

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Northanger Abbey

Matthew Dangerfield

NaNoGenMo, 2018

A celebrated Psychic, Mrs. Piper, uttered, in the year 1899 words which were recorded by Dr. Hodgson at the time. This I concealed where no one has ever discovered it; but my fears would not allow me to go back for the other, as I might perhaps have done, had I foreseen how terribly its presence might tell against my master. Still, I could not see what harm could come to me by complying with his request, and certainly I could not have devised any arrangement which would give me such an opportunity of satisfying my curiosity. It was indeed this attitude upon the part of my friend and certainly not any lack of interesting material which has caused me of late years to lay very few of my records before the public. These treats were, however, rare events, and made such a mark upon my mind, that when I was sixteen years of age I could have checked off upon my fingers all that I had ever seen.

Everything which the girl said seemed to be meant as an insult to me, and yet I could not imagine how I had ever offended her. Her whole life was a round of devotion and of love, which was divided between her husband and her only son, Harold. "You must know, Sir Charles, that though my son knew nothing of his parents, we were both alive, and had never lost sight of him. Now that they had not only ceased to protect him, but had themselves become a source of trouble to him, he began to understand how great the blessing was which he had enjoyed, and to sigh for the happy days before his girls had come under the influence of his neighbor. In her pure and earnest mind her mother's memory was enshrined as that of a saint, and the thought that any one should take her place seemed a terrible desecration. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian's descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them.

"I have already explained to our young friend here," said Challenger (he has a way of alluding to me as if I were a school child ten years old), "that it is quite impossible that there should be an easy way up anywhere, for the simple reason that if there were the summit would not be isolated, and those conditions would not obtain which have effected so singular an interference with the general laws of survival. Her face had neither regularity of feature nor beauty of complexion, but her expression was sweet and amiable, and her large blue eyes were singularly

spiritual and sympathetic.

SHAKESPEARE'S EXPOSTULATION -LSB- 101 -RSB-

Masters, I sleep not quiet in my grave, There where they laid me, by the Avon shore, In that some crazy wights have set it forth By arguments most false and fanciful, Analogy and far-drawn inference, That Francis Bacon, Earl of Verulam (A man whom I remember in old days, A learned judge with sly adhesive palms, To which the suitor's gold was wont to stick) – That this same Verulam had writ the plays Which were the fancies of my frolic brain. There was no sound in the woods – not a leaf moved upon the trees, and all was peace around us – but we should have been warned by our first experience how cunningly and how patiently these creatures can watch and wait until their chance comes. Now her spirit seemed very near him, and his own was tempered by its presence. I never said anything, and I tried not to make myself ridiculous. My mother lived for five years after my father's disappearance, although at the time all the doctors said that she could not survive long. "If it were not for our great ancestors and for our beloved country, the Queen of the Waters," said he, "I could find it in my heart to be glad at this destruction which has come upon this vain and feeble generation. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. You'll understand that I really do love you when I tell you that, if it were not that I knew you were frightened and unhappy, these last two days in which we have been always together would have been infinitely the happiest of my life." In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. What a dreadful atmosphere!" In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no

clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction.

“It was ten o’clock. Having concluded by a sonorous amen, he at last suffered himself to be led upstairs; while my mother, who had slipped in and listened with much edification to his words, hurried away to prepare him a bumper of green usquebaugh with ten drops of Daffy’s Elixir therein, which was her sovereign recipe against the effects of a soaking. It made me proud as I watched him to think that so magnificent a man, with such easy, masterful ways, should be my own blood relation, and I could see from my mother’s eyes as they turned towards him that the same thought was in her mind. You have seen your cousin Sibylle, and though her behaviour this morning is such as to prejudice you against her, yet I can assure you that she is a very amiable girl. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them.

“At the same time,” said Challenger, his great voice booming strangely amid the silence, “it is difficult for us to conceive that out of seven millions of people there is only this one old woman who by some peculiarity of constitution or some accident of occupation has managed to survive this catastrophe.”

‘You do me an injustice,’ I cried, for the evident and malignant scorn of this girl galled me to the quick.

‘Life is indeed life on such a night as this,’ quoth he, as we breathed in the fresh country air with the reeks of crops and of kine.

“Well, I was pretty proud at having this small command given me, since I was a raw recruit, and a game-legged one at that.

As for myself,’ said he, with an air of false candour, you will very well understand that in these days a worthy merchant must do the best he can to get his wares, and if the Emperor, God save him, sees fit in his wisdom to

put an end to open trade, one must come to such places as these to get into touch with those who bring across the coffee and the tobacco.

"I dare say that it has happened with you, sir," said my uncle at last, "that you have lost some dear messmate, in battle or wreck, and that you have put him out of your mind in the routine of your daily life, until suddenly some word or some scene brings him back to your memory, and you find your sorrow as raw as upon the first day of your loss."

"You dear, sweet angel," she cried, "how can we have the heart to be glad when you – when you –"

"But I don't believe it is so," cried the brave Irishwoman.

I have no idea what backward sweep of memory had brought the matter fresh to his mind, or what freak had caused him to desire that I should recount it; but I hasten, before another cancelling telegram may arrive, to hunt out the notes which give me the exact details of the case and to lay the narrative before my readers. "I should be loath to exercise any undue pressure upon my sister Ada; but I have given her to understand that there is no one whom I should prefer for a brother-in-law to my most brilliant scholar, the author of 'Some Remarks upon the Bile-Pigments, with special reference to Urobilin.'" He instantly fell, resigned his breath, And closed his languid eyes in death." She could not forget the scrap of conversation which she had heard the night before, nor the secret which her sister had refused to confide to her. She was six years older than Napoleon, and on this occasion, when I saw her first, she was in her forty-second year; but at a little distance or in a discreet light, it was no courtier's flattery to say that she might very well have passed for thirty. This is, indeed, unfortunate! Surely that must be obvious, for in what other possible way can the facts be explained?" There was not one of us who did not carry away a kindly remembrance of the land and its people. There was not one of them who did not look to me in his trouble, and to the best of my poor power I had befriended and consoled them. Lord Avon had no children, and Sir Lothian Hume – the same who was at the card-party – is his nephew and heir.

"Oh, a lady of mature years may do many things which a young girl must avoid." If it comes to a rally I should hold my own, and I should have the better of him at a throw."

"My name is Sawyer – her's is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her – and a smart, clean lad, too, as long as he's at sea, and no steward in the company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what with liquor shops –"

"Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer," I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my companion; "it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to be able to restore it to the rightful owner." Mrs. Forrester, too, was full of curiosity.

"I have already explained to our young friend here," said Challenger (he has a way of alluding to me as if I were a school child ten years old), "that it is quite

impossible that there should be an easy way up anywhere, for the simple reason that if there were the summit would not be isolated, and those conditions would not obtain which have effected so singular an interference with the general laws of survival.

‘If your Majesty will overlook what I have done,’ Lesage stammered, ‘I shall faithfully promise you that I will be your most loyal servant until the day of my death.’

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form.

But in spite of the evident hatred of her husband’s family, the Empress appeared to be entirely unconcerned and at her ease as she strolled about among the groups of her guests with a kindly glance and a pleasant word for each of them. But it would not do! Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. And so the matter was allowed to rest. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

And she began a scene between the two of them, so exact in voice and manner that it seemed to us as if there were really two folk before us: the stern old mother with her hand up like an ear-trumpet, and her flouncing, bouncing daughter. “I should wish Ida to be my sister, and you my wife.” As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. I give ye my word that only a week gone last Friday I stopped a grazier coming from Blandford fair, and I took seven hundred guineas off him in these paper cheques, as they call them – enough, had it been in gold, to have lasted me for a three month rouse.

Under some foolish, aimless impulse, he took a few quick steps towards the door. They were filled with the quiet serenity of despair. Nor could the heroism and the folly be kept apart, for there were few who could quite escape the contagion of the times. No one could be more averse from cruelty than I am, but you were present with me some months ago when Toussac silenced the man from Bow Street, and certainly it was done with such dexterity that the process was probably more painful to the spectators than to the victim.

“And then he arrived. We are happy to state that the fit rapidly passed off, and that, owing to the skilful attention which he received, the gentleman, who is a distinguished visitor in our city, was able to regain his hotel and is now rapidly becoming convalescent.’ I told him that I should be very happy.

We lunched at Stephen’s, the fashionable inn in Bond Street, where I saw a line of tilburys and saddle-horses, which stretched from the door to the further end of the street.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion. She was of a perfect beauty, but she had not the figure nor the grace of Lucia. The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes. I think she is one of the most charming young ladies I ever met, and might have been most useful in such work as we have been doing. But she – she was admirable. By degrees I had trained my old servant into habits of silence, so that she now rarely opened her lips, though I doubt not that when twice a year she visited her relations in Wick, her tongue during those few days made up for its enforced rest. My energies shall now be devoted to devising some means by which spirits may be able to recollect what occurs to them in their free state, and I trust that when I have worked this out, I may have the pleasure of meeting you all once again in this hall, and demonstrating to you the result.” But presently, as the designer took them out one by one and placed them on the table, I understood that the Emperor, with his extraordinary passion for detail and for directly controlling everything in his Court, had had these dolls dressed in order to judge the effect of the gorgeous costumes which had been ordered for his grand functionaries upon State occasions. “I hope before very

long to be able to introduce you to the pair of them. If love had not come to her yet, there was at least pity and sympathy, which are nearly akin to it.

'I would have told you that the cottage was the rendezvous, but it was not decided upon until the last moment. It was too late now, however, for Roustem the Mameluke had opened the door, and two ladies had entered the room. When the Professor published his experiences in the *— Medicalschrift —* as he had promised, he was met by an intimation, even from his colleagues, that he would do well to have his mind cared for, and that another such publication would certainly consign him to a madhouse. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal* state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. And then, whether it was this nerve-racking vision before me, or whether, my task finished, all the overwork of the past weeks came in one crushing weight upon me, the room danced round me, the floor seemed to sink away beneath my feet, and I remembered no more. That colour alone showed that she could be none other than the Empress; but the dignity of her carriage, the fierce authority of her magnificent dark eyes, and the perfect beauty of her haughty face, all proclaimed that it could only be that of Theodora who, in spite of her lowly origin, was the most majestic as well as the most maturely lovely of all the women in her kingdom. I was determined, however, not to look about me before I had reached the very highest point, so I scrambled on until I had got so far that the topmost branch was bending beneath my weight. She was some distance off when I first set eyes upon her, yet I knew that this wandering woman could be none other than our arrival of last night, for there was a grace and refinement in her bearing which marked her from the dwellers of the fells. She saw her face as the glass reflected it, but she did not see the changing play of expression which gave it its charm -- the infinite pity, the sympathy, the sweet womanliness which drew towards her all who were in doubt and in trouble, even as poor slow-moving Charles Westmacott had been drawn to her that night.'T is true that if La Jeune

were dancing, or if Mrs. Bracegirdle or Mrs. Oldfield came upon the boards, we would hum and clap, but it was the fine woman that we applauded rather than the actress.' Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good.

I was weary and spent, so my progress was not so fast as I wished; but at last I came into regions which I knew. And now you shall come in with me, and we will take a dish of tea together." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning, Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention, as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever.

I glanced at the hastily clad clergyman, with the formally dressed lodger seated beside him, and was amused at the surprise which Holmes's simple deduction had brought to their faces. He would not resent it so much if he had not something to fear from it. "This is very piquant. I have not had time to examine this room yet, but with your permission I shall do so now."

"My words were not addressed to you, sir," answered Sterne, looking rather frightened.

"But, my dear Mrs. Smith," said Holmes, shrugging his shoulders, "You are frightening yourself about nothing.

"What shall we do?" Yes, gentlemen, he continued, raising his voice and glancing across the table at some of the courtiers, 'ye may sneer at words of piety, but I say that it is you and those like you who will bring down God's anger upon this army.'

"Ah, so you did." It is indeed deplorable. I wish to goodness she had called me."

"I'd have done it to please you."

"Well, it was, as far as anybody that could be of any good goes." "You were in trouble last month for the same thing.

"I could not wish a better one." There is no safety for any of us.

"No, indeed." How absurd! It would have been hard to let them down if it had been wished, so dense was the crowd around them. Oh, dear, dear, what is this I hear?" I am afraid that I have been somewhat carried away by it."

"No, it seems fair enough." But we can never forget your kindness, Charles, in showing our dear Rodney something of the world." I rather think you must."

"Then I must confess that I don't know what it is." I have been able to do so much for him that he has become my very good friend, so that I may ask him what I like in return. I should be so glad if you would." There she goes! Then she took it with her left hand and held it against her gown out of his sight. That would be very old-fashioned. "Look at this.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott.

"Well," said Mr. Lumsden, with some hesitation, "I hope that your temper is really as good as you say, for I rather fancy that you may need it."

'Your silence is a sufficient answer,' said she, as I hesitated for a reply.'

"In fact," said the Professor, "I hope that she will now be induced to aid me in getting a wife. When I thought of the way in which he had spoken of his unhappy friend, Lord Avon, upon the evening before, and of the emotion which he showed as he told the horrible story, I was glad to think that there was the heart of a man there, however much it might please him to conceal it. Oh, I trust he is not offended with me!

"Then I suppose that we had better call again," said the Admiral.

Being a fine night,' said he, we chose to walk back to our lodgings; but never shall I forget the wicked scenes wherewith we were encountered on the way. For about ten or twelve years' time she had in her right hand four running wounds, one on the inside, three on the back of her hand, as well as two more in the same arm, one above her hand-wrist, the other above the bending of her arm. Next moment the door was flung open and two men appeared, one of whom was Drebbler, and the other was a young chap whom I had never seen before. Never shall I forget the sudden flash of hope which shone in his dark eyes when he saw a comrade burst into the room, or the look of despair which followed as he understood that I had come not to change his fate but to share it. But after his death there was no reason why I should not return to the land of my birth, and my desire was the stronger because Eugenie – the same Eugenie who has been thirty years my wife – was of the same way of thinking as myself.

'Ye are come in good time, gentlemen,' she answered, looking us straight in the eyes with a kindly smile as a sister might greet her brothers. We three practical men smiled when we heard that he had been elected as our colleague, and at the

meeting we fixed it all up very nicely among ourselves without much thought of the old fellow who sat with his ears scooped forward in his hands, for he was a trifle hard of hearing, taking no more part in the proceedings than the gentlemen of the press who scribbled their notes on the back benches.

WE met next day as he had arranged, and inspected the rooms at No. 221B, -LSB- 5 -RSB- Baker Street, of which he had spoken at our meeting. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

Passing in succession a middle guard and an inner guard, the travellers came at last into the palace proper, and followed their majestic guide from chamber to chamber, each more wonderful than the last. The apprentice Derrick hath for a long time raised his eyes to his master's daughter, and the old man was ready to have him as a son, so much was he taken by his godliness and zeal.

He was not a tall man, not more than five feet seven inches, and it was often said that if he had had an extra inch of reach he would have been a match for Jackson or Belcher at their best. She was much impressed by your kindness and skill." The novelty of her presence had brought a few curious invalids into her consulting-rooms, and, once there, they had been so impressed by the firmness of her manner and by the singular, new-fashioned instruments with which she tapped, and peered, and sounded, that it formed the core of their conversation for weeks afterwards. He, on his part, showed me no ill-will, but met me rather with a coarse joviality, and a rough familiarity which he meant to be ingratiating. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. It has taught me to be less remiss in saying what I think to be true, less indolent in doing what I feel to be rightful." If you can do it, I know you will.'

"cannot allow it, sir!"

"No, no, thank you!"

I thought of the solicitude which he had shown over my toilet in the morning, his anxiety that I should make a favourable impression, his displeasure when she had been cold to me, and the smile upon his face when he had seen us hand in hand.

"My words were not addressed to you, sir," answered Sterne, looking rather frightened.

"Really. I asked in astonishment.

"Why did he do that, sir?"

"Why, that!" said he, in amazement. But I've something to do now which is more in my own line, and I need not trouble you any more." Let us go down." And perhaps you never heard the name before?"

"Never better, sir.

"Indeed!" Have I not attended at the Temple?

"Oh yes, doctor, last November.

"We were to go to the theatre.

"Well, sir, you heard I was coming," said the smith.

"Why the band?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you are not satisfied, Charles.

"I like him very much indeed.

"I should be glad to try you, if I may." She shook her head when she heard where I was going, but she did not say nay, and so it was settled. I should have called upon you on the morning after the recapture of my father, but my knowledge of your dislike to visitors and also of – you will excuse my saying it – your very violent temper, led me to think that it was better to communicate with you by letter.

"My word!"

