, the breath very laboured; but the lips were puffing something; and Dr. Burroughs, leaning near, could hear: “Tell Caxton Hazlitt—be generous to my children.”

In those same moments, however, some sounds of thumping, coming from outside, bothered the doctor, who, stepping to Mary within the chimney, whispered to her: “Go and shut up that old woman,” on which Mary tripped out to the corridor, to the locked door, to say low at the lock: “The doctor says keep quiet; do you want to kill im?”

And from within: “Tell him to let me out, Mary. They have no right to separate husband and wife—I won’t be kept from him——”

But Mary: “Whoy, ain’t it just as well for anybody to be reasonable? Ain’t you heard he mustn’t have no excitement. You’ve got a fire, stay in there . . . Wait, I’ll send your son to you.”

“No, don’t!” from within—“Caxton won’t let me, I know . . . Send the doctor, Mary, say I won’t touch, or make any noise, unless he keeps me here among these mummies; and tell him——” but Mary was off tripping, into the travail-chamber, where she said offendedly to Hazlitt: “I should go to your mother, if I was you, she’s carrying-on and killing im, because they won’t let her be with im.”

Hazlitt raised his face. "She is not—in *there*?" leer and thumb meaning the death-chamber.

"No, she's across the corridor"—moving away; and now he stood up, moved to go to his mother, his feet leading him steeply now to complete his own undoing . . .

Though he did not know in which room "across the corridor" she was, he chanced to go straight to it—an end room, opposite the death-chamber—and, finding the door locked, he stepped away, but came back, said "You in there, Mum?" then, seeming to hear a sound within, though no answer, unlocked the door to look in; but did not see her.

For she, hearing, not the doctor, but him, and instinctive of further opposition to her desire from him, had been spurred to fly to hide behind an organ; and, on spying a side-door behind there, and on trying it, to find that it opened, she fled into the next room—the room opposite the travail-chamber—while Hazlitt, not seeing her in the end-room, went along the corridor to that next room's door, to look in.

And, as he looked in, he saw her—hobbling on her crutch all among shavings and planks, toward him—saw her by the light in the organ-room from which she was flying, for no light was in this room; and by that light behind her he could see, what *she* could not, that she was on the edge of an empty space some six feet square in the flooring, close inside the door he stood at . . .

Even as his "*Stop!*" hopped out of his mouth, he could see that the step she was making would precipitate her, that nothing could stay her from making it, and this was the end of her—unless he instantly leapt: and instantly he leapt . . .

Down into a mouth of darkness . . . not far, however—twelve, fourteen feet—and he might have made the leap with complete success, but that, leaping into a scullery, his right foot dived into a box divided-up into squares, each containing a bottle—bottles at present empty of beer which his mother had drunk: it was this that broke his leg.

In the same instant he was aware of the little outcry of her mouth above, was aware by the crimson glimmer within the flooring-hole of her little body coming upon him: and he caught her nicely; but, then, being one-legged, was felled by her; and together they lay, his head red among the broken bottles in the box.

He could hear the ~~whocat~~ of her breathing, but no utterance; when he panted "my Mam!" at her, there was no answer.

Then, struggling upright, he got her on his breast, but

ow in the agony of his every step he got out to the stair, and up it, he had no consciousness; and only there on the stair, as up he worked his way, murmuring at it, like one merging drenched from depths of adversity, did he become conscious that his steps were followed by a flow of blood liberately dribbling, from her, or from him, or from both.

Upon a sofa in the travail-room close to the door-of-communication he dropped her, dropped upon the floor beside her, and sighed . . .

At the same time the young mother on the bed, catching sight of the mass of bloodshed which was his bludgeoned head, sat up to cry out, while the wise woman and Máhndorla ran, to find the sofa already a growing pool, since the old woman's old leg-wound had broken out profusely again; and the moment Dr. Burroughs came and looked at her he muttered "*She's* no good," for in her aspect was arrant that blue rapture of departure, and she flew on the breeze the blue Peter of travel.

And "Whatever has happened?" he asked, fastening a compress on her leg, but Hazlitt, whose head Máhndorla was tending with warm water in a bowl, did not answer, and when Dr. Burroughs asked him "*You* got anything broken?" his head shook No, his gaze given up to that visage of the old woman, which, too, was agaze at some vision with an expression of scare, her throat pouring the ruckle of a petty repitus with a purring that hurriedly rolled its hurdy-gurdy, as when egg-froth, fretting to break down, carries-on a crackling, trodden down by fairy rabbles that romp and rample it. But she was conscious, for presently she panted at Hazlitt: "Well, Caxton"; and she panted at Mary Gidlins: "Let me die with him, put me on his bed."

To this the doctor had no objection, having now rather lost hope of the other sick; but when he said "Very well" to Mary, and bent to raise her, Hazlitt sat up staring, shaking his head, saying "No, no," and afresh shaking it, saying "No, no, no"; upon which the doctor flinched, desisted, tepped hastily away to look at the other dying, to find him now lying quite quiet, white as milk, his sinking eyes fixed on high, a tantrum of the tempest that rattled everything when pouring a Missouri of rumours through the rout of oliage that surrounded the house: during the row of which the doctor and Dr. Radlor, leaning over the dying, could hear sighs that puffed up the moustache, and could catch that strophe of the Emperor Hadrian to his soul:

“Animula, vagula, blandula . . .
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,
Pallida, rigida, nudula . . . ?”

before which puffing was over, out once more—from the public-house now—broke upon the tempest that pestilence, dull doggerel with groggy drag,