When my uncle spoke like this there was always that dancing, mischievous light in his dark blue eyes, which showed me that this humour of his was a conscious eccentricity, depending, as I believe, upon a natural fastidiousness of taste, but wilfully driven to grotesque lengths for the very reason which made him recommend me also to develop some peculiarity of my own.

"I will do no such thing."

"Shall I tell you?"

"If I must."

I was astounded to hear so delicate and personal a matter discussed in this public way, but this also was characteristic of the rule of this extraordinary man, who proclaimed that he looked upon delicacy and good taste as two of the fetters with which mediocrity attempted to cripple genius. "Well, I love that you should think me so.

"No, I got no letter."

"I will not go upstairs," said I. "I have all I want here." It is certain that there is a point where an ascent is possible." Not a word! "If it were not for our great ancestors and for our beloved country, the Queen of the Waters," said he, "I could find it in my heart to be glad at this destruction which has come upon this vain and feeble generation." You certainly have the credit of being the first of us to find this out, and, as you say, it bears every mark of having been written by the other participant in last night's mystery. My point is, that the physical phenomena which have been proved up to the hilt for all who care to examine the evidence, are really of no account, and that their real value consists in the fact that they support and give objective reality to an immense body of knowledge which must deeply modify our previous religious views, and must, when properly understood and digested, make religion a very real thing, no longer a matter of faith, but a matter of actual experience and fact. The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes. What interested him was precisely what interested her, and she could meet him at every point upon equal terms. "I may say in answer to your original question that I have not cleared my mind entirely on the subject of this case, but that I have every hope of reaching some conclusion.

"Miss Eva Cameron be her name, sir," she said: "but who she be, or where she came fra, I know little more than yoursel' . I could not understand all that they said, but I was very sure about their general meaning.

I was at my wit's ends what to do, whether to be silent, or to tell her of the terrible position in which her lover was placed; but, even as I hesitated, she, with the quick intuition of a woman, read the doubts which were in my mind.

"And they?"

I had to confess my total and humiliating ignorance of the subject at issue.

"Upon my word!" He would not resent it so much if he had not something to fear from it. Besides, you do not know how much we know of it.'

The plight of the officers was no better than that of the men, nor should an officer, my dears, when he is upon service, ever demean himself by partaking of any comfort which all cannot share with him. His own frank and downright nature respected the same qualities in his neighbor, and a friendship sprang up between them which was more like that which exists between two men, founded upon esteem and a community of tastes.

'We, whose names are underwritten, do certify the miraculous cure of a girl of this town, about twenty, by name Elizabeth Parcet, a poor widow's daughter,

who hath languished under sad affliction from that distemper of the king's evil termed the joint evil, being said to be the worst evil.

"Well, as you seem to have made the discovery, whatever it may be, and the vicar to have had it second-hand, perhaps you had better do the speaking," said Holmes.

"How do you know that, sir?"

"On the contrary, sister Mary," said my uncle, graciously, "your son has been an excellent companion to me – so much so that I fear that I am open to the charge of having neglected my dear Fidelio. When I asked him if he had bought it, he answered that it was a present from a certain gracious lady in whose interests he had once been fortunate enough to carry out a small commission. My homespun garments were somewhat rough for such an occasion, yet I determined to appear in them, with the addition of a new black baize waistcoat faced with silk, and a good periwig, for which I gave three pounds ten shillings in the Haymarket."

Professor Ainslie Grey was as good as his word. Yet during all that time I have never seen a finer man than Jim Belcher, and if I wish to match him in my memory, I can only turn to that other Jim whose fate and fortunes I am trying to lay before you. "I should wish Ida to be my sister, and you my wife."

"I hope – I hope you're well," she stammered.

"Oh, sir, see her boots and her dress!"

"I am very sorry, Mr. Weld," said he, "but I am afraid that I shall be compelled to dispense with your services."

"But I wonder that you should come and see me now, Rodney," said he, when we parted, trying to laugh as he spoke.

"Oh, George, I am so sorry you brought me back," she said, holding him by the hand.

If it please your Majesty,' Saxon answered, it is like so much uncarded wool, which is rough enough in itself, and yet may in time come to be woven into a noble garment. I never said anything, and I tried not to make myself ridiculous. His blood hath through his daughter been transmitted to the ten of us, though I rejoice to say that I, being the tenth, it had by that time lost much of its virulence, and indeed amounts to little more than a proper pride, and a laudable desire to prosper."

They breed a good old English stock in those parts,' said Monmouth; but how comes it that you are here, sir? Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until

my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. We must be upon our way in five minutes.'

When I looked at this splendid fellow, with his high-bred, clean-cut face, and thought of the fine qualities and gentle, generous impulses which I knew to lie within him, it seemed so absurd that he should speak as though my friendship towards him were a condescension, that I could not help laughing aloud. He concealed his fears from his daughter, however, and affected to make light of the whole matter, though she, with the keen eye of love, saw plainly that he was ill at ease. "What do you think of it?" I took the precaution of walking the horse very quietly until we were some distance from the house, for I had told Reuben nothing of my intended journey, and I was convinced that if he knew of it neither discipline, nor even his new ties of love, would prevent him from coming with me.

"I'm not much afraid of anything."

"I am afraid that you will not be able to wire to me, for I can hardly tell yet where I may find myself.

"I will not.

'I am glad to hear you say so,' I answered, 'for it makes it easier for me to say that I wish to go my own way, and to have nothing more to do with you.

It has now come to pass, however, that Monmouth, who has long lived in dalliance with the Midianitish woman known by the name of Wentworth, has at last turned him to higher things, and has consented to make a bid for the crown. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called lying asleep' - a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the Hypnoidal' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in

the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. In his great goodness and self-abnegation he had, in his early declaration given forth at Lyme, declared that he should leave the choice of a monarch to the Commons of England, but having found that his enemies did most scandalously and basely make use of this his self-denial, and did assert that he had so little confidence in his own cause that he dared not take publicly the title which is due to him, he hath determined that this should have an end.

CHAPTER VII

“To-morrow we Disappear into the Unknown”

I will not bore those whom this narrative may reach by an account of our luxurious voyage upon the Booth liner, nor will I tell of our week’s stay at Para (save that I should wish to acknowledge the great kindness of the Pereira da Pinta Company in helping us to get together our equipment). Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. As I sat alone at my breakfast – Mrs. Challenger is in the habit of keeping her room of a morning – it suddenly entered my head that it would be entertaining and instructive to see whether I could find any limits to this woman’s imperturbability. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep**’ -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the Hypnoidal**’ state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is ‘absolutely unknown,’ that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian’s descendants

have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them. A wondrous subtle thing is love, for here were we two who had never seen each other before that day, between whom no word or even look of affection had ever passed, and yet now in an hour of trouble our hands instinctively sought for each other.

It was just three days after the Doctor and the Admiral had congratulated each other upon the closer tie which was to unite their two families, and to turn their friendship into something even dearer and more intimate, that Miss Ida Walker received a letter which caused her some surprise and considerable amusement. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

"Cocks and hens," cried the little girl gleefully, pointing at their ill-omened forms, and clapping her hands to make them rise. "It is to ask the Empress herself whether what I say is not true, and to give her the glad tidings that her boy is alive and well." He is very much in love with her, I assure you.

And yet somehow the possibility and even the probability of it had occurred to me from the beginning, and I believe that it had to Harrison also, for I had noticed that his face grew grave and troubled from the very moment that there was talk of the stranger below.

"Come, come, my dear lady," said he, "you speak vastly beyond my merits;" upon which encouragement she started again in a theatrical apostrophe to Britain's darling and Neptune's eldest son, which he endured with the same signs of gratitude and pleasure.

"That's him!" cried her mother; and then, turning to me, 'I will tell you all, sir. If all goes well you should be back in three or four days. But, then, Champion Harrison told me how the fighting-men lived there, and my father how the heads

of the Navy lived there, and my mother how her brother and his grand friends were there, until at last I was consumed with impatience to see this marvellous heart of England.

It was just three days after the Doctor and the Admiral had congratulated each other upon the closer tie which was to unite their two families, and to turn their friendship into something even dearer and more intimate, that Miss Ida Walker received a letter which caused her some surprise and considerable amusement. cried Lady Hamilton, and straightway she began to talk of the admiral and of his doings with such extravagance of praise and such a shower of compliments and of epithets, that my father and I did not know which way to look, feeling shame and sorrow for a man who was compelled to listen to such things said in his own presence. Show us your worst and we can face it, but it is when you are sweetest and smoothest that we have most to fear from you.

“Then my wish is, that you should forget these odious notions which you have imbibed, that you should dress and act as you used to do, before ever you saw this woman, and that, in future, you confine your intercourse with her to such civilities as are necessary between neighbors.” At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is **absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.** It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful -- a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. Finally, it was not until after midnight that the four travelers were released at the entrance to Lord John Roxton's chambers in the Albany, and that the exuberant crowd, having sungThey are Jolly Good

Fellows' in chorus, concluded their program with 'God Save the King.'

The abbot, who had made several visits to Constantinople upon the business of his monastery, walked with the assured step of one who knows his ground; while the boy, alarmed and yet pleased by the rush of people, the roar and clatter of passing chariots, and the vista of magnificent buildings, held tightly to the loose gown of his guide, while staring eagerly about him in every direction.

"And Clara is as bad, Clara who used to be so good and sweet, the very image of her poor mother. To see their sons and daughters so flushed and healthy and happy, gave them also a reflected glow, and it was hard to say who had most pleasure from the game, those who played or those who watched.

"At the same time," said Challenger, his great voice booming strangely amid the silence, "it is difficult for us to conceive that out of seven millions of people there is only this one old woman who by some peculiarity of constitution or some accident of occupation has managed to survive this catastrophe."

CHAPTER VII

"To-morrow we Disappear into the Unknown"

I will not bore those whom this narrative may reach by an account of our luxurious voyage upon the Booth liner, nor will I tell of our week's stay at Para (save that I should wish to acknowledge the great kindness of the Pereira da Pinta Company in helping us to get together our equipment). Stephen's was no bigger than Belmont's.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott.

CHAPTER VII

"To-morrow we Disappear into the Unknown"

I will not bore those whom this narrative may reach by an account of our luxurious voyage upon the Booth liner, nor will I tell of our week's stay at Para (save that I should wish to acknowledge the great kindness of the Pereira da Pinta Company in helping us to get together our equipment).

"Come, come, my dear lady," said he, "you speak vastly beyond my merits;" upon which encouragement she started again in a theatrical apostrophe to Britain's darling and Neptune's eldest son, which he endured with the same signs of gratitude and pleasure. He found the door open, and in the front room, which is bare of furniture, discovered the body of a gentleman, well dressed, and having cards in his pocket bearing the name of 'Enoch J. Drebber, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.' There had been no robbery, nor is there any evidence as to how the man met his death. And indeed it was no wonder, for that name was never mentioned

unless it were in connection with something brilliant and extraordinary. I must be gone. He would not resent it so much if he had not something to fear from it. For my own part, I was glad to throw off my gear, but I kept my attention all the while upon the movements of our host, whose graceful manners and learned appearance had aroused my curiosity and admiration. She could wish nothing better than that Ida should be the wife of Harold Denver, and from the words which she had overheard as they left the lawn that evening, she could not doubt that there was some understanding between them. Now that they had not only ceased to protect him, but had themselves become a source of trouble to him, he began to understand how great the blessing was which he had enjoyed, and to sigh for the happy days before his girls had come under the influence of his neighbor. Well, she was a smart, kindly-hearted lass, and I was glad in my heart that the old seaman should have such a one to look after him. Mrs. Harrison loved Jim as if he had been her own son, and her husband loved mine, so they came to my help, and may God bless them for their kindness to a distracted wife and mother! I could not but observe, however, that her fall was very carefully executed, and that she was fortunate enough, in spite of her insensibility, to arrange her drapery and attitude into a graceful and classical design.

"Commonplace," said Holmes, though I thought from his expression that he was pleased at my evident surprise and admiration. But I had not got half through my story, and Jim, like the good fellow that he was, had just begun to forget his own troubles in his delight at my good fortune, when my uncle called to me from without. They could no longer tell in that wild country in which direction I had gone. I am so glad you have come, Mr. Thaddeus, sir!" At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently

her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. I look back at the chain of incidents, my interview with McArdle, Challenger's first note of alarm in the Times, the absurd journey in the train, the pleasant luncheon, the catastrophe, and now it has come to this – that we linger alone upon an empty planet, and so sure is our fate that I can regard these lines, written from mechanical professional habit and never to be seen by human eyes, as the words of one who is already dead, so closely does he stand to the shadowed borderland over which all outside this one little circle of friends have already gone. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Alas! The only thing which troubles me is whether it may not be so important as to forbid me from broaching it to you, or indeed, to anybody save the Empress Theodora, since it is she only whom it concerns." "I cannot understand you.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. Surely you will not desert me. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. Through all his fear, however, there was a suspicion of triumph in his tone and manner. __ -RSB-

THE END

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT

And Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

New -LSB- Illustration -RSB- York George H. Doran Company

Copyright, 1905, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1918, 1919, by A. Conan Doyle

Copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons

Copyright, 1911, by Associated Sunday Magazines, Inc.

Copyright, 1908, by the McClure Company

Copyright, 1900, 1902, by the S. S. McClure Company

Copyright, 1894, D. Appleton & Company

-LSB- Illustration -RSB-

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT AND OTHER TALES OF THE
UNSEEN – Q – Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

PAGE

I THE BROWN HAND 9

II THE USHER OF LEA HOUSE SCHOOL 30

III B. 24 51

IV THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT 72

V CYPRIAN OVERBECK WELLS 95

VI PLAYING WITH FIRE 120

VII THE RING OF THOTH 139

VIII THE LOS AMIGOS FIASCO 163

IX HOW IT HAPPENED 174

X LOT NO. 249 179

XI "DE PROFUNDIS" 225

XII THE LIFT 239

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT

__ and Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen __

I

THE BROWN HAND

Every one knows that Sir Dominick Holden, the famous Indian surgeon, made me his heir, and that his death changed me in an hour from a hard-working and impecunious medical man to a well-to-do landed proprietor. And indeed it was no wonder, for that name was never mentioned unless it were in connection with something brilliant and extraordinary. This is not." What were you reading?" Oh! It's only a name. When he at last regained his utterance, he indulged in such a bellow of passion that the young lady dropped back, petrified with fear, into an arm-chair. That colour alone showed that she could be none other than the Empress; but the dignity of her carriage, the fierce authority of her magnificent dark eyes, and the perfect beauty of her haughty face, all

proclaimed that it could only be that of Theodora who, in spite of her lowly origin, was the most majestic as well as the most maturely lovely of all the women in her kingdom. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

VI

THE SEALED ROOM

A solicitor of an active habit and athletic tastes who is compelled by his hopes of business to remain within the four walls of his office from ten till five must take what exercise he can in the evenings.

And so for ten minutes he plied me with questions, which showed me clearly that the Emperor had read him aright, and that he was determined, come what might, to be upon the side which won. I've been waiting for two hours.'

"Oh, indeed! I'm awfully sorry if I seemed to doubt you. So it was even now. We shall not have to wait long now.'

"Oh! You look eighteen, at the least. Then I am a quarter of an hour late already. If we sit at the window we shall see him coming down the road." – a hundred times I have said it." I wandered on then, wet and weary, trusting to fortune, but always blundering deeper and deeper into this horrible bog, until I began to think that my first night in France was destined also to be my last, and that the heir of the de Lavals was destined to perish of cold and misery in the depths of this obscene morass.

To every traveller it was a sight of beauty, but to me it was the world – the great wide free world – and my heart thrilled and fluttered as the young bird's may when it first hears the whirr of its own flight, and skims along with the blue heaven above it and the green fields beneath. "But we have already taken too

much of your time, and so I beg to thank you for your kindness and to wish you good morning." You say that Beaufort gave you nought in writing?"

"Not I, forsooth, for I have ever kept myself clear of black magic or diablerie of the sort.

"And are you indeed scathless?" Wonderful!" Oh! I would not believe them, I __ could __ not believe them – for I did not know that there was upon this earth a thing so contemptible. Is not this so?"

"Oh! But how could that be? I suppose that you did not touch any of them?" "What with too little that is solid and too much that is liquid I am like to be skeleton Reuben ere I see Havant again. Oh! I am so pleased. I would spend the day in writing a third, which would bring my experiences absolutely up to date. But it couldn't have been so very deep, could it, if you could go off to the other end of the world and leave me here alone.

"Dear! We've been goin' this twenty year, but now we'll draw aside and let our betters get to the front; so if you wish to find what that note means, I can only advise you to do what you are asked, and to drive over to Cliffe Royal, where you will find out."

"Oh, indeed! Oh, I am so glad." How are you all?

"I'll have my rights, I tell you.

"When thy star is in trine, Between darkness and shine, Duke Monmouth, Duke Monmouth, Beware of the Rhine!" This is our last chance."

We did indeed, but they were of a terrible and most unexpected nature.

"You will permit me to compliment you, my dear Mary," said he, in a voice which was the most mellow and beautiful that I have ever heard. I know how delighted she will be." Fly, my sweetest, move those dainty feet of thine, for egad! For my own part I was not so very anxious that she should save this craven lover of hers, whose handsome face belied the poor spirit within him. I fear that it is all over with them."

"Pardon me!" "Are you not afraid for yourself?"

"Yes, I did." "There's nothing would please me better, but you heard for yourself." Verily there is no possible way by which a truth can be proved by which this truth has not been proved. You have always been so strong, so above me. It was this imminence of the danger which warmed our hearts to our sailors, and made us talk, round the winter fires, of our little Nelson, and Cuddie Collingwood, and Johnnie Jarvis, and the rest of them, not as being great High Admirals with titles and dignities, but as good friends whom we loved and honoured above all others. When men like yourself, who represent the foolish curiosity of the public, came to disturb my privacy I was unable to meet them with dignified reserve. All this is the truth, and if I tell it to you, gentlemen, it is not to amuse you, – for you have not done me a very good turn, – but it is because I believe the best

defence I can make is just to hold back nothing, but let all the world know how badly I have myself been served by Major Sholto, and how innocent I am of the death of his son."

"Oh, dear! Mary cried. How could you possibly know?"

I was at my wit's ends what to do, whether to be silent, or to tell her of the terrible position in which her lover was placed; but, even as I hesitated, she, with the quick intuition of a woman, read the doubts which were in my mind. Oh! I confess that from what I see of the young man's character I should not say that he is worthy of your love.' She coloured and hesitated. The Admiral laughed. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible." I cannot with justice blame you personally for what has occurred. What I wanted to say is that if you would like to have a second opinion I shall be very glad to meet any one whom you might suggest." Well, my dears, it is useless for me to expound to you that which I cannot myself understand. "All that you say is perfectly true.

"And as far as I can help," said Harvey Deacon, "it will certainly never be done again."

"Not take him!" Of mine I cannot yet speak. I am sure he would be miserable."

"No, I will not." I have often thought of taking a look round there, but the truth is that I was never much of a credit to the family, and I doubt if they would be so very glad to see me. Oh! And this dreadful smell!" "I am sure," said she, "that dear mother would like papa to do whatever would make him most happy.

This is the letter which I read:

"MY EVER DEAREST WIFE, –

"Since Sir William told me how weak your heart is, and how harmful any shock might be, I have never talked about my business affairs to you.

"No, I cannot." Again, if Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth life of which he could not have cognisance, and if those things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also.

"Yes, Sir Charles." Say, it's awful dry, ain't it? I did not know which way to turn or what I should do first.

We thought him very wicked then, but, looking back, I am not sure that we were not very wicked ourselves.

"Do it!" It would not have been a surprise to him. You will, I am sure, make allowances, lieutenant, when I tell you that your prisoner of last night was a very dear friend of my daughter's. I am most anxious to be of use to you. Because he has thought for the men, and so the men have thought for him.

"I confess," said I, "that I do not quite follow you."

"Profound!" "Good heavens!" I think it is safe to say that things can never be quite the same again. They were long messages very often, spelled out by tilts, and it was quite impossible that they came by chance.

"And they?" But I never believed in such things. You always remind me of a steamengine."

"Oh! They watch us. They are all people who are in trouble about something, and want a little enlightening. What sort of a man could he be who during thirty years of his life had never made a single friend, high or low, who cared to continue to keep in touch with him? Do your best.

"Well, hardly that. I never thought of it before. That's all, I think. Nay, turn not pale!

"Very well, ma'am." "Which is he?" I am not one who, for the sake of a white skin or a blue eye, would belie my own life, and change the whole tenor of my thoughts and existence. But here it is different. I believe that you could do it better than any one. 'You must not say a word to any one about it, and I shall see you again soon.'

"You!" What do you mean?"

"Nay, I know not." I thought as much. Let us go down."

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. We shall move into the next room. To think that only a few hours before we had left this very spot with such high hopes and all fair prospects for our mission, and now the remnants of us waited as beaten and humiliated men for whatever lot a brutal enemy might ordain! Yes, I do very much mind." Let us look at it from his point of view. "They can see us and we cannot see them.

Mr. Cecil Brown – to take the names in the chance order in which they appear upon the passenger list – was a young diplomatist from a Continental Embassy, a man slightly tainted with the Oxford manner, and erring upon the side of unnatural and inhuman refinement, but full of interesting talk and cultured thought.

"You're not going yet?" I hope we shall not lose sight of you." Then let them do what they will. I am not likely to forget it."

I had been forgotten during this episode, and though I am not a man who is accustomed to being overlooked I should have been all the happier had they continued to neglect me.

"And why did they leave?" she said, looking round. This man Small is a pretty shrewd fellow.

He went in through the garden.

"I am very pleased to hear you speak so sensibly, my dears. 'You said to me that the Emperor was out, and here is his hat!' You will see to it."

"It certainly does," I agreed. If I know anything o' that young man, he'll be back here with a speed that would whip electro-telegraphs."

"Oh! Never mind manoeuvres! If I fail I shall, of course, incur all the blame due to this omission; but that I am prepared for.

"But there is no use our going out of our way to incur danger."

"I trust that I shall not be compelled to disturb you." "I give no man reasons for my conduct." What a pity to spoil it!

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion.

CHAPTER VII

There was nothing to show them as they journeyed onwards that they were not on the very spot that they had passed at sunset upon the evening before. For the wealthy dignitaries of the Church, rolling in their carriages to their cathedrals, in order to preach the doctrines of their Master, who wore His sandals out in tramping over the countryside, he professed the most bitter contempt; nor was he more lenient to those poorer members of the clergy who winked at the vices of their patrons that they might secure a seat at their table, and who would sit through a long evening of profanity rather than bid good-bye to the cheesecakes and the wine flask. It reminded him, he said, of a similar stratagem executed at Market Drayton by that God-fearing soldier Colonel Pride, whereby a captain and three troopers of Lunsford's own regiment of horse had been drowned, and many others precipitated into a river, to the great glory of the true Church and to the satisfaction of the chosen people.

"Oh, chuck the infernal thing away!" said she, looking out. How you must hate and loathe me! She felt suddenly that she was giving herself away, and she changed her face to a kindly, friendly smile, but it was too late, for I had had my warning. said my uncle.

"Good heaven!" "T is he.

Whilst we were talking the men whom we had left with the horses had come up, together with some of the neighbouring farmers and cottagers, who were aghast at the scene of slaughter, and much troubled in their minds over the vengeance which might be exacted by the Royal troops next day.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

‘With all humbleness, your Majesty,’ said Lord Grey, who had just returned with the horse, ‘I should suggest, since there are only a few troops of their cavalry on this side of the Avon, that we blow up the bridge and move onwards to Bath, whence we can pass into Wiltshire, which we know to be friendly.’ That a man of the world, five-and-forty years of age, shrewd, honest, and acquainted with Courts, should be beguiled by such crude and coarse homage, amazed me, as it did all who knew him; but you who have seen much of life do not need to be told how often the strongest and noblest nature has its one inexplicable weakness, showing up the more obviously in contrast to the rest, as the dark stain looks the fouler upon the whitest sheet.

So the promise was made, and very faithfully did Jim keep it, for many a time when I have wanted him to go fishing or rabbit-snaring, he has remembered that it was his day for Miss Hinton, and has tramped off to Anstey Cross.

“I do not know.” She went likewise ten or eleven miles to a seventh son, but all in vain.

“Seven to five!” cried Stephens. Now it has twenty-two. And she, the polluted one, had risen to the dignity, had cut herself sternly away from all that related to her past life, and had shown signs already of being a great Queen, stronger and wiser than her husband, but fierce, vindictive, and unbending, a firm support to her friends, but a terror to her foes. I have but seen them this once in ten years, and it may be ten more, for all I know, ere I see them again.

My uncle’s fears as to our being blocked upon the road were only too well founded, for after we passed Reigate there was such a procession of every sort of vehicle, that I believe for the whole eight miles there was not a horse whose nose was further than a few feet from the back of the curricule or barouche in front.

“It’s a hundred that you don’t see us before Westminster with a quarter of an hour’s start,” said Sir John.

‘Twenty.’ “It was seven to one against me, yesterday. I repeated. I was convinced that Mortimer Tregennis was the murderer; that for the sake of money, and with the idea, perhaps, that if the other members of his family were all insane he would be the sole guardian of their joint property, he had used the devil’s - foot powder upon them, driven two of them out of their senses, and killed his sister Brenda, the one human being whom I have ever loved or who has ever loved me. The servant said that the gentleman had ordered a cab the instant that I had left, and had gone off in it. True enough! It’s three or four miles from here. Look up and see if you can see aught of it.’

“Oh, he might look very much like you.” —

" _ Egyptian! I find," he continued, glancing over the pages of his ledger, "that within the last twelve months we have supplied no fewer than seven Latin masters to Willow Lea House Academy, four of them having left so abruptly as to forfeit their month's salary, and none of them having stayed more than eight weeks." But what do you know of Gaster Fell, Miss Cameron?" That is one, is it not?" And yet the day may come when I would not have it otherwise. It is pleasant to think that five years afterward, when Lord Rufton came to Paris after the peace, he was able to assure me that my name was still a famous one in the north of Devonshire for the fine exploits that I had performed. I had determined to give you notice when we reached Brighton; but as we drove from the village that day, I caught a glimpse of a lady passing in a phaeton between whom and Lord Avon I was well aware there was a close intimacy, although I was not certain that she was actually his wife. "Now," said he, "what am I do to earn this?" You are tired of me, and by the gods I am tired of you, and glad to be at the end of it. Oh! "Now," said he, "what am I do to earn this?" But what do you know of Gaster Fell, Miss Cameron?"

"Because I am not sure.

Chapter V

THE DEAD WORLD

I remember that we all sat gasping in our chairs, with that sweet, wet south-western breeze, fresh from the sea, flapping the muslin curtains and cooling our flushed faces. I give ye my word that only a week gone last Friday I stopped a grazier coming from Blandford fair, and I took seven hundred guineas off him in these paper cheques, as they call them – enough, had it been in gold, to have lasted me for a three month rouse.

At least he did not refuse you,' said I. It is as good as a promise that; should the cause be successful, you shall be so too.'

"They do not love the blockading service, and it is little wonder, since neither money nor honour is to be gained at it.

"You look very happy," said he.

"Oh! It was a loathsome adventure, and one of which I hate to think.

' "Having heard from your father, my dear lad, that there was some chance of being able to send a letter to you, I have written this, and am now sending it under the charge of the worthy John Packingham, of Chichester, who is bound for the West.

"My name is Sawyer – her's is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her – and a smart, clean lad, too, as long as he's at sea, and no steward in the company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what with liquor shops –"

"Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer," I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my

companion; "it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to be able to restore it to the rightful owner."

Having got so far, Defoe remarked that he thought he had given them a fair start, and handed over the story to Dean Swift, who, after premising that he feared he would find himself as much at sea as Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells, continued in this way: —

"For two days I drifted about in great distress, fearing that there should be a return of the gale, and keeping an eager look-out for my late companions. I give ye my word that only a week gone last Friday I stopped a grazier coming from Blandford fair, and I took seven hundred guineas off him in these paper cheques, as they call them — enough, had it been in gold, to have lasted me for a three month rouse.

" 'Tis but my horse in the stall below,' I answered.

'My horse!' Oh, lack-a-day, lack-a-day! You wouldn't think the mares had come fifty miles, would you? Now let me see, which of you is Miss Williams, and which Miss Bertha Williams?"

'It is true; and yet I never expected that I should be on such terms with you.

"I am glad to come if I can do any good by coming."

"Well, well, it's rather a delicate question to answer," said Dr. Proudie, with a show of embarrassment.

"Then I shall run over to Camberwell and call upon Mrs. Cecil Forrester.

'May not our horse advance?' — "

" — Egyptian! "We could not have been moving more than fourteen or fifteen hours, and a camel seldom goes more than two and a half miles an hour unless he is trotting. No time to stop, for we shall be in action again in five minutes.

'And you!' said Mary. That would be sixty per cent a year."

'Twenty.' Some eight hundred, I think." Now drive with me to High Combe, and I will explain as we go."

"How long will this be?" he cried, "Lucia!" she cried, "and asking your pardon for troubling you, but I'm feared o' the young leddy, sir; she is not in her room."

"A new one! None of your jokes, Don Decimo, for by the Lord I'll let drive at you if you were my own mother's son. Which do you care to use?"

The Colonel had not understood this sudden change, nor had the others fathomed the reason of it, but some instinct flashed it upon Stephens's horrified perceptions. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to

them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

"Murder!" "Oh, Lord!" I never have anything to do.

I was amazed at the interest and knowledge which all these great people showed about the ring, for they not only had the deeds of the principal men of the time -- Belcher, Mendoza, Jackson, or Dutch Sam -- at their fingers' ends, but there was no fighting man so obscure that they did not know the details of his deeds and prospects.

"I am about to tell you, Mr. Holmes, all that actually occurred, for you already know so much that it is clearly to my interest that you should know all.

"Not I!" No, Mr. Malone, I will place no restriction upon your correspondence, since the ventilation of the facts is the object of your journey; but I demand that you shall give no particulars as to your exact destination, and that nothing be actually published until your return.

I felt a creeping of the flesh, and a presentiment of coming horror, even before Sherlock Holmes answered.

"No thought of it." I dare say that I thought as you do at the time when the stupid Parisians were saying what a misalliance the widow of the famous General de Beauharnais was making by marrying the unknown Buonaparte.

"For you, I presume?"

"But how cruel it is! So long as there was any question of the fall of man there was at least some sort of explanation of such phrases; but when it became certain that man had never fallen -- when with ever fuller knowledge we could trace our ancestral course down through the cave-man and the drift-man, back to that shadowy and far-off time when the man-like ape slowly evolved into the apelike man -- looking back on all this vast succession of life, we knew that it had always been rising from step to step.

‘I have not read it.’

I was amazed at the interest and knowledge which all these great people showed about the ring, for they not only had the deeds of the principal men of the time – Belcher, Mendoza, Jackson, or Dutch Sam – at their fingers’ ends, but there was no fighting man so obscure that they did not know the details of his deeds and prospects.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Mother!" How do? he added, with a sudden smile upon his face. Where did you get it, fellow?" But you could do it, I'm thinking – an old friend like you." As I look back, one or two instances of that stand out so hard and clear in my recollection that they might be scenes which I had seen of late in the playhouse, instead of memories of my childhood more than threescore years ago, when the second Charles was on the throne. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him. Her face was pale, striking rather than pretty, but with two great dark eyes, so earnestly questioning, so quick in their transitions from joy to pathos, so swift in their comment upon every word and deed around her, that those eyes alone were to many more attractive than all the beauty of her younger sister.

“My name is Sawyer – her's is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her – and a smart, clean lad, too, as long as he's at sea, and no steward in the company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what with liquor shops –”

“Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer,” I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my companion; “it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to be able to restore it to the rightful owner.” At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but

that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. But perhaps you would not mind waiting here for a minute or two, for if we all go in together and she has no word of our coming she may be alarmed.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

"Very likely, dear."

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. I hope, madam, by the King's generosity and goodness, and your intercession, I may hope for my life which if I have shall be ever employed in showing to your Majesty all the sense imaginable of gratitude, and in serving of the King like a true subject.

"I am very pleased to hear you speak so sensibly, my dears. 'You must not say a word to any one about it, and I shall see you again soon.'

"I thought that I should probably hear from him soon, and I did. I hope that you will find Norwood a pleasant residence." She was a charming companion, as well as a most assiduous doctor. The lady is of excellent family and she is not wanting in personal charm. said I.

"Well, it bought him the prettiest wife in England, and that was some good that he got out of it.

" 'Nay, take it not to heart, bold Allen,' exclaimed their leader, who was none other than the great Jack Cade himself. You need not fear to tell me, dear, for you will find that I am worthy to be loved by such a soldier.

'I am glad to hear you say so,' I answered, 'for it makes it easier for me to say that I wish to go my own way, and to have nothing more to do with you.

"You know," I answered with some emotion, for I have never seen so much of Holmes's heart before, "that it is my greatest joy and privilege to help you."