“*Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to, oo, oo, reign ory us,
Gaw-od save thah king*”:

at which poetry and music of the Stone Age the dyir sighed and died; abruptly his breathing ceased to sound, leaving about him a sounding absence of sound; ah, heart of me, in the old sys diá, and sys diá, stolé, it was cease no for sys, and die for diá, and nothing quick and witty for stol at the bed's head Dr. Radlor laid fingers on the dead lid while out of his eyes, blind with passion of sorrow, droppe splashes to wash from the forehead-bandage its spots; at the same instant came distinct on the winds from the next room the outcry: “Oh, *do* gook, Mrs. Furley! he is opening his little eyes!”—from the little girl, who could not say “look” and immediately thereupon out broke the baby's rote like a beating-up of eggs for the pudding of the gale's sounds, he cackling his canticle in amphibrachs that cantered a Barbury cantering to the rhythm of the hymn of Man, cackling “for ever for ever for ever,” and cackling “for ever and ever and ever”; presently after which Dr. Burroughs, entering afresh that other chamber of the baby, muttered, “Oh, she dead”; then, looking at Hazlitt remarked: “*You* look as you wanted some seeing to, my friend”—Hazlitt strew over the floor, womanized and mothered by Máhndorla, who held his head within her arm, an elbow of his resting on little foot-stool of carnation jade, while his hair, grown long in his prison, was being combed back and back from his forehead by his sister's fond fingers, and two streams, spilled from his closed lids, were weeping amid the ooze that still spittled from the lips of his wounds. He made no answer and when the doctor added: “I have this message for you from Mr. Farrel, who is dead—he wishes you to be ‘generous to his children,’ ” Hazlitt smiled in pain a little, making no reply, while, at that “dead,” Máhndorla's forehead droppe upon the sofa near the old woman's knees.

And so they still were when Dr. Radlor walked smartly on, his face a mask of distortions—his object being to go to get something (his revolver), in that corner farthest from the two doors, where Hazlitt had long since tossed it, where it had since lain near to the easy-chair in which Máhndorla had long been seated, and she had not seen it: to get that was his object, but, on catching sight of the old woman lying dead there, flagrant white against her coral drops, he stopped, stooped over her, said to her: "You, too?" and with that crooked rictus of his lips he kissed her once, he kissed her twice, with passion; then, passing by Hazlitt, he stopped, and stooped to pat Hazlitt's arm, with one wag of his head at Hazlitt and a wag of his beard, mutely laughing his agony with a crooked crick of the lips, and anew he mutely patted Hazlitt, and wagged the agony of his mouth at Hazlitt, without saying anything; then walked onward in his masculine manner to the corner, got the revolver, and grandly immediately, with a goat's bleating, the cry of his throat rang vibrant out: "Ha, ha, *look Máhndorla!*"—a crackle in his voice of the cavalry-captain's call, so that all stood in awe of him, as he pointed the revolver at his forehead: for suddenly now Horror's eyeballs bounced up in that room, and a mouth was bawling news so appalling of the mood of funerals, and of the gruesome, the ghostly, the frantic, the Pan-ic that underlies the footsteps of Life, as the tongue cannot utter . . . Though he was invisible to her, here at the bed's foot, the young mother screamed, hearing the electric bell that trembled in that bleat of "*look, Máhndorla!*" as when thunder, brittle-like on the brink of utterance, stutters a little . . . The grumble of remonstrance murmuring in Máhndorla's gullet was a murmur too horridly low to be heard, and when the revolver burst into noise, she sickened and lost consciousness; but some moments before this she had been conscious of Hazlitt in action, knew when he threw the footstool—beautifully done, with seraph's luck—at her brother's head, was aware when, flying, he left her side, and, as her senses failed, was aware of the uproar of the bellow of excruciation which broke from his throat, as he rushed on his broken bone. Meantime, the bullet, batted oblique by the footstool, had smashed to a mass of sherds a nyrhine vase; and a moment afterwards Radlor was on the floor under Hazlitt, while the gun, wrung from his grip, was going through a window-glass.

Within the minute of stillness that followed, Hazlitt, having dropped off from the other, lay as dead . . .

Chapter 2

Dull Weather

NOR did he come to his senses till he found himself in his own old bed-room over the Amoor Room in Park Lane, his right leg big in splints, Mary Giddins knitting by his side; and still for three days he tended to delirium.

Yet he had a will of his own: for when Mary told him "she is to be buried with him on Wednesday," vigorously he shook his head with "no, no," and with "no, no, no"; nor could his will be unfix'd: Máhndorla came to move him, but he would never receive her—ashamed of being seen ill; every day Dr. Radlor came, but was never received; and when Radlor wrote up "Joint burial would seem agreeable to wishes of dead? You are entreated to consent," Hazlitt sent down a note: "No, thank you. Please mind your own business."

So in the end the old woman got home under the thatch of a chestnut which I know in Fullham Cemetery, while the old man got home in a sultry spot on a mound outside Florence, near to that black-and-white chapel where the David of Angelo stands at ease, he lying there in a mausoleum with his second wife; and by the time the doctor and Máhndorla got back to England from that expedition, Hazlitt had been lifted, and driven, and lifted, to see his mother's tomb.

He laughed a little on being carried to it!—such a laugh; he laughed on seeing his face in a hand-mirror the day that the wrappings were taken off, a face from "the front," all rough country, cut to the bone by those bottles from which his mother had drunk; and, waiting on his leg, whereon his fate hung, he did not go out again until Spring was come, for again and again the patella bones were set, rebroken, re-set . . .

It was a case, then, of doctors with him—and of lawyers, American lawyers, British, Italian lawyers, he making over by deed-of-gift to Máhndorla the whole Rhone of revenues inherited from his father: for not any of it would he have; as to which thing, "Is this the way to do?" Mary Giddin said

o him at the bedside: "you've got a girl, you've got a son, don't you care nothing about them?"

And Jessie, her right leg ever attacking, like the fencer's, o rock her child which she carried: "Oh, don't mention us; he doesn't love me now; doesn't look at the child."

He muttered: "Nonsense," gazing out of window at a cloud-group of whales swimming away with their young in grave migration to some other ocean of blueness, and what suffused their bulk was not blood but the stuff that glows in gold, he watching with a waeing breast the strangeness of that voyaging, strangeness as of buoy-bells' voices bleating at eventide across the bleakness of boisterous seas, voices cosmic, memnonic, like calls of the cock dawdling far off, forlorn, in darkling dawns; and Mary remarked: "I can't make out what can have got into him like this against his father——"

He muttered: "Please shut-up about that man."

And she: "Whoy, do you call that right? Best man in the world? You don't know all he did for you and Jessie."

And Jessie: "It's his mother makes him like that! He was mad after that old woman, though he didn't know it until they took her from him; he said 'girl be damned' about me that night at Mound House Huguénin. And all his roubles, and mine, are due to that old woman. After all Mr. Farrel's efforts, here is my little boy born without a name—through her; there he lies with that leg of his—through her; and that—accident—on the stair that night—through her . . . Let him know now, Mary, why his father left her."

Mary weighed him some moments with the tail of her eye before deciding to say: "Listen to me—it wasn't his fault that he left her, and went to America. He worshipped the ground she walked on, but she carried-on with a naval officer at Portsmouth; he caught the officer kissing her."

Hazlitt's sullen eye moved aside upon her. "The man told you that?"

And Mary: "No, he didn't tell me 'kissing,' but I am not a fool, I could very well make out how things was: the officer was kissing her right enough. That's why she always made out to you that your father was dead, because she knew in her own self that it was her own fault. But he was going to forgive her and write to her from New York, when his second wife saw him, five months after he had left England. She was a widow named Mrs. Van Maatens, the richest

woman in the world, everybody said, and *he* was only manager in a jeweller's when she fell mad in love with him like Italians do. He told her he was married in England, but she didn't care about that, she still married him when she had made him get her into trouble, and the two of them took the name of 'Ricchi,' which had been her name when she was a singer. But he called himself 'Farrel' when he came to England, because he didn't mean to reveal himself to the old woman, or let anybody know that he had married twice: he only meant to find out the old woman, as he had been trying to do for years from America; and when his second wife died he came himself, just meaning to find his first wife and son to send them money, and then go back home; it was only at the last, when he saw he must tell that you and his daughter are brother-and-sister, so that you might be able to marry Jessie, and give Jessie's child a name—it was only then that he made up his mind to let out everything: and think what *that* must have cost him, to resolve to disgrace his name, to run the risk of prison for bigamy—all for that little boy's sake—— Whoy, you ought to worship the ground he walked on."

Now again Hazlitt turned a surly eye aside at her to murmur: "I said I don't want to hear."

And Jessie, holding her child on high as an idol to look up to: "Don't trouble, Mary: he only likes one of the family."

"My sister, Jessie," Hazlitt mentioned.

And Jessie: "Ah! sister. Yes, I suppose. Tender relationship, a sister. The kings of Egypt married their sisters, and the sisters of the kings of Egypt were keen on it. Sister, eh ha, ha. Closer than a father a sister is; and there is a sister that sticketh closer than a brother."

"Oh, pray, leave me a little alone," he muttered, with melancholy and the colour of winter days in his tones, that swooned as winds do for woefulness when they winnow the snows on wolds and wildernesses: for, though as yet nothing as settled as to the leg, he guessed and feared; nor was it an easy thing for him to live with his thoughts of that mishap on the stair, that something enormous, something ultimate not to be obliterated ever from the Records, that squall that in the twinkling of an eye had capsized his skiff, when something within him had sprung out rough and potent enough to overthrow his discipline of hand, eye, mind, and to prove men a troop of fauna still unformed and faulty, still greatly to be pitied, as when, naked, they were ingirt by

glaciers and terrific turbulances, lightly furred, and ignorant of fire. Ever afresh for him the shock and astonishment of the consciousness "I have killed: *I!*" and to his "why?" and eye of reproach those skies which he had much loved uttered no reply. Low, then, he lay who had flown, unstrung who had been tense, bed-ridden who had run; languid, stagnant, as when no wind blows, and all is ignobly wrong with Nature, so that men and dogs will wretchedly perish of plagues and fog's garrotting fingers, unless a wind from God wings quickly to the rescue. Sometimes he smiled at the sight of his old wafer stuck there on the ceiling, that he could no more stare at without winking, nor even attempted to now, moth and rust now corrupting all his treasures of self-culture and habit of anabasis. He scarcely ever said anything; occasionally would shake the baby's hand, with a "hallo, friend"; but would not let the young mother sleep with him, on the plea that that was unseemly, though he would sometimes let her and Mary Giddins be with him—the house now being an emptiness with but few domestics, not as in the old days: the only interrupters of its loneliness being doctors, with some lawyers in January, Jessie's mother, too, and friends, who ever afresh roamed through its spaciousness in admiration; and then, daily, came Mary, and Dr. Radlor (or "Ricchi"), to enquire; while, as to Máhndorla, her visiting ardour had been dampened by the chills of Jessie's receptions, and by Hazlitt's shrinking from being seen in feebleness by her; yet she was not seldom mentioned in his presence, Jessie having a tendency to complain of her—having twice spied her eyeing across at her half-brother's window from the opposite houseback, and this had soured the young mother, making her say "sister, eh?"; moreover, it was now known that that mountain of wealth which Hazlitt had heaped upon Máhndorla had by Máhndorla been heaped upon her brother, the doctor, not upon Jessie's boy, for whom the boy's grandfather had meant it; and Mary, too, tended to dispraise of Máhndorla, making her blacker by praise of her father, of her brother, the parson: discussions in which Hazlitt took no part, though one afternoon he remarked, "She fulfils the duty of being beautiful"; whereupon Mary said: "Well, she is something to look at, it's no good saying that she ain't, but she's bad to the heart, that lady, not like her brother, because he ain't bad, the parson: he is dark, and he is artful, and he is hard-headed, but he ain't bad. They would have kicked up no end of a fuss about what took place on the stair that night,

you may bet, if he hadn't got on the soft side of Dr. Burroughs—only *im* could er done it, too: he ain't bad. Me and him is good friends these days, because there's always two sides to every question, and I can very well understand *im* in what he did."