"My name is Sawyer – her's is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her – and a

smart, clean lad, too, as long as he's at sea, and no steward in the company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what with liquor shops –"

"Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer," I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my companion; "it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to be able to restore it to the rightful owner." For my own part I was relieved at the explanation, for my father had left London in the full conviction that a vacancy would speedily be found for us both, and the one thing which had weighed upon my mind was that I might have found it hard to leave my uncle without interfering with the plans which he had formed. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. __ -RSB-

THE END

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT

And Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

New -LSB- Illustration -RSB- York George H. Doran Company

Copyright, 1905, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1918, 1919, by A. Conan Doyle

Copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons

Copyright, 1911, by Associated Sunday Magazines, Inc.

Copyright, 1908, by the McClure Company

Copyright, 1900, 1902, by the S. S. McClure Company

Copyright, 1894, D. Appleton & Company

-LSB- Illustration -RSB-

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT AND OTHER TALES OF THE
UNSEEN – Q – Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

PAGE

I THE BROWN HAND 9

II THE USHER OF LEA HOUSE SCHOOL	30
III B. 24	51
IV THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT	72
V CYPRIAN OVERBECK WELLS	95
VI PLAYING WITH FIRE	120
VII THE RING OF THOTH	139
VIII THE LOS AMIGOS FIASCO	163
IX HOW IT HAPPENED	174
X LOT NO. 249	179
XI "DE PROFUNDIS"	225
XII THE LIFT	239

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT

__ and Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen __

I

THE BROWN HAND

Every one knows that Sir Dominick Holden, the famous Indian surgeon, made me his heir, and that his death changed me in an hour from a hard-working and impecunious medical man to a well-to-do landed proprietor.

He gave me the amused hand-shake and encouraging smile which the head master bestows upon the small boy, and, having greeted the others and helped to collect their bags and their cylinders of oxygen, he stowed us and them away in a large motor-car which was driven by the same impassive Austin, the man of few words, whom I had seen in the character of butler upon the occasion of my first eventful visit to the Professor.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Do not be satisfied with any evidence short of the best, but having got that, you can, it seems to me, wait for that short period when we shall all be re-united. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought

it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. 'T is true that if La Jeune were dancing, or if Mrs. Bracegirdle or Mrs. Oldfield came upon the boards, we would hum and clap, but it was the fine woman that we applauded rather than the actress.' Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. For though these poor peasants, in their dumb, blundering fashion, would have found it hard to give all their reasons in words, yet in the inmost heart of them they knew and felt that it was England's cause which they were fighting for, and that they were upholding their country's true self against those who would alter the old systems under which she had led the nations. No, no," she continued, laughing, as she saw a look of dismay upon his face.

Terrified as they were by this sudden torrent of words, the two gentlewomen could not but smile at the sight of the fiery, domineering victim and the big apologetic representative of mankind who sat meekly bearing all the sins of his sex. The name brought back instantly to him the remembrance of the sinister reputation of its owner – a notorious buck of the thirties – who had gambled and duelled and steeped himself in drink and debauchery, until even the vile set with whom he consorted had shrunk away from him in horror, and left him to a sinister old age with the barmaid wife whom he had married in some drunken frolic. Although he had succeeded in learning from her lips that she was not indifferent to his suit, he had never dared to announce himself to her family as a formal suitor. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental

anxiety; that a painful death is ‘absolutely unknown,’ that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. He lived rather nearer to the Squire’s than she did, and was convinced that he could get there well before her. “I am as glad to see you as ever I was to see a man in my life, but I confess that I did not expect you.” She felt suddenly that she was giving herself away, and she changed her face to a kindly, friendly smile, but it was too late, for I had had my warning.

“It’s a play-actress,” said I.

“Oh, you rude little boy, to say it in such a tone,” said she; “as if a play-actress wasn’t as good as any one else. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. He used to ask me so often about my own health, and I thought him so fussy, for how could I tell what the meaning of it was?”

“In fact,” said the Professor, “I hope that she will now be induced to aid me in getting a wife.

“Thank you, sir. I have no doubt that you are quite right. And that’s Anthony Browne, who took a larynx out successfully last winter.

“But you must give reasons.

I began to understand as I listened to him that my friends in England had not been so far wrong when they had declared that as long as he lived – this little thirty-six year old artilleryman – there could not possibly be any peace in the world.

‘It has now come to pass, however, that Monmouth, who has long lived in dalliance with the Midianitish woman known by the name of Wentworth, has at last turned him to higher things, and has consented to make a bid for the crown. So we stood throughout the evening, until, finding that they could get little sport from us, my Lord Clarendon, the Chancellor, gave us the word to retire, which we did at our leisure after saluting the King and the company.’ Her voice was full of tears, and what she said was so simple, so true, that we both seemed to see the dead babe stretched there on the carpet before us, and we could have joined in with words of pity and of grief. I took the precaution of

walking the horse very quietly until we were some distance from the house, for I had told Reuben nothing of my intended journey, and I was convinced that if he knew of it neither discipline, nor even his new ties of love, would prevent him from coming with me. His fair daughter Sophie looked at me also, but she said nothing, and I could read her tender pity in her dark eyes. Our conditions are different." The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes. It was agony to him to hear that she was about to straighten little Alec Turner's club-foot, and right at the fringe of the rumour came a note from his mother, the rector's wife, asking him if he would be so good as to act as chloroformist. she cried, "and asking your pardon for troubling you, but I'm feared o' the young leddy, sir; she is not in her room." Again, if Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth life of which he could not have cognisance, and if those things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also.

"Come, come, my dear lady," said he, "you speak vastly beyond my merits;" upon which encouragement she started again in a theatrical apostrophe to Britain's darling and Neptune's eldest son, which he endured with the same signs of gratitude and pleasure.

"The fact is, my dear Belmont – I'm sure you would not let it go further – above all not to the ladies; but I am rather older than I used to be, and rather than lose the military carriage which has always been dear to me, I –"

"Stays, be Jove!" He had not yet attained his full six foot of stature, but no judge of a man (and every woman, at least, is one) could look at his perfect shoulders, his narrow loins, and his proud head that sat upon his neck like an eagle upon its perch, without feeling that sober joy which all that is beautiful in Nature gives to us – a vague self-content, as though in some way we also had a hand in the making of it. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him. Beyond sighting a Barbary rover once, whereat our mariners were in sad distress, counting themselves already as little better than slaves, we had good luck until we had come within a hundred leagues of the Cape of Good Hope, when the wind veered round to the southward and blew exceeding hard, while the sea rose to such a height that the end of the mainyard dipped into the water, and I heard the master say that though he had been at sea for five-and-thirty years he had never seen the like of it, and that he had little expectation of riding through it.

Having got so far, Defoe remarked that he thought he had given them a fair start, and handed over the story to Dean Swift, who, after premising that he feared he would find himself as much at sea as Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells,

continued in this way: –

“For two days I drifted about in great distress, fearing that there should be a return of the gale, and keeping an eager look-out for my late companions. Ah, my friends, the hour of my triumph had come! What would happen if I were to make the same claim? I have been very selfish and thoughtless.”

“My dear fellow, what does it matter to me. I could not believe it.

’ I do not ask it in my father’s name, but in my own. I have, as I said, done Mortimer some turns which he might remember, though it did not become me to remind him of them. That would not do, Charles! ‘Why, man, you are mad! I have been able to do so much for him that he has become my very good friend, so that I may ask him what I like in return. I trust that you will never put yourself into the way of having such another.”

‘Weary again, daddy, weary again,’ she said, shaking her head anxiously, with a small white hand upon each of his shoulders. He is Mrs. Westmacott’s brother.”

“Oh! Heavens! Please don’t!” Now look at this.” “What a vulgar-looking woman!” “I never saw any one like you. But where is your uncle?” How came he into the room?” Tell me this instant what it is.” “How did he die?” It is a subject upon which he will not listen to argument. “I don’t understand what they are talking about.”

‘But how comes this about?’ What is this?

“I knew it would come out, I felt that it would. He has some small matter upon his mind which makes him restless.” Whatever would the women think of him! It is nothing. But if it be for you, then it cannot be from any one of much importance.”

“But what do you mean to do?”

“But you never had any real cause?” “What were we talking about?” Now one thing I have to say to you, and I speak it that all may hear, and that none may hereafter complain that the rules he serves under were not made clear to him.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. It was called, as I remember, “The Briton Conquers but to Save,” and he rolled it out in a very fair bass voice, the others joining in the chorus, and clapping vigorously when he finished. If only Mr. Brown and Mr. Headingly were with us, then I should not have one care in the world,” cried Sadie. Of him I shall have more to say hereafter; but you will note now that he was my own uncle, and brother to my mother. It is a sorry thing for a man’s mind to have nothing higher to dwell upon than the turning of a compliment or the dancing of a coranto. If we had not got in when we did, you would not be here to tell the tale.

“Come in, Sir Charles, and I am convinced that you will acknowledge that I could not have done otherwise.

“Oh, you say that, do you?” He is a man who is always in a hurry, and yet has never anything to do. Oh, do help me, like a good, dear, kind papa, in this matter, for my whole heart is set upon it. He would not resent it so much if he had not something to fear from it.

“No, it’s not quite so bad as that.

“My dear Mrs. Westmacott,” cried Clara, “I assure you that I have not the least idea what it is that you are talking of.” “If it were not for our great ancestors and for our beloved country, the Queen of the Waters,” said he, “I could find it in my heart to be glad at this destruction which has come upon this vain and feeble generation. Oh, do help me, like a good, dear, kind papa, in this matter, for my whole heart is set upon it. I did it, and came to your post in my return.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Mrs. Harrison loved Jim as if he had been her own son, and her husband loved mine, so they came to my help, and may God bless them for their kindness to a distracted wife and mother!

“Very good, sir.”

“I am glad of that.” Gad’s wounds, are they not beautiful?

“Did you speak, sir?” asked Mrs. Adams.

“No, he’s not.”

“I was so afraid that he might get upon the drink that I made him promise to go straight to you, sir, the very instant he should arrive.

“Who can he be?” She saw her face as the glass reflected it, but she did not see the changing play of expression which gave it its charm – the infinite pity, the sympathy, the sweet womanliness which drew towards her all who were in doubt and in trouble, even as poor slow-moving Charles Westmacott had been drawn to her that night.

“Ah!

My mother seemed to speak with a hushed voice when she mentioned this wonderful brother of hers, and always had done as long as I can remember, so that I had learned also to have a subdued and reverent feeling when I heard his name.

It is your first entrance at Court, is it not, Monsieur de Laval,' said he, in his high-bred cordial manner; you should not feel lonely, for there are certainly many friends of your father here who will be overjoyed to make the acquaintance of your father's son.

"My first explanations I owe to you, Sir Charles," said Jim; and as I listened to his voice and noted his manner, I could not but admire the effect which the company of her whom he now knew to be his mother had had upon a rude country lad.

Doctor Walker looked disappointed. She saw her face as the glass reflected it, but she did not see the changing play of expression which gave it its charm – the infinite pity, the sympathy, the sweet womanliness which drew towards her all who were in doubt and in trouble, even as poor slow-moving Charles Westmacott had been drawn to her that night.

"Well," said she, laughing like one who is hurt, "you have no cause to say anything, for I read on your face what you have been taught to think of me.

"Why should you not?" Let us walk," said he. In the room above was the fourth sister, a remarkably beautiful girl in evident need of my assistance. You have been frowning and smiling like an April day.

They walked on together side by side, she brooding over some thought of her own, and he a little crossed and disappointed at her caprice and the lost commission for Harold. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning, Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention, as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever.

It was between eight and nine o'clock now, and I was conscious of a strong reaction after the successive excitements of the night. My fellow-lodger had kept her room; and, steeled as my mind was against her influence, I was yet conscious of a little throb of disappointment that she should allow me to depart without a word of farewell. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. As I was racking my brain as to how I should best describe it, my eyes fell upon the issue of my own Journal for the morning of the 8th of November with the full and excellent account of my friend and fellow-reporter Macdona. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I

seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. "Have you been there?" I was not clear that these professions could be made to agree with the speech in which Kenna had promised a hundred hides of land to every man on the ship; but on my making this remark, the three chiefs seemed very surprised and hurt by my suspicions, and explained very plausibly that, as the Britons needed them as a guard, they could not aid them better than by settling on the soil, and so being continually at hand in order to help them. How do, George?" Surely one night was not too much to ask. But, as Miss Morstan remarked just now, it is late, and we had best put the matter through without delay." They will serve to break the force of the attack.

"What do you mean?" said Mary. Where are you off to now?"

"Where to?" "Why should we not have a chat?" Did it not prove me to be in the right?" What have you yourself now?" Well, we are well down Channel now.

I was surprised to find my companion speaking as though he were about to set out on a journey, since he had not said anything to me about it.

"Not I!" That's good enough for me. And yet the day may come when I would not have it otherwise.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion. Well, what do you make of that?" Do you recall the hour?" Shall I stop?

"But, my dear Mrs. Smith," said Holmes, shrugging his shoulders, "You are frightening yourself about nothing. and taking to my heels I ran for home at the top of my speed. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian's descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them. I'm afraid I can't get it off. I had an extraordinary experience with it last night. I have but seen them this once in ten years, and it may be ten more, for all I know, ere I see them again.

"My first explanations I owe to you, Sir Charles," said Jim; and as I listened to his voice and noted his manner, I could not but admire the effect which the company of her whom he now knew to be his mother had had upon a rude country lad. You also loved her.

"I should stay to keep her company, Mr. Belmont," said the little American old maid; "but I learn that Mrs. Shlesinger finds the ride too long for her, and has some letters which she must mail to-day, so Mrs. Belmont will not be lonesome." It would be kind of you, though, if you would look in at number one when you get back and tell my wife that all's well with me, and that I'll be back in an hour or so." He, on his part, showed me no ill-will, but met me rather with a coarse joviality, and a rough familiarity which he meant to be ingratiating.

Terrified as they were by this sudden torrent of words, the two gentlewomen could not but smile at the sight of the fiery, domineering victim and the big apologetic representative of mankind who sat meekly bearing all the sins of his sex. I took the precaution of walking the horse very quietly until we were some distance from the house, for I had told Reuben nothing of my intended journey, and I was convinced that if he knew of it neither discipline, nor even his new ties of love, would prevent him from coming with me.

When I looked at this splendid fellow, with his high-bred, clean-cut face,

and thought of the fine qualities and gentle, generous impulses which I knew to lie within him, it seemed so absurd that he should speak as though my friendship towards him were a condescension, that I could not help laughing aloud. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. He's not the same man he used to be, though I make free to say that he was never quite one of my gentlemen, like Mr. Hastie or yourself, sir.

"Oh! Mark that, Watson." Yes, yes, here he is, sure enough!

"No, no, not at all.

"No -- certainly not."

'What is the name of your great-uncle?' That is one, is it not?"

"My brothers!" No!

"I like him very much indeed.

"Yes, quite recently."

"Aye, it's just him that I do mean. We were of an age, he a few years perhaps my senior, but our tastes, our judgments, and our characters were alike, save only that he had in him a touch of pride such as I have never known in any other man. I suppose you think this is drink."

“A month! No! Why do you do this thing?” The very night of his arrival he became very much the worse for drink, and, indeed, after twelve o’clock in the day he could hardly ever be said to be sober.

“God help me!” It is women like you who brace men up. He is not a man to flinch from his liquor, I’ll warrant. “I’m not quite clear in my own mind how these things should be approached, – if they are to be approached at all, – but I am sure this is not the way. I wish it to be a great success.

“I cannot help it.

“Oh! where would the hundreds of millions be which have been invested in this country? It is not too much to say that it will rank level with my own when the final credit of this business comes to be apportioned. Mark whose face is gloomy and whose content.

‘I have heard,’ said Saxon, ‘that much beer and cider, with wine and strong waters, have found their way into their camp.

“Cambridge.” There is no use of arguing about it now; I tell you that it is so. It’s not drink. What sort of a man could he be who during thirty years of his life had never made a single friend, high or low, who cared to continue to keep in touch with him? Tom would only admit about a dozen of the more influential of the townspeople into the room, but issued bulletins out of the window every five minutes to the crowd below. That was the end of the matter so far as I was concerned.” Well, you are fine, to be sure!” ‘You must not say a word to any one about it, and I shall see you again soon.’ I do hope you will have a good drink before you leave the wells.

So pleased was I at these sensible remarks on the part of the strangers, that I was right glad to have the opportunity of making their closer acquaintance over a flask of excellent wine. But now I am really a dead man, so it does not matter very much what I say.”

“My name is Sawyer – her’s is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her – and a smart, clean lad, too, as long as he’s at sea, and no steward in the company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what with liquor shops –”

“Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer,” I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my companion; “it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to be able to restore it to the rightful owner.”