"Yes, so can I"—from Jessie, cutting Hazlitt's hair, with one knee on the bed.

And Hazlitt: "You understand cruelty and chicane . . ."

"No, I don't like cruelty," Mary said, "but I understand *im*. Here was one of the three or four tip-top families of America, respected by everybody, and all at once the son finds out that he and his sister is bastards: whoy, wasn't it enough to set him crazy? It was some time after his mother died eight months ago that he found out, when he was rum-maging among her papers; and when he told me about it he broke down crying like a child. Then he saw his father coming to England, and he knew very well who his father was coming to find, and he thought his father meant to live publicly with the lawful wife and son, for he had found out from his mother's papers that his father always loved the lawful wife the best. So what did he do now? He is pretty tricky! The minute his father was gone from America he got into a faster ship, got to England before his father, and started hunting for the wife and son, to hide them away from his father. This house and that one behind was 'to let' together, so he hired them, knowing that his father would want a house, and he managed it so, that his father actually become his tenant, and none the wiser . . . That's just like *im*, he likes that—whoy, I know the man as I know this hand—it pleases him to get the laugh of them that are going agen *im*, he is dark, and he is sly, and he is guiley, but he ain't bad. That time when he had the old woman in his father's kitchen—his father hunting everywhere for her, and she just under his father's nose—it was pretty risky, but that just pleased him, he chuckled in himself at that, I'll bet; and it was just like him when he put Hazlitt to live here behind his father who was hunting everywhere for Hazlitt."

"He must have meant to live here himself at first," Jessie remarked, smelling a handful of dark hair cut from Hazlitt: "that's why he took the two houses."

And Mary: "Yes, he did mean, so as to have his father under his eye, and to hear quick whatever occurred from that pock-marked butler: because at first he meant to get Hazlitt to foreign parts on a job, but he didn't have the time, he says, because his father's agent was hot on the scent

of the mother and son: the mother he could carry off, but his only safe way now of hiding Hazlitt was to snap-up Hazlitt right out of Hazlitt's poor surroundings, and make a lord of Hazlitt, here where nobody would ever think of looking for Hazlitt: and he did it quick as thunder, too. The day he brought Hazlitt here the clerk of his father's agent—I know the clerk, he has the one boot-sole thick—the clerk actually saw Hazlitt go into Rowton House, for the clerk knew Hazlitt's description; and while the clerk went to report to the father's agent that Hazlitt was at Rowton House, the parson snapped-up Hazlitt quick, and had im ere. May-be ten minutes later would have been too late: he is pretty tricky. And it would all have worked out nicely, too, his father wouldn't have found the old woman and Hazlitt, only his sister went and fell in love with Hazlitt—he never counted on that: she was the rat that gnawed the rope, and in that way *I* came across her, and I was the rope that hanged the butcher."

And Jessie: "More like a cat than a rat, the lovely tender sister—green lights in her eyes!"

"Love your neighbour, Jessie," Hazlitt muttered.

"You hear that?" Jessie said to Mary: "'Love'—you hear that? though he knows the awful things she did."

"No proofs"—from Hazlitt.

And Mary: "Oh come, no proofs? Whoy——"

"Look closer to you for stains," he breathed with deep depression.

But only the soul knows the tone of its own funeral-bell: neither of these two could realize, or conceive, on what way his feet were wending; nor, on the day-break of that day when the leg was to be tested, could they realize the greatness of such a thing to such as he. It was that same morning also that he got lawyer-letters, from which he first gathered that all those masses of money which he had disburdened upon Máhdorla, and Máhdorla upon Radlor, were again to be hurled back upon his own shoulders: and at once notions surged up in him, an emotion, a world-plan taking shape, which much reinforced his tendency toward death . . .

With those letters on his lap he lay in a chaise-longue, waiting, watching his chance to steal out without being seen alimp, and presently managed it, slipped out, to limp smartly on a stick across Park Lane, and on through the park to a solitary spot where no one would remark his experiments in running—an April forenoon, breezy, alert, birds screaming their roundels, flowers screaming their perfumes: and there he ran—seven steps, and failed; then he ran—ten steps, and

fell; and now, as he lay, his face-muscles convulsed, pity and reproach stretched his lips, though he shed no tear, kissed the ground like that old Roman, muttering: "Mother, I come; rougher mother, but trustier . . . closer still . . ."

This, however, was not a fixed decision: an interview with an osteopath on the morrow still held in it prospects for him, and he was presently responding to Jessie's queries with some show of jauntiness: "Yes, darling! I can walk . . ."

Chapter 3

At the Tomb

THEN again toward the gloaming he went out alone, though it had now turned cold and cloudy, and now first since he had been a boy he wore—an overcoat, hopping along on a stick, until he saw a taxi, into which he got to go to Fulham Cemetery, from the gates of which he set out for his chestnut-tree, limping, chilly, blown by breezes, the whole hemisphere of heaven streaming with variegated greys like riches of smoke pouring out of the chimneys of the foundry of God, the twin fogs which his nostrils breathed-out streaming like a scarf blown abaft from his throat; but within a stone's-throw of the tomb he stood still some moments, seeing someone musing over it with a bowed brow—Dr. Radlor—who with rather a haggard face, engraved with records of agonies under-gone, presently said to him: "Ah, you; I am glad to see you on your legs again."

Hazlitt, standing now by the tomb, bowed without answer.

Then the doctor again: "I see the face has been rather cut up."

But no answer.

And presently again the doctor: "As I have not been permitted to see you, this meeting is lucky. I sometimes come here in the afternoon——"

"What for?"—from Hazlitt, with a downward and side-ward sullenness of eye.

"Because I please, sir."

Then silence; till again the doctor: "After all, there are things to be said . . . You doubtless know that the moneys bequeathed to you by your father, and passed over by you

to Máhdorla, have, all of them, been passed over by Máhdorla to me—before I knew anything of her intention, I may mention. All these funds are now mine by law; but are in process of being retransferred to you: and I have wanted to say to you that, if you now again transfer them to Máhdorla, you simply make lawyers and Exchequers fat, without other result. Máhdorla will not have them. Nor will I.”

“Nor I,” Hazlitt remarked.

“You will be compelled to,” the doctor said: “they are your properties——”

And Hazlitt: “They were not the properties of the man whose whim it was to give them me; rather they were the properties of your mother; though, in fact, they are the property of the craftsmen who created the wealth which they represent.”

“Not in law, sir.”

“No, I state a fact, not a ‘law’—as you call it.”

“Well, you will have to have it—Caxton. Máhdorla and I have fully discussed the matter, and we now agree that our father’s will must take effect—in so far as we are concerned. She commissions me to say to you that she will accept as much as fifteen million dollars, about an eighth of the whole; and I will be thankful to accept as much. Within a month the whole will again be yours, to give what you will.”

The sullenness of Hazlitt’s eyes dwelt downward and sideward on the doctor’s strip of red sock visible; and he said: “I see . . . and what will you do with your fifteen millions?”

“What I please. For one thing, I have long projected the building of such a chapel as——”

A flash of wrath from Hazlitt checked him: “Oh, keep the damned money, man, and curse the damned ‘world’ as you please with it! But, if I give you fifteen million dollars, do you imagine that you would be building any chapels? I’d see about that.”

“Agreed!”—the doctor threw up his forefinger: “I am your man. Your wishes shall be respected.”

And Hazlitt: “I have nothing to do with you . . . But suppose, instead of building chapels, you turned to God, as modern men *should*, spending a shilling of the money in buying some little book on electricity—heat—something immutably true—to devote your soul to? Or can’t you see the simple truth, which the simple great ones easily see, that that little book is the Word of God, the only Bible, the Book of the Law, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, which if men

follow, it will bring them one day to the Beatific Vision, and, if they do not follow, they will never see God? Suppose that Galileo in the church had been looking at the altar-service, where God was not, instead of at the lamp swinging, where God was, what would *you* be now? poor, ignorant, Asiatic—or far poorer—no millions to spend on altars . . . Well, do as you like. I am getting cold. Good evening.”

Slowly he drew his palm over the tomb, and moved off; but the doctor followed . . .

“Look here, Caxton”—in a tone of secrecy—“shall we be friends?”

And Hazlitt: “You might take your hand off my shoulder.”

“No, I won’t. This hand but for you”—his utterance broke—“would today be in the grave. So it is yours. If you won’t have it on you, throw it off, I shan’t complain . . . Look here, we may as well—We are brothers—”

“Ah!”—from Hazlitt—“you several times said that to me in the old days, I remember—‘we are brothers’—knowing that it was literally true, knowing that I should never scent its truth, and enjoying your advantage over me. Very like you, Radlor—or whatever your name is.”

The doctor stepped some way with his head bent; and he said: “True. I confess. Remember that I was horribly distorted, tormented, envenomed by events: let that weigh with you. But—I confess. My sins have been as scarlet. Forgive.”

“My forgiveness is of no importance.”

“To me, yes. Caxton, I always loved you. Only—was jealous of you. I had expected to find the brother who was to supplant me an average proletarian; had expected to have the satisfaction of saying, or of fancying myself saying, to my father, ‘look, pretty object, your first-born’: and, on finding you a higher mind than my own, I felt sore, jealous—naturally perhaps. Looked askance at you. Disliked. But still liked you. Liked you a lot. Locked in that lavatory, you suffered; but less than I, take my word. I could somehow have got blankets to you—but wouldn’t—to torment you—tormenting myself more: for my torment was of the heart and the conscience. Caxton, let bygones—My brother, forgive.”

“Ha, ha”—from Hazlitt—“you once admonished me ‘never forgive!’ ”

“Chut, man, words are nothing. I was drunk, I think.”

“In wine is truth! But *I* am not unforgiving—as *you*

probably are. I can forgive a world, but—no—not that aeroplane. Damn you for that, Radlor.”

“The aeroplane, yes, bad” . . . Now the doctor cast up his eyes, crying out: “God is my Judge! I think it was not for *myself* that I was agonized, nor for *my* Máhndorla, nor for *my* father: it was for the idea of *a* family, *a* name, the uprooting of something so established and ramified in society. And that day of the aeroplane I did not know what else to do! She would surely have been discovered otherwise. Nor, in fact, did she suffer much. It was her way to tell me that she would never get over it: but she did—was in better health the night she died than the day I abducted her. And we were sweethearts, man, she and I—in the end. She forgave, loved me; we always kissed . . .”

With a sulky eye Hazlitt looked aside at him to ask: “Is that a fact?”

“Yes, sweethearts. Great friends. I tell you so.”

“Oh, well, if *she* chose to . . .”

“There—you are coming round. We love each other, you and I, as we should: you are my elder brother, my saviour, and, though I am proud, I humble myself to you, I say that you are better than I, and I intend to submit myself to you in everything.”

Again Hazlitt looked round at him to ask: “In the spending of the money?”

“Yes, in everything.”

“You *mean* that?”

“. . . Why, yes. I undertake. Whatever you may give me——”

“Very well, that settles everything. I will tell you how. Shake hands on it.”

They stood still a little to shake hands.