‘With all humbleness, your Majesty,’ said Lord Grey, who had just returned with the horse,’ I should suggest, since there are only a few troops of their cavalry on this side of the Avon, that we blow up the bridge and move onwards to Bath, whence we can pass into Wiltshire, which we know to be friendly.’ She began to praise you, I said what I felt, and then in an instant it was all out.” It was impossible, then. In his great goodness and self-abnegation he had, in his early declaration given forth at Lyme, declared that he should leave the choice of a

monarch to the Commons of England, but having found that his enemies did most scandalously and basely make use of this his self-denial, and did assert that he had so little confidence in his own cause that he dared not take publicly the title which is due to him, he hath determined that this should have an end. It was agreed that I should write home full accounts of my adventures in the shape of successive letters to McArdle, and that these should either be edited for the Gazette as they arrived, or held back to be published later, according to the wishes of Professor Challenger, since we could not yet know what conditions he might attach to those directions which should guide us to the unknown land.

"Come down!" Oh! Good Lord! "Did ever you witness anything more masterly?" There is not a tittle of evidence for this. I have but seen them this once in ten years, and it may be ten more, for all I know, ere I see them again. A sudden hope sprang up in my soul that I might be in time to intercept him. It is a very queer place, – the queerest that ever I was in, and I have been in some rum corners, too. "Thank God! I know better now." You wouldn't think the mares had come fifty miles, would you?

"Good heavens!" she cried, with pretty wonder. Now, if you will kindly turn round, I will explain, also, what we see upon the other side." It is as well, for I have already made up my mind that my duty to you, my son, outweighs that which I owe, and have at such bitter cost fulfilled, to my brother and my family."

Shameful!" "Oh, Lord!" "What is that?" And then they know that nothing is so catching as shyness, and that if they do not keep a face of stone, their patient will be covered with confusion. Oh, what a misfortune! Though it is now eight-and-forty years ago, it is clearer to me than the doings of last week, for the memory of an old man is like one of those glasses which shows out what is at a distance and blurs all that is near. God bless you!" I would give the state of the barometer, but that unlucky instrument had experienced an unprecedented fall of forty-two inches – from a nail to the ground – and was not in a reliable condition.

So stunned and shaken was I by the sudden fall, that though I had a dim knowledge of shadowy figures bending over me, and of hoarse laughter sounding in my ears, I could not tell for a few minutes where I was nor what had befallen me. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. He much regretted that any personal bias should have been read into his remarks, which were entirely dictated by his desire for scientific truth. At any rate I obtained, at various times,

statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

Reuben had said not a word since she had uncovered her face, and bore the face of a man who finds himself in some pleasant dream and is vexed only by the fear lest he wake up from it.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. It was impossible, then. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. He concealed his fears from his daughter, however, and affected to make light of the whole matter, though she, with the keen eye of love, saw plainly that he was ill at ease.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust

persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her.

She raised no objection, and for my part I was overjoyed at the proposal, as it gave me an opportunity of learning more of this singular cousin of mine, who had told me so much and yet seemed to know so much more.

"I could not wish a better one."

"Commonplace," said Holmes, though I thought from his expression that he was pleased at my evident surprise and admiration.

"You have seen him, then?"

"He has a good deal to thank you for, and so have I," she answered, "he's awful fond of me. I have never yet encountered any problem, however, which my inventive brain was unable to solve, and I promise you that to-morrow I will turn my attention to the question of our descent."

'Did you meet anyone there?'

"Well, I like the English tailor-made dresses well enough for walking, Mr. Stephens," said Miss Sadie from behind them.

"Did you? What do you say to that?"

"Yes, I was there, and lingered for a quarter of an hour or so." "It was extremely good of you." "Mrs. Belmont, you look just too perfectly sweet anyhow, but if you'll allow me, I'll fix your dress for you." However, I could talk to my father, who knows a very great deal of the world."

"I tell you that I saw her do it.

"Oh! In a fairly large experience I have never known any one to do so in real life.

" _ Re _ Abousir," she read; "now, what _ do _ you mean by' _ re _," Mr. Stephens?

"She did not think so." "It was extremely good of you." It still bore the splotches of the tears which she had dropped on it, poor soul, and ran in this wise: -

'Instructions from Mistress Mary Clarke to her son Micah, on the twelfth day of June in the year of our Lord sixteen hundred and eighty-five. Now, you will remember also that Mrs. Porter, the housekeeper, told us that she herself fainted upon entering the room and had afterwards opened the window.

"Is Mr. Smith or Mr. Hanbury in?"

"Because I am not sure. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian's descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them.

"This is my only son, sir," said my father.

"You are certainly a very modest young man, and I hope you will not lose that charming quality when you have been for a little time at my Court.

She raised no objection, and for my part I was overjoyed at the proposal, as it gave me an opportunity of learning more of this singular cousin of mine, who had told me so much and yet seemed to know so much more. They were never at their ease, always upon the brink of a catastrophe, encouraged one day only to be rudely rebuffed the next, bullied in public and slighted in private, and yet, in spite of it all, the singular fact remains that they loved him and served him as no monarch has been loved and served.

The Empress had graciously offered me a seat in her berline, and all the way to the village, entirely forgetful apparently of the scene through which she passed, she chatted away, asking me a thousand personal questions about myself and my affairs, for a kindly curiosity in the doings of everyone around her was one of her most marked characteristics. "Good heavens!" "I really think that you are right as usual," said she at last. She rose to follow her, but her head was in a whirl with new thoughts, and she sat down again. From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night. Miss Brenda Tregennis had been a very beautiful girl, though now verging upon middle age. I cannot ask you to share it."

"Well, to tell the truth, your people seemed more lively and generally human than I have ever seen them. All this is the truth, and if I tell it to you, gentlemen, it is not to amuse you, – for you have not done me a very good turn, – but it is because I believe the best defence I can make is just to hold back nothing, but let all the world know how badly I have myself been served by Major Sholto, and how innocent I am of the death of his son." Oh! It would not have been a surprise to him. I am strangely familiar with your features." It is the love of a woman that makes the story of a man, and many a year was to pass before I first looked into the eyes of the mother of my children. What was he now? "For God's sake do something for me!" "And yet I agree with you that we cannot go back until we have tried."

"No, master, I have not seen him."

"It's dreadful – dreadful!" Am I never to have any privacy? How do you like your new costume? "I'm not quite clear in my own mind how these things should be approached, – if they are to be approached at all, – but I am sure this is not the way. It may have been a humble object-lesson, but I give you my word that many a time in my life I have braced myself to a hard task by the remembrance of that morning upon Crawley Downs, asking myself if my manhood were so weak that I would not do for my country, or for those whom I loved, as much as these two would endure for a paltry stake and for their own credit amongst their fellows. All this impressed me very much, as here, independently, we had exactly the same results, without any question of American frauds, or modern vulgarity,

which were so often raised against similar phenomena in Europe. It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me.

“No, I will not.”

“Ah, that is more than I can tell. Through all my adventurous life I have never been so close upon the threshold of death as at that moment, and yet I declare to you that, terrible as my position was, I could think of nothing but the tattoo marks upon old Solomon Sprent’s arm, and the cunning fashion in which he had interwoven the red and the blue.

“I am sorry to be a disappointment to you, sir,” said I.

“It is your misfortune not to have come under my influence earlier,” said he.

“This is Mr. St. James’s way of talking,” said the principal, smiling nervously as he glanced at me.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian’s descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to

think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"And your brother?" Worst of all, he speedily assumed the same attitude towards my daughter, Alice, and spoke to her more than once in a way which, fortunately, she is too innocent to understand.

"James!" she cried, with a mischievous smile. "Yes, yes, here he is, sure enough!

He was sitting alone one evening pondering deeply over his troubles, and searching vainly for some way out of them. I had been engaged by some people of the name of Silcoe. I have just promised Mrs. Westmacott that I will do so. I cannot think of it," said she; "could _ you _, if you had left the man you love behind you, as I have mine?" I feel that we have gone too far already."

"I'll do it with pleasure," said I. "In fact, I would rather go by rail, for we shall have enough and to spare of the sea before we reach Colombo. He would not make a fit partner for me."

"Do you mean to say that I create a thing which has never existed by merely thinking of it?" She could not forget that when Charles Westmacott had spoken to her one night he had alluded to the possibility of his aunt marrying again.

"For the mistress, Mr. Johnson.

"I dare say that you will do very well," said he. Do you understand me?"

"Not a bit.

"He never existed."

'Use it as though it were your own,' said my father.

"But you must leave me," said Miss Adams, earnestly. I hope that you will hear soon from Mr. Smith. I suppose I shall see you at the Downs to-morrow?"

"Then I certainly will.

"I am glad of that." How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the

further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over.

“You look very happy,” said he. “But we have already taken too much of your time, and so I beg to thank you for your kindness and to wish you good morning.” You shall have such an allowance as will permit you to keep up a proper appearance as my aide-de-camp, and I have determined to marry you suitably to one of the ladies-in-waiting of the Empress. ‘She cannot deny it.’ All of them agree that this state of bewilderment is harmful and retarding to the spirit, and that some knowledge of the actual truth upon this side is the only way to make sure of not being dazed upon the other. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep**’ -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the Hypnoidal**’ state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is ‘absolutely unknown,’ that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. A bad man he was in many ways, my dears, cunning and wily, with little scruple or conscience; and yet so strange a thing is human nature, and so difficult is it for us to control our feelings, that my heart warms when I think of him, and that fifty years have increased rather than weakened the kindliness which I hear to him. The lady is of excellent family and she is not wanting in personal charm. No man will take her from me. Whimsical and bizarre conceits of this kind are common enough in the annals of crime, and usually afford valuable indications as to the criminal. Dost not know that a word of what you have said, whispered to the nearest justice of the peace, might mean your liberty, if not your life?”

When the Doctor came down to the dining-room next morning, he was surprised

to find that his daughters had already been up some time. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. I think she is one of the most charming young ladies I ever met, and might have been most useful in such work as we have been doing. So far all had been kindly, however far apart our desires might be; but we felt well assured that our actual plans of a descent must be kept secret, for we had reason to fear that at the last they might try to hold us by force. It was agony to him to hear that she was about to straighten little Alec Turner's club-foot, and right at the fringe of the rumour came a note from his mother, the rector's wife, asking him if he would be so good as to act as chloroformist. It was evident that we had passed through the Cossacks and that there was nothing between us and our goal.

Do not judge my father by his words, but by his deeds,' said she, with a warning finger upraised;and, above all, Cousin Louis, unless you wish to have my life upon your conscience, never let him suspect that I have said a word to set you on your guard.' I declare it is getting quite unendurable." "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Tell me, dear, have you often felt like this? After you was gone he walked and he walked, up and down, and up and down, until I was weary of the sound of his footstep.

'No, nor that either.' After you was gone he walked and he walked, up and down, and up and down, until I was weary of the sound of his footstep. As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers. Rather would I fancy that a glow of admiration filled their breasts, and that their one desire was to embrace the stranger who had carried himself so gallantly and well. I felt that if I did not discharge my pistol Lord Dacre's honour might feel hurt, and yet it was quite impossible for me, after hearing what this lady has said, to aim it at her husband. It did not seem to be any personal concern of mine.

I had hoped that in some way I could coax my companion back into the quiet which had been the object of our journey; but one glance at his intense face and contracted eyebrows told me how vain was now the expectation. "Look, Miss Adams! said he. What is the meaning of this?" but she went on with her dance.

"You knew it, and never told us!"

"By Jove, yes; there's some one there. I asked, eagerly, when we had regained

the lower room once more. It was horrible – horrible! From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night. I wanted to say to you that, if I were you, I should change my rooms at once.” There was something in the gentleness of his rebuke, and in his appeal to her mother, which brought the tears to her eyes, and in another instant she would have been kneeling beside him with everything confessed, when the door flew open and her sister Ida came bounding into the room.

“Well, no; I don’t think that is quite the idea, either.

“Not a capillary,” said I. “Now, look here; I’ll throw up the whole business unless you give me your word to behave yourself. What have we here? The Doctor looked pleased. he repeated.”But I do not know what to do. “That’s a good guess,” said he. What do you think of that horse?” And if what I tell you should ever chance to differ from what you have read in the book of Mr. Coke or of Mr. Oldmixon, or of any one else who has set these matters down in print, do ye bear in mind that I am telling of what I saw with these very eyes, and that I have helped to make history, which is a higher thing than to write it. A challenge to match my bird Julius against my Lord Dorchester’s cockerel for a hundred guineas. I have always been a judge of a horse, and I had a good look at these ones, but I could not see that there was much to be said for them. I wonder if any friend would do as much for me!” I think that it is the most sincere compliment that I have ever had paid me.” They could not be more than ten paces from us. I return to Southampton to-morrow, and I shall hope to see you in the course of the next week.” If a subject is painful why treat it at all?

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. I took her hand, and in two minutes we were on such terms that her husband swore roundly that he would give me up himself if I pressed the matter farther. I had no orders about them from the master.” My energies shall now be devoted to devising some means by which spirits may be able to recollect what occurs to them in their free state, and I trust that when I have worked this out, I may have the pleasure of meeting you all once again in this hall, and demonstrating to you the result.” No, no, I must tear myself away – even her persuasions were unable to make me stop. I am thinking of getting married.”

“I am sure, Monsieur Fardet,” said Mrs. Belmont, “that you, who are a Frenchman, and therefore a man of gallantry and honour, would not permit your own wounded feelings to interfere with the fulfilment of your promise and your duty towards three helpless ladies.”

“But you are very strong.”

“We cannot reckon time as you do.

"Certainly not." She and I never took to each other very much; but now I hope all that may be ended, and when I marry she will come and stay with me." And then, whether it was this nerve-racking vision before me, or whether, my task finished, all the overwork of the past weeks came in one crushing weight upon me, the room danced round me, the floor seemed to sink away beneath my feet, and I remembered no more.

"Yes, indeed; and I hope you will come to my wedding, all of you." I'm not quite clear in my own mind how these things should be approached, – if they are to be approached at all, – but I am sure this is not the way. And so also, when the ring has become as extinct as the lists, we may understand that a broader philosophy would show that all things, which spring up so naturally and spontaneously, have a function to fulfil, and that it is a less evil that two men should, of their own free will, fight until they can fight no more than that the standard of hardihood and endurance should run the slightest risk of being lowered in a nation which depends so largely upon the individual qualities of her citizens for her defence. Do you follow all this?"

"Well, perhaps if both love, it may be different. And yet it is so real with me, so entirely part of my very self, that I cannot help acting upon it.

"But there is such a sudden change in them both." "If I may read your life, I would venture to say that you were destined to fulfil the lot of women – to make some good man happy, and to shed around, in some wider circle, the pleasure which your society has given me since first I knew you." 'T is true that if La Jeune were dancing, or if Mrs. Bracegirdle or Mrs. Oldfield came upon the boards, we would hum and clap, but it was the fine woman that we applauded rather than the actress.' I would have you to understand that it is a matter of perfect indifference to me, and I refuse to entertain the most remote sense of personal obligation.

"No, no: I never guess.

"I'm sorry I missed it. However, we must do what we can. That is his most dangerous subject. I do not speak upon this subject as an amateur, nor, I may add, as a popular lecturer, but I speak as one whose scientific conscience compels him to adhere closely to facts, when I say that Mr. Waldron is very wrong in supposing that because he has never himself seen a so-called prehistoric animal, therefore these creatures no longer exist. Now one thing I have to say to you, and I speak it that all may hear, and that none may hereafter complain that the rules he serves under were not made clear to him.

"I knew you fairly well, sir, in our youth; but you will allow me to observe that neither I nor any friend of yours ever heard of a wife or a son.

And what is that to me? 'Alas, alas!

"I will tell you about him – or a little about him, for he has done much which I would not care to talk of, nor you to listen to.

"I thank you, sir, for the kind interest which you take in me," said I.

"But you must be a credit to me. I think that perhaps I have interest enough with the Pope to ask him, in return for any little attention which we gave him at the Coronation, to show you some leniency in this matter.

"Yes, quite recently."

"Stangerson too!" You are tired of me, and by the gods I am tired of you, and glad to be at the end of it. They must be full cry upon our scent this four hours.

They were ten days which I am not likely to forget.

Crabbe took his degree a year before I did, and went down to a large port in England with the intention of setting up there. In six weeks or two months we shall be in London, and it is possible that this letter may not reach you much earlier than we do ourselves. I find," he continued, glancing over the pages of his ledger, "that within the last twelve months we have supplied no fewer than seven Latin masters to Willow Lea House Academy, four of them having left so abruptly as to forfeit their month's salary, and none of them having stayed more than eight weeks."