And now Radlor: “Now we are chums, are we? So let’s be together—let’s do a bunk from England: you want a change. Máhndorla says that you have a love for Syracuse—let’s be off out there. I still have that yacht of yours at Cowes. Me an’ you and old Jess and the baby: we’ll go.”

“That would be nice,” Hazlitt remarked, limping, chilly.

“Agreed, then?”

“Wait: I will write to you in five days’ time. Don’t come to Park Lane till then.”

Now at the exit the doctor helped the anchyrotic knee into a cab; and, as they parted, kissed his brother on each cheek.

Chapter 4

Yet a Wedding-Day

THE next afternoon, after half-an-hour in Harley Street with an orthopædist, Hazlitt went away with his peering look at facts, as when one peers at the sun, and, on getting home, drew his Jessie to his side within the "apricot" hangings of the divan in the Amoor Room, to say with a smile: "I want to finish marrying you; will you still have a wreck like me?" and on the fourth day thence, when they came home "married," her finger at last having-on that ring long ago gone meant for her, he said to her in the same place: "Who loves you?" and when she answered "You," he then said: "I love my fellow-lives as much as myself, or I always thought that I did, until—lately: so when I trouble to say 'I love *you*,' that means that I love you *more*, somehow, than myself. But I think you know that."

She said "Yes, don't I know?"—her head on him.

And now he: "So whatever happens—suppose I go away from you—you will always know——"

Quick she started from him, glanced, could see grimness in him, and instantly to her liver struck panic, she acquainted now with wedding-days, and quick to mistrust the woe of them . . . "Where to? *O, God!* Something else to do with your mother now?"

He was panting a little, paled. "No—listen—listen—there are reasons . . . I have told you how those millions of money are being flung back by Harold at me; now think what that means: Harold was brought up with the notion that all that money is his very own by cosmic law; and he loves power, loves money: so think of the heroic gesture, the generous rush of that blood—I am proud now to be called the brother of such a cock. And he has suffered through me—much—"the shame,' 'the family,' 'the name'; he and Máhndorla will suffer many things, if I remain extant; whereas, if I drop out now, everything may still be hushed up——"

"Drop out . . ." her forehead all crosses of perplexity, as when one encounters an ogre in the old lane, and did not know that there are ogres.

“Yes, drop out, disappear”—not looking at her, his agitation more and more short-breathed—“you must be prepared. There are still deeper reasons . . . Look, now: I have conceived a scheme for the spending of the money which may do no end of good—business-matter, which Harold is just the man to handle—much more smartly than I should; but the responsibility of it must be cast upon his back in such a way that he can’t escape—the sole responsibility: so I go right away, get out of it.”

The tail of his eye now venturing aside on her, he sickened to see her irises like two islands afloat on the poles of her eyeballs’ stare, as when lunacy dawns in an eye because of surprise at the affrights that writhe in the depths of hell—as when once I saw a seamstress leap afire from a “skyscraper,” and, as down she shot, she came a comet flaming, her stare stretched in astonishment at Nature and at the horrors that are in Her.

But such a stare suited ill those pretty home-made frailties of the young mother’s face, her bébé youthfulness and innocence of air, which was but accentuated by those two discs of wet that stained her mohair where her milk oozed through; and, seeing that stare in that face, Hazlitt groaned in himself, thinking that her guardian angel must have been far that day when she met *him* . . . She moved from him to let her feet down to the floor, to sit with her chin on her fists, staring her stare, dull-bloodless like dough; and hoarsely, with an ominous composure, she asked: “Without me?”

And he: “It has happened! It is hard! But I know, and I tell you, that all things work together——”

“When?”

“I am afraid—you see, there are reasons—today, then.”

“For how long?”

“No, don’t . . . For—some time.”

She muttered, musing: “I see: that’s why you married me—to give me a name . . . My wedding days! . . . the third one . . . and then the night-one . . . it came off this time . . . a success at last”—still calm of voice, though passionately her breasts toiled, rebelled, battling for breath.

And he, grim, gaunt, repressing the discharge of the passion which perilously charged their atmosphere: “But we mustn’t blaspheme!—must believe that all things——”

“Where to?”

“Where to? Another country. It has happened, it is hard——”

“Which country?”

Now he broke out, crying aloud: "Oh, my dear, don't . . . What do I know? Some country where, as here, whatever is is under the shadow of the Wing which is Life's refuge for ever. We have to——"

But she had no ear for this . . . looked round to shake her face at him with gentle reproach, saying: "No, don't you. Strangle me, but don't rob me so. I dreamed of you when I was in my mother."

"Ha, ha, how pitiless!" he cried, glancing upward: "yet, by God, I know that, if we understood, we should surely pardon——"

But she, intolerant of listening to the abstract concepts that interested *him*, eyeing aside at him, interrupted with: "So you won't be doing it to me-and-you, and him: my milk will poison him——"

He called out: "But don't say, Jessie, that *I* have done it! It just had to be——"

And now, love in her flushing to resentment, to rebellion, up she leapt, exclaiming: "And where will *I* be? You *shan't!* I refuse to listen to a word——" this so exasperating him, that, he, too, coarsened toward rancour, crying out: "God! all this is no good, this is what I get for trying to prepare you——"

He stopped at the entrance of a nurse-girl who was bearing-in the baby arrayed in gay attire; at which sight, Jessie's passion breaking free of restraint, she stamped, screaming out: "Take him away! Dash out his brains! Don't let me see him!" scaring the maid away, and a flush slashed her right cheek-bone with a brand, as she flung her eyes on high, crying out: "God in Heaven, what have *I* done? His mother kissed some man long years ago—*I* didn't—have *I* got to go stark mad for it?"—her fingers hovering over her hair to tear; and he was crying out to her: "We mustn't go giddy! mustn't give in!" when her mouth gasped, her lids closed down, she staggered; on which he started up to catch her, and, having her, snatched her into his heart, stamped three kisses quickly with impassioned appetite upon her lips which lay agape, and three upon her lashes which lay moist and matted; then, tossing her to lie on the divan, fled from her—though he had not meant to leave her till the evening.

But he had hardly limped half to the door when she shrieked—an abrupt yell as from the larynx of some wretch snatched by the teeth of machinery—and she was up after him to catch him just at the four steps that led up to the door: on which he turned upon her as upon a foe, to hurl

er unmercifully off him upon a sofa, where she lay undone, and again he was gone; but, in banging the door upon her, as aware of the franticness of her scrambling up, of her haste and crazy stare, her scream of appeal to what created her: "Almighty Christ! have mercy on me!"; and since he had no time to transfer the key, which was inside, with wanting passion he hurled at the door, to bar it, a marble column, which, though the crash smashed it to a stack of shards and smoke, did hold her imprisoned a minute or so: or, by forcing each inch of speed into his limp, he had got to the top of the main-stair ere the gasps and half-shrieks and darting feet of her chase reached his ears: and down now helter-skelter he raced—too recklessly, for some way down a howl of helplessness hopped out of his mouth, as stumbling he went with hubbub to the bottom, thinking in the nick of it of the hubbub of *another's* tumble on another stair . . .

He was picked up below by a footman, from whom he instantly tore himself to run, dripping blood, bare-headed, out of doors—wondering that she was not in chase: but she now lay on the floor close by the stair-head banisters—having fainted at his howl and downfall.

Chapter 5

Good-bye

PRECIPITATELY now he urged his limp, until the first turning hid him; and so into Piccadilly to a "chemist" who knew him to be a chemist, who dressed his head-wounds, sold him morphia-sulphate, cocaine, and a syringe; after which he walked still eastward, bought a razor, bought paper, a pencil; then went down into the smoking-room of a tea-shop, where he wrote to his brother:

"My brother Harold, this is the promised letter.

"On several 'counts' (some of them not necessary to mention), I stand condemned to death: for one thing, it is now evident that men do not know enough to get my leg well, and altogether I am in a bad way, mainspring broken, the horse in my heart hangs his head; and no wonder: 'I have slain a man to my wounding.' As only bipeds (men, anthropoids, birds) sing, song not being for quadrupeds and one-

legged lives, when a life, born a biped for song, becomes dumb, he becomes much of a sham, life when bitter or insipid being a sham, since life is sweet—though, being still in an early stage ('here below'), it is still subject to many mishaps, like the aeroplane in its early stages. The good Buddha 'thought' that 'life is sorrow,' but, if that were so, it would promptly end, for a life that can kill itself and continues to live *thereby* declares 'the universe is good, life is sweet'; the moment it becomes insipid, or bitterer than sweet, one realizes that Nature rejects him, and he disappears from her face, recalled by God: which recall by God they name 'temporary insanity,' though, in fact, it is everlasting sanity. As for me, accustomed to the upper strata of air, I am now overcome by dust and dulness, my aeroplane down in ruins. Nevertheless, somewhere in me I still dance and thank, saying 'though He slays *me*, yet am I sure of Him,' and I say 'it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved': for I have loved; and though the armies of psalmists to come after me will be loving Her who is loveliness far more wisely than I, perhaps none will ever love Her eyes' glances more wildly well, and you may inscribe on my grave, if you like 'Never man sang as this man sang'—'never man' in the past I mean, when no one was educated, for I take it that the educated of our day so sing, when healthy and wealthy song being a fiddle of three strings, health, wealth, education—'healthy, wealthy and wise,' as the rhyme says, this being the right *order*, also: for wisdom without health and wealth weeps no tears of enchantment at the strangeness of the latitude of gusty grey days among the gulf-stream oceans, the catalogue of galaxies; whereas with much health and so little wisdom and wealth as a linnet's, you still get song; melody only, though, not harmony; for organ-chord there must be wisdom, trained realization of facts: for, of course, the fairyness of Being is no fancy of little 'poet' people, but is a fact intrinsic in Being, which, drenched in reverie of somnambulism, fabulously with muted footsteps moves, journeying in search of the terminals of eternity, of the limits of infinity: which *fact* of fabulousness the wise eyes spies. Indeed, we may merely say 'wise,' for a life wise *enough* will be healthy and wealthy as well; only, I say that lacking health and *some* wealth, the emotions do not flow in response to the consciousness of facts; and the notion that Chatterton 'sang' starving, that Keats 'sang' consumptive, is grotesque, since only glee sings—though they may have had gifts of expression which would have come-in well, if, being

healthy and wealthy, they had veritably *sung*. But when I say 'health,' I'm afraid I chuck a Dutch word at a person who never felt it, for he simply can't conceive what it means; the notion that it means the *absence* of something is amusing: 'health' is the name in heaven of the minuet that the Muses move to. I have said to it a fond farewell.

"This, then, is my case.

"However, if I die unhealthy, anyway I die mighty wealthy: for you are handing back to me what your father 'left' me; I hereby accept it: so now it is 'mine'; and, this letter being my 'will,' I hereby appoint you my sole trustee and administrator, with the fullest confidence, somehow, that you will not fail me. Be faithful and generous to me, my brother, in my grave.