"For my part," said Holmes, "whatever you may choose to say will go no further." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"But you are not satisfied, Charles.

"I am." I told him that I should be very happy. We could be far happier together in a little cottage in the country than with all the riches of the City. But one day was exactly like another.

"It depends so much upon what you can do, you know.

And I?

"Why should you not?"

"I do not know."

All this, which takes me so long to describe, impressed itself upon me in a few seconds.

But I am not taken so easily. Every time that a knock came to the door, or a sharp step passed in the street, I imagined that it was either Holmes returning or an answer to his advertisement.

Brother William was deeply shocked.

"Oh, then, you live also with Mrs. Adams!" he repeated. What a picture! 'Sink me, if I could remember where I had seen your face, but now it comes back to me very clearly.' You'll just need to be patient awhile, and then you'll be all right.

"Oh! Yes." I shall never go to that doctor again,' says she afterwards. But I am telling you frankly, at Lord Avon's request, all that I thought and did upon that night, and I shall continue to do so, even if I am not fortunate enough to win your approval. But I really do love you very much, and you would make me happy if you came to Texas with me, and I think that perhaps after a time I could make you happy too." Though my parents had been married so long, they had really seen very little of each other, and their affection was as warm and as fresh as if they were two newly-wedded lovers. Oh! 'Who ever saw such a shambles?

I do not know if that voice thrilled through every one as it did through me. But if you would come out with me into that forgotten world; if you would know Boy Jim and Champion Harrison; if you would meet my father, one of Nelson's own men; if you would catch a glimpse of that great seaman himself, and of George, afterwards the unworthy King of England; if, above all, you would see my famous uncle, Sir Charles Tregellis, the King of the Bucks, and the great fighting men whose names are still household words amongst you, then give me your hand and let us start. Their talk was sometimes merry and sometimes sad, but there was a forced note in their merriment and a naturalness in their sadness which told me that a heavy heart beat upon either side of me.

I was at my wit's ends what to do, whether to be silent, or to tell her of the terrible position in which her lover was placed; but, even as I hesitated, she, with the quick intuition of a woman, read the doubts which were in my mind. He had not yet attained his full six foot of stature, but no judge of a man (and every woman, at least, is one) could look at his perfect shoulders, his narrow loins, and his proud head that sat upon his neck like an eagle upon its perch, without feeling that sober joy which all that is beautiful in Nature gives to us – a vague self-content, as though in some way we also had a hand in the making of it. She felt suddenly that she was giving herself away, and she changed her face to a kindly, friendly smile, but it was too late, for I had had my warning. I confess that at the beginning I did not tell him what I had seen, and my excuse must be that he disappeared before I had time to determine what I should do. Uncle, here's a gentleman who wants to speak with you." "Roddy, darling, here's your father!"

"Oh, Clara, if it were only that! Yes, it was indeed so. But he feared above all things lest he should offend her, and so put an end to their present pleasant intimacy. It made me proud as I watched him to think that so magnificent a man, with such easy, masterful ways, should be my own blood relation, and I could see from my mother's eyes as they turned towards him that the same thought was in her mind. said she in surprise.

Mrs. Westmacott's great meeting for the enfranchisement of woman had passed over, and it had been a triumphant success. She had never been from home before, and she was now busy upon the self-imposed task of bringing the East up to the standard of Massachusetts.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. But perhaps you would not mind waiting here for a minute or two, for if we all go in together and she has no word of our coming she may be alarmed.

We came to Oban in the rain, I need not mention it again, For you may take it as a fact That in that Western Highland tract It sometimes spouts and sometimes drops, But never, never, never stops. About six years ago – to be exact, upon the 4th of May, 1882 – an advertisement appeared in the Times asking for the address of Miss Mary Morstan and stating that it would be to her advantage to come forward. As for me, I had sprung to the side of the old friend of my boyhood, and was trying to tell him my joy at his good fortune, and listening to his assurance that nothing that could ever befall him could weaken the love that he bore me. On this she sprang out of her chair with a cry of great joy, and holding the garment which she was mending over her head, and swaying it from side to side with the motion of her body, she danced as lightly as a feather all round the room, and then out through the open door into the sunshine.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form.

As she turned slowly round, and the sunshine struck upon her face, the two watchers were amazed to see that this very active and energetic lady was far from being in her first youth, so far that she had certainly come of age again since she first passed that landmark in life's journey. She saw her face as the glass reflected it, but she did not see the changing play of expression which gave it its charm – the infinite pity, the sympathy, the sweet womanliness which drew towards her all who were in doubt and in trouble, even as poor slow-moving Charles Westmacott had been drawn to her that night. She began to praise you, I said what I felt, and then in an instant it was all out." She was very good over the matter, but every now and again _ he _ would fetch a hollow groan, and I noticed that he held his right hand just under the sheet all the time, where I had no doubt that it was clasped by her left.

"It was nearer one than twelve, and a wild, bleak night, blowing hard and raining in torrents. Presently it broke upon us again, wild, shrill, and agonised: the scream of a woman in mortal distress.

"Well, I suppose it would," said Lord John.

But it was no easy thing for me to think seriously of anything in the hamlet; for I was in some way, my dear children, though I say it myself, a favourite with the young and with the old, so that I could not walk ten paces without some greeting or address.

"Well, perhaps if both love, it may be different.

"Oh! It would not be right nor honorable."

"No, Mr. Stephens, I've had such a good time all my life, that I don't think, when I look back, that I ever had any real cause for sorrow."

"Now, off you go, and come back with a better report next time." But then as she stood at the casement, the girl beneath looked smilingly up at her and beckoned to her with a merry gesture to open the window.

And it did. How the rain is splashing in the street.

"There will be two or three in the boat. How you must hate and loathe me!

"You say they are dangerous. What would words do for you if you were in this chair and I in that?

It was a blithesome morning. I think it would be very nice."

"I should think so. What a lucky thing it is that we have had no very heavy rain since yesterday! I took the precaution of walking the horse very quietly until we were some distance from the house, for I had told Reuben nothing of my intended journey, and I was convinced that if he knew of it neither discipline, nor even his new ties of love, would prevent him from coming with me.

"There was not a soul to be seen, nor a sound to be heard, except the dripping of the rain. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. It told him that it was half-past seven, and that he had been gone an hour and a quarter. You would not desire it, dear, would you?"

"Then your case is not hopeless." I shall not dream of dying for at least another thirty years. It will be time enough to discuss the why and the wherefore when he is a little stronger. I have but seen them this once in ten years, and it may be ten more, for all I know, ere I see them again. Oh! But at present just here in North Africa there is Italy in Abyssinia, and England in Egypt, and France in Algiers —"

"France!" It was when my poor mother died. beautiful!

I began to understand as I listened to him that my friends in England had not been so far wrong when they had declared that as long as he lived – this little thirty-six year old artilleryman – there could not possibly be any peace in the world.

As she turned slowly round, and the sunshine struck upon her face, the two watchers were amazed to see that this very active and energetic lady was far from being in her first youth, so far that she had certainly come of age again since she first passed that landmark in life's journey. Why, he was turned five-and-fifty when he challenged and beat, after fifty minutes of it, Jack Thornhill, who was tough enough to take it out of many a youngster. Again, if Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth life of which he could not have cognisance, and if those things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also.

Having got so far, Defoe remarked that he thought he had given them a fair start, and handed over the story to Dean Swift, who, after premising that he feared he would find himself as much at sea as Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells, continued in this way: –

“For two days I drifted about in great distress, fearing that there should be a return of the gale, and keeping an eager look-out for my late companions.

“That’s my nephew, Sir Charles.” I have, as I said, done Mortimer some turns which he might remember, though it did not become me to remind him of them. asked Mrs. Adams. Charles Westmacott knew little enough of City life and the ways of business, but at least he had more experience in both than the Admiral, and he made up his mind not to leave him until the matter was settled. Do!" Do!" He pushed open the door." “The odds are that this plateau is of no great size, and we shall travel round it until we either find an easy way up it, or come back to the point from which we started.” How d’ye do, Mrs. Harrison?

“To London!” Is it not splendid? I am so glad to have your friends here, not only as an escort to you, but also as witnesses to what I am about to do and say. It needed no questioning to get at her knowledge, for she was so full of indignation that she shook with passion as she spoke of it, and raised her hands into the air in the earnestness of her denunciation, as she described the grievances which she had against my colleague. The lady is of excellent family and she is not wanting in personal charm. “Perhaps, sir, I had better drive.”

But in spite of gleams of sunshine, there was thunder in the air, and Champion Harrison had just whispered in my ear that he was quite sure that we should never get through the night without trouble, and was advising me, if it got very bad, to take refuge under the table, when the landlord entered the room hurriedly and handed a note to my uncle. And it is not the night which has chilled me. Oh! It’s the Oasis of Kurkur – a little quiet, I am afraid, but excellent air. “You might do better than this.” If you like, we shall drive round together after luncheon."

"I dare say that you will do very well," said he.

"Confound the fellow! cried Stephens. The charge should be six times greater, and therefore, of course, it would be six times more effective." Ay-ah! "If you will pledge your word that after this experiment I may have the hand of your daughter, then I am willing to assist you; but if not, I shall have nothing to do with it.

"Rose!" Mary cried. What is that?"

'If the West can give eight thousand, how many can all the counties of England afford?"

" 'But what is the treasure, then?"

"Our old life!"

"But what is it?"

"The same here.

"Because there are so many pretty things upon the walls."

' A dozen.

"I wish I could think it were not so.

"Not I!" But our new comrade, what think you of him?"

"My first explanations I owe to you, Sir Charles," said Jim; and as I listened to his voice and noted his manner, I could not but admire the effect which the company of her whom he now knew to be his mother had had upon a rude country lad. I have but seen them this once in ten years, and it may be ten more, for all I know, ere I see them again.

"I do not need to be shown the way in a house where I have drunk many a bottle of good claret," cried a deep voice in reply; and there in the doorway stood the broad figure of Squire Ovington in his buckskins and top-boots, a riding-crop in his hand.

"I do not know."

"Yes, I think he was. I do not know how you came to meet him last night, or what passed between you, for we do not share each other's confidences.

"Yes.

"At last, one evening I was driving up and down Torquay Terrace, as the street was called in which they boarded, when I saw a cab drive up to their door.

"Did you?"

As I listened to the words and realized what they meant, a great shadow seemed to pass from my soul.

"It seems most improbable." If you'll loose my legs I'll walk down to it.

“On the contrary, I never spoke so deliberately in my life. Go!” There could no longer be a doubt. There are some who say that the Bussex Rhine, as it is called, is not either deep or broad, and was, therefore, unmentioned by the moorsmen, but that the recent constant rains had swollen it to an extent never before known.

“My dear Mrs. Westmacott,” cried Clara, “I assure you that I have not the least idea what it is that you are talking of.”

“I think we should see it to the end.”

We had ascended the kitchen stair and entered the suite of rooms upon the first floor.

“Oh, yes, all right.”

If all are agreed, ' said he, let our word be “Soho,” and let us come upon them as soon after midnight as may be.

The man, whom we already know as Theckla the Thracian, paid no heed to the attention which he had aroused, but strode onwards, stepping as lightly as a deer, until he reached the fringe of the soldiers.

“Then I will.” “Shall I tell Brother Drebber?”

“Yes, my dear.”

“Why, Sadie,” she remarked, “I thought I heard you in the night, dear, and now I see that you have been crying.” “Your dear mother would not have liked it, Clara,” said he. And now it is high time we were off.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. She could not forget the scrap of conversation which she had heard the night before, nor the secret which her sister had refused to confide to her. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. “Only a twist, I think; but it’s pretty painful. The height of the trees and the thickness of the boles exceeded anything which I in my town-bred life could have imagined, shooting upwards in magnificent columns until, at an enormous distance above our heads, we could dimly discern the spot where they threw out their side-branches into Gothic upward curves which coalesced to form one great matted roof of verdure, through which only an occasional golden ray of sunshine shot downwards to trace a thin dazzling line of light amidst the majestic obscurity.

With these words he led the way out of the hall and paced slowly down Fore Street, the people falling back to right and to left as he passed, and raising their caps to do him reverence. I had just fallen into a dream in which I saw Reuben Lockarby crowned King of England by Mistress Ruth Timewell, while Decimus Saxon endeavoured to shoot him with a bottle of Daffy's elixir, when in an instant, without warning, I was dashed violently from my horse, and left lying half-conscious on the stony track. She carried herself in the most stately fashion, so that as I looked at her majestic entrance, and at the pose which she struck as she glanced at my father, I was reminded of the Queen of the Peruvians as, in the person of Miss Polly Hinton, she incited Boy Jim and myself to insurrection.

"Who's that?" Where?"

We are off the main road now,' I remarked; even should they pursue us, they would be unlikely to follow this side track.' I asked, pointing to a stalwart, plainly-dressed individual who was walking slowly down the other side of the street, looking anxiously at the numbers. said she, looking out. "You see, Clara," she cried, "the charm works already. How could you get me out?" "I think, if you will have me, that I would rather go with you." "But what I do for you now?"

He tore himself from her as he spoke, and, flinging himself upon his horse, galloped furiously away, never even looking round, as though afraid that his resolution might fail him if he took one glance at what he was leaving. From time to time I turned and approached them, hoping to fall into conversation with them; but as I did so they would break and hasten down the road. Pray do!" We can't go on like this." "I not leave you. What do you intend to do, Miss Morstan?"

He tore himself from her as he spoke, and, flinging himself upon his horse, galloped furiously away, never even looking round, as though afraid that his resolution might fail him if he took one glance at what he was leaving. Nay, frown not, for I was but jesting. Why should you deceive him?' How could you hope to pass through the streets of the city? I could not have believed it. How you must hate and loathe me! But why did you not tell me so?' You would do well, Mr. Holmes, not to forget it, for I have no desire to do you an injury." I have but seen them this once in ten years, and it may be ten more, for all I know, ere I see them again. At last, breathless, speechless, I reached the phaeton. They never took their wondering eyes off me as I told my story, and my heart swelled with pride when my uncle said that we had carried ourselves well, and that he did not think that many of our age would have stood it as stoutly.

It was not an easy question to answer, so I was silent. There was no longer any chance of his having legitimate offspring. She spoke languidly and wearily. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over

seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. I saw, too, that eccentricity was, as my uncle had told me, the fashion; and if the folk upon the Continent look upon us even to this day as being a nation of lunatics, it is no doubt a tradition handed down from the time when the only travellers whom they were likely to see were drawn from the class which I was now meeting. But already, as I write, a week has passed, and we have had our momentous interview with Lord John Roxton and – well, perhaps things might be worse. I find," he continued, glancing over the pages of his ledger, "that within the last twelve months we have supplied no fewer than seven Latin masters to Willow Lea House Academy, four of them having left so abruptly as to forfeit their month's salary, and none of them having stayed more than eight weeks." I never could find them. "We have gone through a great crisis. Then we had better go down, for it is a little past the hour."

'With all humbleness, your Majesty,' said Lord Grey, who had just returned with the horse, 'I should suggest, since there are only a few troops of their cavalry on this side of the Avon, that we blow up the bridge and move onwards to Bath, whence we can pass into Wiltshire, which we know to be friendly.'

If we are indeed to be comrades,' said I sternly, you must learn to speak with more reverence and less flippancy of my father, who would assuredly never have harboured you had he heard the tale which you have told me even now. 'To continue my story, however, which I broke off in order to step down from my horse, I found out early in the morning that ye were gone, and Zachary Palmer was able to tell me whither. Or, perhaps, finding that we are not with him, he may trust to the speed of his horse.'

"No one who was not good could be so absolutely happy as she seems to be.

"But why not settle it now?"

"It's not so bad as we thought," said he, "and yet it is bad enough.

"But the cause?"

"No," said I. "I know of none." It was not merely that his own fortunes were largely at stake, but it was the dreadful position in which he would stand before this immense concourse of people, many of whom had put their money upon his judgment, if he should find himself at the last moment with an impotent excuse instead of a champion to put before them. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

She worked upon me so, partly with her scorn and partly with this money that

she held before my eyes, that I believe I should have yielded and taken my chances upstairs, had it not been that I saw her eyes following the struggle within me in such a crafty, malignant fashion, that it was evident she was bent upon making me the tool of her revenge, and that she would leave me no choice but to do the old man an injury or to be captured by him. At this she seemed somewhat hurt, and the tears sprang into her eyes, but she followed me into the sitting-room and watched me wistfully. On the other hand, I am bound to admit that she confidently prophesied the escape of her fourth brother, who was a prisoner in Germany, and that this was duly fulfilled. It was a glorious thought.

"Well, we did it at night. Beyond sighting a Barbary rover once, whereat our mariners were in sad distress, counting themselves already as little better than slaves, we had good luck until we had come within a hundred leagues of the Cape of Good Hope, when the wind veered round to the southward and blew exceeding hard, while the sea rose to such a height that the end of the mainyard dipped into the water, and I heard the master say that though he had been at sea for five-and-thirty years he had never seen the like of it, and that he had little expectation of riding through it. Their language is more than half signs, and it was not hard to follow them. Now, do you see the dreadful dilemma in which those poor people found themselves? I am surprised that you did not see me. Shall it end well or shall it not? You have not yet began to practise it?" We cannot have them all over the world." It is very nice of you to call so early. "I did not dare to think it." I know now that I cannot have the use of it, and I know that they cannot. "You will, I am sure, excuse us. I do not know why they should be so coupled, and they never were with Jim. You meant well, I am sure." Oh, I do pray that you may not repent it!" I only say that it is impossible for you or any man to realise it.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. I could not pass on and leave this poor soul in her distress. You will have to break it open. It was bad enough to be compelled to have Madge in the house, but she was old and ugly, and could be ignored. Why should you not have them? It was horrible – but it was doocedly interestin' too. I'm sure I wouldn't either, if I were he. I only know that he was a very great one, and that the things in which he dealt were also so great that it is impossible to judge him by any ordinary standard. "Good heavens!" "So you've got them too!" I repent! I never was so happy in my life." – a hundred times I have said it."

It was on the very night which succeeded the events which have just been narrated, when suddenly into Monica William's head, as she tossed upon her sleepless bed, there shot a thought which made her sit up with a thrill and a gasp. It would be kind of you, though, if you would look in at number one when you get back and tell my wife that all's well with me, and that I'll be back in an

hour or so."

There, sir, I have told you the whole story of the events which led up to the murder of Lord Mannering by his wife upon the night of September the 14th, in the year 1894. I do not yet know what it is, but I am perfectly ready to do it.'

One other detail: On the left side of the skirt of the black dress was, as I thought at first, a shapeless bunch of white ribbon.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I would have left the room without another word, but he clung to me, and tore the ruffle from my wrist in his attempt to hold me back, and to prevail upon me to promise to say nothing to you or Sir Lothian Hume. He's not the same man he used to be, though I make free to say that he was never quite one of my gentlemen, like Mr. Hastie or yourself, sir. She will be glad to make your acquaintance." She drew back her hands. Now that they had not only ceased to protect him, but had themselves become a source of trouble to him, he began to understand how great the blessing was which he had enjoyed, and to sigh for the happy days before his girls had come under the influence of his neighbor. I could only bow and leave the room, with a bitter sense of ill-usage at my heart. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I managed to be close to her so as to hear the address, but I need not have been so anxious, for she sang it out loud enough to be heard at the other side of the street, 'Drive to 13, Duncan Street, Houndsditch,' she cried. She had a commission from her father in the City, and was dashing in as she had done many a time before, with all the fearlessness of youth, thinking only of her task and how it was to be performed. She crimsoned with shame at her own baseness, as she turned once more to her companion. I could see that her remarks were as offensive to her father as they were to me, for he looked at her with eyes which were as angry as her own. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to

obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable.

She worked upon me so, partly with her scorn and partly with this money that she held before my eyes, that I believe I should have yielded and taken my chances upstairs, had it not been that I saw her eyes following the struggle within me in such a crafty, malignant fashion, that it was evident she was bent upon making me the tool of her revenge, and that she would leave me no choice but to do the old man an injury or to be captured by him. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. He had not imagination enough to realise that the experience which seemed so appallingly important to him, was the merest everyday matter of business to the medical man who could not have lived for a year had he not, amid the rush of work, remembered what was due to his own health. But, then, Champion Harrison told me how the fighting-men lived there, and my father how the heads of the Navy lived there, and my mother how her brother and his grand friends were there, until at last I was consumed with impatience to see this marvellous heart of England. Thus when he tries to recall each stage of the journey he does so with the knowledge of its end, and can no longer make it clear, even to himself, how it may have seemed to him at the time. And yet, when I knew that the fact was attested by three eye-witnesses, who were Lord Dunraven, Lord Lindsay, and Captain Wynne, all men of honour and repute, who were willing afterwards to take their oath upon it, I could not but admit that the evidence for this was more direct than for any of those far-off events which the whole world has agreed to accept as true. Surely there is no situation which the mind of man could invent which has not taken shape and been played out upon the world stage. And then in an instant, as though she had said too much, she sprang to her feet and drew her mantle round her. No one could entertain more charmingly than she, for she moved about among the people with her amiable smile, setting everybody at their ease by her kindly natural manner, and by the conviction which she gave them that she was thoroughly at her ease herself. He hurried in, fearing that she might have taken some turn for the worse, but he was reassured to find her sitting up in her bed, with Clara and Ida Walker in attendance upon her. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no

pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

This was just before the end of the session; and soon after the holidays commenced, the professors who still remained in Birchespool were shocked to hear that their brother of the chair of physiology had sunk so low that no hopes could be entertained of his recovery. He would talk, too, to his two daughters of her strength of character, her decisive mind, and of the necessity of their cultivating her acquaintance and following her example, until at last it had become his most common topic of conversation. Oh, I trust he is not offended with me! I have, according to our arrangement, addressed it to you, my dear Mr. McArdle, and I leave it to your discretion to delete, alter, or do what you like with it. **You may think me ill-bred to say it, sir,' she remarked,**but I cannot but marvel where you have been, or what you have done all your life. I had determined to give you notice when we reached Brighton; but as we drove from the village that day, I caught a glimpse of a lady passing in a phaeton between whom and Lord Avon I was well aware there was a close intimacy, although I was not certain that she was actually his wife. what could I say, what could I do? I swear that they have not in mine, Though I am a year Short of sixty, my dear, And you are well, say thirty-nine.

"My dear Clara," he cried, "you have torn your skirt!"

How far Mansoor may have gone with his assurances may never be known, but the Mussulman preacher came walking towards them at this moment with a paternal and contented smile upon his face, as one who has a pleasant and easy task before him.

Well,' said she,there are some who call him a usurper, and wish him all evil; but for my own part I have never heard of anything that he has said and done which was not great and noble. However, I could not turn and I could not stop, so there was nothing for it but to gallop on and to take my chance.

"How can you so far forget yourself, Mr. Stulpnagel," said he, "as to jest in the presence of death?" Oh, Charles, you have not the heart!

"That is one of the few professions which cannot be improved," said Mrs. West-

macott, with her sweetest smile. Oh! Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. That I did not know.

Well,' said she, there are some who call him a usurper, and wish him all evil; but for my own part I have never heard of anything that he has said and done which was not great and noble. There was nothing to encourage my ambition, for the only thing which I inherited from my father was a weak stomach. That is all that I can say." In her own eyes she was herself very plain, and she knew that her manner was often ungracious when she would most wish to be gracious.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. "If your friend," she said, "would be good enough to stop, he might be of inestimable service to me."

"Oh! I have it!"

"That was to make you angry," said I.

"Well, I am angry," said he.

I felt more and more angry. but I could say no more.

"I had no idea that you noticed that," he said. He is going to bring you up to my rooms, and I shall ask you for a true account of the matter.

I contented myself by answering that I was not, by which reticence I could see that I only excited his curiosity the more. And yet I felt happier than I had done since this crushing blow had fallen upon me, for it was good to think that the world should know what we had done, so that at the worst our names should not perish with our bodies, but should go down to posterity associated with the result of our labors.

I may have commented upon my friend's power of mental detachment, but never have I wondered at it more than upon that spring morning in Cornwall when for two hours he discoursed upon celts, arrowheads, and shards, as lightly as if no sinister mystery were waiting for his solution. What had you to do with her or with us? Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying

that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. What would your father say? she asked, with something appealing in her voice and expression. I have no doubt that something which he had said had put the thought into my father's head, and that the fiery nature of the man had done the rest.

' "Having got so far, let us inquire to what end the universe was made, and we put upon it. If, for example, our only knowledge of unknown forces depended upon the researches of Dr. Crawford of Belfast, who places his amateur medium in a weighing chair with her feet from the ground, and has been able to register a difference of weight of many pounds, corresponding with the physical phenomena produced, a result which he has tested and recorded in a true scientific spirit of caution, I do not see how it could be shaken. There's Belcher's young brother, Tom. For my own part, if I were only assured that I was as clever and brave as the average man about me, I should be well satisfied.

But how was I to do it?

"That's him!" "There are some trades that had best not even be spoken about.' I left him here last night, and I heard him lock the door as I came down-stairs." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. A fine leader truly for a godly cause! Him I took to be the landlord, and I asked him what I should have for my dinner. "What were we talking about?" You!" "Good heavens!" Then she walked back into the house, the happiest girl in all Utah.

"Oh! Nonsense! How could you possibly know?

"Well, what do you think of that?" "Meanwhile, I am much obliged to you for your courteous acquiescence.

" 'Nay, take it not to heart, bold Allen,' exclaimed their leader, who was none other than the great Jack Cade himself. Then at last I would speak, and she would start in her chair and stare at me with the most admirable pretence of being surprised to find me in the room.

Reuben had said not a word since she had uncovered her face, and bore the face of a man who finds himself in some pleasant dream and is vexed only by the fear lest he wake up from it. We were all taking the matter much more seriously than we had ever done before.

Thus day followed day; and as sure as morning came he found that his unseen enemies had kept their register, and had marked up in some conspicuous position

how many days were still left to him out of the month of grace. It was not until we had returned in the afternoon to our cottage that we found a visitor awaiting us, who soon brought our minds back to the matter in hand. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I instantly communicated with Miss Morstan, and it only remains for us to drive out to Norwood and demand our share. said she; and was gone ere I could say a word in answer to her extraordinary request. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants?

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. It was ingenious, but not convincing. Do not hesitate to summon me." "I like you, my dear, and I am going to call you Clara." I cannot understand you. It is nothing. The most that she would concede was that she would not openly interfere with anything which her companions might say or do. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"No, it certainly is not." I could not believe it. There has been no better case within my recollection. Worst of all, he speedily assumed the same attitude

towards my daughter, Alice, and spoke to her more than once in a way which, fortunately, she is too innocent to understand. For my own part I was not so very anxious that she should save this craven lover of hers, whose handsome face belied the poor spirit within him. To her child's heart it seemed incomprehensible, – and yet she understood that it was sweet and beautiful also. And yet she did not like this secrecy, this disinclination upon the part of one so frank and honest as Ida to tell her what was passing. I know because I have tried." And she, the polluted one, had risen to the dignity, had cut herself sternly away from all that related to her past life, and had shown signs already of being a great Queen, stronger and wiser than her husband, but fierce, vindictive, and unbending, a firm support to her friends, but a terror to her foes. You are not as aggressive as I should wish, Clara, but still I like you very much. It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me. And yet I felt happier than I had done since this crushing blow had fallen upon me, for it was good to think that the world should know what we had done, so that at the worst our names should not perish with our bodies, but should go down to posterity associated with the result of our labors. I may have a laugh at them if I have nothing else.

"It was foolish of me to faint. Maybe it's the want of a friend that has driven her to this." In her own eyes she was herself very plain, and she knew that her manner was often ungracious when she would most wish to be gracious. **It's quite irregular, and he must go,' said I.** It's that or nothing,' said she.' Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. Surely you will not withhold it any longer." It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me.

My uncle was exceedingly anxious to know what I was about to do, but my fears of raising false hopes prevented me from telling him. Suppose that I got clear away, she would be in their hands until I could come back with help, for single-handed I could not hope to clear a way for her. No, no. From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. If he does not start at once I must go without him. But she must not think of herself. I would not believe them, I __ could __ not believe them – for I did not know that there was upon this earth a thing so contemptible.

"I shall go with you, James," she said.

"Why should he not take your mother with him?" "I did not dare to think it."

I need not tell you how my dear mother wept over me and fondled me, for you who have mothers will know for yourselves, and you who have not will never understand how warm and snug the home nest can be. No; why should I?" I could only think of one way of doing it.

"There is no time like the present. 'But I fear that your pains have been thrown away.

It was not easy for us to observe anything at the time, however, for we were ourselves in the midst of the frantic crowd, swaying about and carried occasionally quite off our feet, but endeavouring to keep our places behind Jackson and Berkeley Craven, who, with sticks and whips meeting over their heads, were still calling the rounds and superintending the fight. At the same time I was conscious of a strained feeling of expectancy which was almost painful.

Well,' said she, there are some who call him a usurper, and wish him all evil; but for my own part I have never heard of anything that he has said and done which was not great and noble.

"Here I am," I answered, but they did not seem to hear me. But I know I am right.

"I dare say there is no such very great difficulty over that," said Monsieur Fardet, with a wink at the American.

My whole soul rose against the injustice of it, and yet I had no appeal and no redress. Why, it is but twenty minutes since I had the letter, Clara, and it seems to me to be some old, old thing which happened far away in my past life, some horrid black cloud which shut out all the freshness and the peace from it."

"You will excuse my anxiety, Miss Morstan," he remarked, airily.

"Can it not!" Mary cried.

"But you must – you, with your beauty, with your soul! The she. I could imagine few more unlikely things than that the war should roll back to the Piave, and I could not think how any military event of consequence could arise there, but none the less I was so impressed that I drew up a statement that some such event would occur there, and I had it signed by my secretary and witnessed by my wife with the date, April 4th, attached. She began to praise you, I said what I felt, and then in an instant it was all out." "That's a good guess," said he.

"Yes, he looks happy, mother," he repeated, with a chuckle.

"Remarkable – most remarkable!" All of this is surely tidings of great joy, and I repeat that it is not a vague faith or hope, but that it is supported by all the laws of evidence which agree that where many independent witnesses give a similar account, that account has a claim to be considered a true one.

"Yes, yes; I admit I cannot explain them." I should have turned and run away if I had had the strength, but I could only just stand and stare at her.

There can be grace and courtesy as well as defiance in a bow; I put all three into this one, with a touch of ridicule in the shrug which accompanied it. Challenger was very much annoyed. It was all that I could do to persuade him to let me find out Miss Morstan's address and send her a detached pearl at fixed intervals, so that at least she might never feel destitute."

"I do not care how I look. 'There is no need for you to meddle in the business. Miss Hinton has told me of it, until I feel as if I could find my way through it from end to end. To this day I do not know whether we were deceived, or whether there was some mistake in the name of the place; but there are the facts, and I was so disgusted that for some time my interest in the whole subject waned. But I must go, Clara, I must not seem to shirk.

"Later, when I descended to order the car and found Austin bending over it absorbed in repairs, I controlled my open hand even after I had lifted it and refrained from giving him an experience which would possibly have caused him to follow in the steps of the housekeeper.

"If you'll let one out it's just what I have come for," said I.

"Go on!" "It does not really matter. I never said anything, and I tried not to make myself ridiculous. Then we fell upon him and dragged him away. Smith saw it, and he could have knocked him down for it. Let me go, I say!"

Well,' said she, there are some who call him a usurper, and wish him all evil; but for my own part I have never heard of anything that he has said and done which was not great and noble.

Von Hartmann's indignation at this fresh attack upon him was so great that he became speechless for a minute from rage, and could only glare and shake his fists, while he struggled in her embrace. She spoke just now as if she had mentioned the plan which I had conceived to you. This being so, it is impossible that you, who profess the holy creed, should suffer your daughter to violate it." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more

about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. There was something in the gentleness of his rebuke, and in his appeal to her mother, which brought the tears to her eyes, and in another instant she would have been kneeling beside him with everything confessed, when the door flew open and her sister Ida came bounding into the room. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian's descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them. It is my belief that she is merely stunned, and that she is in no danger at all." "I am as glad to see you as ever I was to see a man in my life, but I confess that I did not expect you." He ran towards me in his eagerness when he saw me come out from the door. I do not know what to make of it." He would not make a fit partner for me."

"I need not say that any publicity given to such an idea – any levity in your narrative of what occurred – would be exceedingly offensive to me." I had expected to find my Cousin Sibylle there, but to my surprise there was no sign of her, nor had she left any word to tell us whither she had gone. 'Now, sir,' she continued, 'I had no intention of telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I have no alternative. What I wanted to say is that if you would like to have a second opinion I shall be very glad to meet any one whom you might suggest.'