"You know already that your chapel-building plan does not quite captivate me. For look, now, Harold: Life 'here-below' is hardly still in its infancy, is it?—a thousand million years, they say now: so that it no longer beseems men to be building silver chapels, and living for their own little interests and caprices, like unicellular lives and infants, nor for themselves-and-a-family, like rabbits, nor yet, if they are white men, for themselves-and-a-tribe, like Africans, but for Life, for God's drive and strife, giving one's all somehow to Him, seeing that it was He that made us, and not we ourselves, we are His people, and sheep of His Pasture. Didn't I hear, or rather see, you sing one evening in that chapel in Kingsland

'If Thou should'st call me to resign
What most I prize, it ne'er was mine,
I only yield Thee what is Thine:
Thy will be done'

which, surely, is the least that we modern men should say and sing. And I, now, look, have a flashier plan than that chapel one—a plan which *you*, with your business briskness, and your authority over the mob, are the man to carry-off with consummate *éclat*. You know, do you? that *newspapers* now exercise no little influence upon the 'opinions' of people? How such a thing can be, how any fellow-man of mine can be inclined a little, this way or that, by the louts who own, and the prostitute louts who thump, those drums of sound, is beyond my power of understanding: but the fact does seem to be so. God knows, I am little disposed just now to look down upon any of my fellows, seeing in myself 'the

chief of sinners': but those little men! I was wondering last night whether some star-gazer in, say, the Pleiades, gazing one night at a haze of seven stars of which our sun is one could ever dream that just *there* in the flushed cheek of Being are grubs so dull and sluggish, creatures built upright on two legs, yet deprived of even one generous throe, one lifting up of the eyes from the village muds they puddle in. Anyway, there they are—phenomenon; and somehow for the moment they do contrive to repulse the climb of Life. So let us counteract them; we have the money; let us set up ten 'papers,' loud-sounding powerful mouths, all blowing an *opposite* blast, the 'policy' of all being to teach the four truths which the people at present most need to know: namely, (1) That science is good; (2) That nothing else is good (causally); (3) That truth likes a troop: so slavery or 'land-owning,' is the enemy of science; and (4) That every friend of science, truth, good, should have a rifle standing ready to kill and to die for the Kingdom of God. The statement in (4) scarcely admits of demonstration, I think; but I remember demonstrating (1), (2) and (3) in a strict way to you one midnight in Park Lane: so, since it is the characteristic of really-white men to be convinced by demonstrations, you know the truth of them; or you know in some way, though I think you will not quite know in white light until you are yourself a scientist. Become one for love of me: then, in your thankfulness to me, you will love me tenfold. Become one: it is every life's natural occupation and you are young, clever. 'A long job,' you say? Yes, a lifelong, but not a bitter: for, if it is bitter in the mouth the first week, from the first it is sweet in the belly, and pretty soon is sweet in the mouth, too, becoming *so sweet*, that presently you will find yourself ready *to die*, if so you may augment ever so slightly the sum of science: *then* you will know Religion and the gist of the martyr's smart, and finally *will die*, of crucifixion by inches, on that higher hill of Calvary on which not X-ray Christs more than other scientists finally die, on which hill, I think, *all* men, as vine-god Christs, will one day be dying, crowned with the thorns of their thought, thorns of the roses that blow about their brows, they stepping up to death with impassioned impetuosity, passionate joy; then a voice will passionately confess: 'yes, this is My son': and the veil of the Temple shall be rent.

"But do begin properly, at the beginning, where Marx began, learning from the first to be a lord, a user of tools

which are the insignia of Man's peerage, the alpenstocks and limbing-axes of Life, the craftsman being the natural duke, or leader, of the feeble people of our 'class' who at present pretend to be his equals—as already he is shewing in Russia, and will presently be shewing everywhere, to the dread of rebels against the rod of his sovereignty. So become, you also, a lord over Nature, yourself making the tools you use; master ten crafts, becoming a cabinet-maker before thinking of being a cabinet-minister, becoming a blacksmith, ricketer, fiddler, instrument-maker, clock-maker, anything that trains the hands to a second-nature of delicate veracity, while you climb the heights, not yet very high, of mathematics; then 'physics.' (A lot of biology is not science.)

"As to our 'papers,' I suggest that you set about them with a certain 'wisdom of serpents,' letting them at first be just so blatant and debased as the others, undercutting every competitor, meantime, in your advertisement-rates, and so becoming stately established, safely 'respectable,' before—within six months, a year—you begin to give signal of some little human gumption and virtue, then burst frankly out, avowing yourself Man, and proud of it.

"As to their number, I say 'ten' at a venture, knowing nothing of the cost, etc.: your experts may advise eight—or twenty. But the whole lump of money I devote to this, have only four million dollars to Máhdorla's use, and two millions to yours—though, here again, my figures have no firmness: if you see fit to take for yourself one million, or six, that will be no violation of my will. As to my baby-boy and my Jessie (whom I married today), I mention no sum of money, entrusting them to your love with just the same assurance as if you were myself. If there is ruth in you, you will pity the dripping of that wounded ewe, that innocent thing; I ask your pity: her widow's-weeds will be blacker than the darks of that valley I pass to. As to the little man, you will no doubt educate him as you know that I want: I beg you for God's sake not to have the dagger of his little intellect 'let down' (as we say when we soften steel) by being taught any reading, spelling, grammar, history, 'geography,' 'astronomy'—any convention or accident: these things he will learn of himself (as he finds them useful or amusing), after he is educated, and will learn them quite lightly, flyingly, *then*: so for his first four years train him in the Montessori way, with breathing and long-running added; then wood, the violin (he making his own violins), silver, copper, steel, glass. At sixteen he (every boy and girl)

should be a bachelor of science—like the little Irene Curie
“To Máhdorla I send my love, and a prayer that, if she really did Jessie any wrong (as Jessie thinks), she will not confess it to Jessie; and let the love they both bear me bind them for life in love.

“To you farewell. I was fond of you before I admire you, and am now more.

“Tomorrow morning ‘I’ will be found on Hampstead Heath, with nothing to identify me, and will be taken to mortuary. But *you* will know: my wrists will be cut.

“I ask you not to look at me dead, nor to let anyone who knows me look, except Newman, the footman at Park Lane who will identify me.

“I ask to be buried beside my mother.

“‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.’

“In the name of God and of the Republic (to be)
“CAXTON.”

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