"Come, come, my dear lady," said he, "you speak vastly beyond my merits;" upon which encouragement she started again in a theatrical apostrophe to Britain's darling and Neptune's eldest son, which he endured with the same signs of gratitude and pleasure. Extricating himself with some difficulty from his unpleasant position, Von Hartmann gave an inarticulate yell of fury, and dashing out of the room, in spite of the entreaties of Elise, he seized his hat and rushed off into the town, all dripping and dishevelled, with the intention of seeking in some inn the food and comfort which he could not find at home. What did he do? "You can consider the matter settled." If my gracious master – the ever-glorious Emperor Justinian – does not disdain to take me into his most intimate confidence in all things, it would be strange if there were any subject within your knowledge which I might not hear.

That night, wearied as I was after the wonderful happenings of the day, I sat late

with McArdle, the news editor, explaining to him the whole situation, which he thought important enough to bring next morning before the notice of Sir George Beaumont, the chief. Miss Thurston was her name. She was much impressed by your kindness and skill." Through all her life she would think of him – she would know. This I concealed where no one has ever discovered it; but my fears would not allow me to go back for the other, as I might perhaps have done, had I foreseen how terribly its presence might tell against my master. "And no one who has not lived with her and known her intimately can tell how charming and good she is. She was modern to the soles of her dainty little high-heeled shoes, frankly fond of dress and of pleasure, devoted to tennis and to comic opera, delighted with a dance, which came her way only too seldom, longing ever for some new excitement, and yet behind all this lighter side of her character a thoroughly good, healthy-minded English girl, the life and soul of the house, and the idol of her sister and her father.

How far Mansoor may have gone with his assurances may never be known, but the Mussulman preacher came walking towards them at this moment with a paternal and contented smile upon his face, as one who has a pleasant and easy task before him. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. And she, the polluted one, had risen to the dignity, had cut herself sternly away from all that related to her past life, and had shown signs already of being a great Queen, stronger and wiser than her husband, but fierce, vindictive, and unbending, a firm support to her friends, but a terror to her foes. His experience had been the same as my own, and he was eager to see Captain Barrington; and to ascertain why he had directed his brother to return the money to us. Mr. Mortimer Tregennis naturally went with him. Oh, why would he do it?

"No doubt we had, but I beg you won't try to drag me into the matter, Mr. Holmes.

"No, I hardly think so. That is not so at all. From every side men, women, and children were rushing wildly for shelter, swarming up the staircases and into the caves in a mad stampede. If we are going to work this thing, we may as well work it well. It is not much, but I can do it well.' I am surprised that you did not see me. You are my Gladys, are you not – little Gladys Hungerton?" Do you not think it possible that it might have an entirely different result?

"Yes, that is so." The atmosphere was poisonous and horrible. The creature has not passed ten minutes. Astonished at the sight, I leaned forward to pick it off, when, to my horror, it burst between my finger and thumb, squirting blood in

every direction. How you must hate and loathe me!

"I do not know." Why, I suppose of all the men you meet upon 'Change, there is not one who has not some such story to tell.

"Yes, my dear." I cannot ask you to share it."

"My dear Mrs. Westmacott," cried Clara, "I assure you that I have not the least idea what it is that you are talking of." I would have taken you into my confidence, Charles, had it not been that your suspicions had wounded me deeply – for I did not at that time understand how strong the reasons were which had prejudiced you against me.

"Well," said Mr. Lumsden, with some hesitation, "I hope that your temper is really as good as you say, for I rather fancy that you may need it." You should not be here. What would our blessed mother have said could she have seen it? "Would that I could have been the first to pay him homage, but it would not be wise for me to go. 'They do not think it hopeless, nor do we.'

I knew that it was not so, but how could I bring myself to tell her?

So much Smith could not avoid hearing, but he hurried on, for he had no wish to be involved in their dispute.

It was heavenly for Johnson to have something to do and to feel that he was of some use to his wife.

'Madam, – I would not take the boldness of writing to your Majesty till I had shown the King how I do abhor the thing that I have done, and how much I desire to live to serve him. Indeed, nothing but my mother's good name for orthodoxy prevented him from insisting upon my dismissal. "But women were few, and there were many who had better claims than I. I was not a lonely man: I had my daughter to attend to my wants." It is true that we had made a strict resolution against firing, but if it seemed to them that I might be in danger they would not hesitate. "I should wish Ida to be my sister, and you my wife."

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

Chapter V

The Tragedy of Pondicherry Lodge

It was nearly eleven o'clock when we reached this final stage of our night's adventures. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. Again, he might walk in the physic gardens of St. James's, or go down the river with the ebb tide to the cherry orchards at Rotherhithe, or drive to Islington to drink the cream, or, above all, walk in the Park, which is most modish for a gentleman who dresses in the fashion.

'I thank the Lord that I have never been so far tempted from the straight path as to set foot within one,' the Puritan answered, 'nor have I ever been in that great sewer which is called London.'

'You have been over there?' cried he, much excited.

"Oh! No, only two, I think. She carried herself in the most stately fashion, so that as I looked at her majestic entrance, and at the pose which she struck as she glanced at my father, I was reminded of the Queen of the Peruvians as, in the person of Miss Polly Hinton, she incited Boy Jim and myself to insurrection. And perhaps you never heard the name before?"

"Why not?"

"I'm not clever enough or slow enough for their Z-Z fashions," said he.

"You have a kind face, Etienne," said she; "you would not condemn this poor man to certain death. I studied you all, therefore, and I have come to the conclusion that you are the one who is most suited for my purpose." When I thought of all my efforts in Abyssinia, of the length of my journey and of the dangers and fatigues which I had endured, I could not bear to think of this total disaster coming upon me at the last instant and robbing me not only of my profits, but also of my original outlay.

Having got so far, Defoe remarked that he thought he had given them a fair start, and handed over the story to Dean Swift, who, after premising that he feared he would find himself as much at sea as Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells, continued in this way: –

"For two days I drifted about in great distress, fearing that there should be a return of the gale, and keeping an eager look-out for my late companions.

"Dear me, Mr. Malone, this is very – very exalted. I could see from Miss Morstan's manner that she was suffering from the same feeling. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. 'And I'm proud of the ridgment,' say I. 'A damned good answer too!'

"I am afraid that you will not be able to wire to me, for I can hardly tell yet where I may find myself. Yes, in very truth he is a young man, and hath much life in him and much strength.

"Oh, I have done a little sailing myself – as much as a woman can aspire to, you know. I took him in thousands, and here I am." Do not wait longer, kind friend, or you may find yourself in trouble.' Thus, in the cross-correspondence experiments we continually have them asking, "Did you get that?" Have you read up the case?" And now I must leave ye, for I have much to do. "I wanted to have a word. Then came the day when your mother's kindness – her mistaken kindness – gave you the means of escaping to London." I should think that you have a full two years before you." To this end he had given up his house in Weymouth Street, and had taken this opportunity of moving himself, his scientific instruments, and his two charming daughters (he had been a widower for some years) into the more peaceful atmosphere of Norwood.

"My nerves are not very strong, I am afraid." I could not put one before the other, but I do none an injustice when I say that Lucia was the equal of the best.

"And which do you think the prettiest of them?" The spirit then depended upon matter.

'Nay, John, you are too absurd!' That is what he always says, and my aunt the same. Or perhaps you will see that there is the ring of truth in what I say, and you will follow it up, and so make your name for ever as a man who does not grudge personal trouble where justice is to be done. The same power which saved us may save them, and let us pray together that it may be so, always remembering that if, in spite of our prayers, it should __ not __ be so, then that also must be accepted as the best and wisest thing."

"My dear Mrs. Westmacott," cried Clara, "I assure you that I have not the least idea what it is that you are talking of."

"You are too young for strong waters," she said, "but this talking gives one a dryness, and –"

Then it was that Boy Jim did a wonderful thing. Oh! "It was extremely good of you." That is all." The cases are manifold, and I mention only a few of them, but my point is that the whole of this system, from the lowest physical phenomenon of a table-rap up to the most inspired utterance of a prophet, is one complete

whole, each attached to the next one, and that when the humbler end of that chain was placed in the hand of humanity, it was in order that they might, by diligence and reason, feel their way up it until they reached the revelation which waited in the end. However, on this occasion we found everything in order.

"Oh, no," cried Ida, "Mrs. Westmacott says that there should be one law for all." "You got rather more than you gave." But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him. That is a very important point. What were you reading?"

"I do not see any other way."

"Indeed!"

'Here comes some one who is not afraid to gallop,' I remarked. So I read it, but it is well not to be dogmatic on such matters. Do you?"

"I am glad of that."

"Then I wish I was also." I hardly know what I said to him, but the facts were so deadly that he did not attempt to deny his guilt. And when I see these faithful men, and when I think that every broad piece in the strong boxes of my townsmen is ready to support them, and when I know that the persecuted remnant throughout the country is wrestling hard in prayer for us, then a voice speaks within me and tells me that we shall tear down the idols of Dagon, and build up in this England of ours such a temple of the true faith that not Popery, nor Prelacy, nor idolatry, nor any other device of the Evil One shall ever prevail against it.' When we read so many references to the phenomena with which we are familiar, the levitations, the tongues of fire, the rushing wind, the spiritual gifts, the working of wonders, we feel that the central fact of all, the continuity of life and the communication with the dead, was most certainly known.

"I am not so sure of that, Miss Adams," said the Colonel. No use to raise hopes and let them down again. I am fond of a hand at cards myself, and it was almost as good as having one to watch the others. My point is, that the physical phenomena which have been proved up to the hilt for all who care to examine the evidence, are really of no account, and that their real value consists in the fact that they support and give objective reality to an immense body of knowledge which must deeply modify our previous religious views, and must, when properly understood and digested, make religion a very real thing, no longer a matter of faith, but a matter of actual experience and fact. And if what I tell you should ever chance to differ from what you have read in the book of Mr. Coke or of Mr. Oldmixon, or of any one else who has set these matters down in print, do ye bear in mind that I am telling of what I saw with these very eyes, and that I have helped to make history, which is a higher thing than to write it.

"You are sure of this?" So this is the upbringing that you have had, Jim – to think evil of that which you do not understand! And I – ah, my friends,

I was magnificent! If I did not make the course of events clear to you, you would hardly understand the influences which had such an effect upon my whole history. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal* state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

"I have already explained to our young friend here," said Challenger (he has a way of alluding to me as if I were a school child ten years old), "that it is quite impossible that there should be an easy way up anywhere, for the simple reason that if there were the summit would not be isolated, and those conditions would not obtain which have effected so singular an interference with the general laws of survival. But when I return I shall hope to find that you have reconsidered your conduct, and that you have shaken yourself clear of the pernicious influences which have recently made such an alteration in your conduct."

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

"Very clearly." It is difficult to think that some fifteen or twenty messages from various sources of which I have personal notes, all agree, and yet are all wrong, nor is it easy to suppose that spirits can tell the truth about our world but untruth about their own. If it had not been for that villain Mansoor, you need not have appeared at all."

"You are a sea-officer of my own heart, Stone," said he, when her ladyship had exhausted her panegyric. She and I never took to each other very much; but now I hope all that may be ended, and when I marry she will come and stay

with me." It is everywhere apparent that their spirits, even the spirits of those who, like Myers and Hodgson, were in specially close touch with psychic subjects, and knew all that could be done, were in difficulties when they desired to get cognisance of a material thing, such as a written document. I was lost. There was nothing that I could see to distinguish him from any professional driver, save that he was chatting very freely with a dainty little woman who was perched on the box beside him. When he spoke of seeing her again so soon, he was referring to her own approaching death, which he had been assured could not be delayed more than a very few months. Even then it was no easy matter to keep to the right track, for the moon had not yet risen, and the high cliffs on either side made the obscurity more profound. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. A shame and a disgrace. Why should you wish to injure us? I would have you to understand that it is a matter of perfect indifference to me, and I refuse to entertain the most remote sense of personal obligation. If the ladies will come after me, they will be spared the sight of anything painful."

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. I look back at the chain of incidents, my interview with McArdle, Challenger's first note of alarm in the Times, the absurd journey in the train, the pleasant luncheon, the catastrophe, and now it has come to this – that we linger alone upon an empty planet, and so sure is our fate that I can regard these lines, written from mechanical professional habit and never to be seen by human eyes, as the words of one who is already dead, so closely does he stand to the shadowed borderland over which all outside this one little circle of friends have already gone. When I looked back upon my series of adventures, my wanderings in the salt-marsh, my entrance into the cottage, my discovery of the papers, my capture by the conspirators, the long period of suspense with Toussac's dreadful thumb upon my chin, and finally the moving scenes which I had witnessed – the killing of the hound, the capture of Lesage, and the arrival of the soldiers – I could not wonder that my nerves were overwrought, and that I surprised myself in little convulsive gestures, like those of a frightened child. For you may remember, my children, that I stated when I first took it in hand to narrate to you these passages of my life, that the hopes of Monmouth's party rested very much upon the raid which Argyle and

the Scottish exiles had made upon Ayrshire, where it was hoped that they would create such a disturbance as would divert a good share of King James's forces, and so make our march to London less difficult.

'Nay, sir, it is too much honour,' cried Dame Hobson, with a simper. 'And what of yourself?'

"I do not know." If anything, they were more impossible than at the first point where we had met them.

"Good heaven!" How could you possibly know?

"What was the last news when you left London?" It is inconceivable and horrible. "They'll have you for murder as sure as fate."

'You speak warmly, sir. But when I return I shall hope to find that you have reconsidered your conduct, and that you have shaken yourself clear of the pernicious influences which have recently made such an alteration in your conduct.'

'That need not hinder us,' said he, with a sour smile; 'I will undertake that he never claims the promise.' There would be no reason in his eyes why the finding of the ring should be connected with the murder.

Clara stared. "If you will let me know how your investigations go," he continued, "I shall be happy to give you any help I can. No; why should I?" "You will ask my pardon for that speech, sir, for it is from no less a person than Sir Charles Tregellis, my own brother." I had no pretence to greater physical courage than my neighbours, but familiarity with a subject robs it of those vague and undefined terrors which are the most appalling to the imaginative mind. "Women are never to be entirely trusted, – not the best of them." 'Yet perhaps it may be from want of habit as much as from want of courage.'

"Colonel Gerard," said he, "I cannot promise you your life, for it is not our custom, but I can give you an easy death or I can give you a terrible one.

"Capital!" What?

And I, dear friends – imagine the fever, the ferment, the madness of my mind! "It is indeed deplorable. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. All came right in the end, but I never heard the true story of the unfortunate beauty and her three crippled sisters." _ -RSB-

THE END

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT

And Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

New -LSB- Illustration -RSB- York George H. Doran Company

Copyright, 1905, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1918, 1919, by A. Conan Doyle

Copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons

Copyright, 1911, by Associated Sunday Magazines, Inc.

Copyright, 1908, by the McClure Company

Copyright, 1900, 1902, by the S. S. McClure Company

Copyright, 1894, D. Appleton & Company

-LSB- Illustration -RSB-

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT AND OTHER TALES OF THE
UNSEEN – Q – Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

PAGE

I THE BROWN HAND 9

II THE USHER OF LEA HOUSE SCHOOL 30

III B. 24 51

IV THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT 72

V CYPRIAN OVERBECK WELLS 95

VI PLAYING WITH FIRE 120

VII THE RING OF THOTH 139

VIII THE LOS AMIGOS FIASCO 163

IX HOW IT HAPPENED 174

X LOT NO. 249 179

XI "DE PROFUNDIS" 225

XII THE LIFT 239

THE GREAT KEINPLATZ EXPERIMENT

__ and Other Tales of Twilight and the Unseen __

I

THE BROWN HAND

Every one knows that Sir Dominick Holden, the famous Indian surgeon, made me his heir, and that his death changed me in an hour from a hard-working and impecunious medical man to a well-to-do landed proprietor. Beware of her! 'Now, sir,' she continued, 'I had no intention of telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I have no alternative.'

Holmes looked grave. Indeed, this might be said of many women in the England of those days, for the men were rude and rough and coarse, with boorish habits and few accomplishments, while the women were the most lovely and tender that I have ever known. Lady Jane did not want him.

"Yes – if you could take her off with you I should be still more grateful."

"No, no; it is out of the question."

"What am I to do?"

"But what do you mean to do?" "All that you say is perfectly true. Whatever would the women think of him!"

"Well, Miss Sadie, I hope with all my heart that you will be able to say the same when you are the same age as your Aunt."

"It is not yet time." What more?

"Miss Eva Cameron be her name, sir," she said: "but who she be, or where she came fra, I know little more than yoursel' . Personally, I can truly say that I never felt stronger in body or better balanced in mind in my life."

"We can do nothing more," said Mrs. Challenger. I am not in a mood to argue such a point." If from all this you learn anything which shows you her real character, or which seems to you to corroborate the story which I have told you, then I am sure that I can rely upon your goodness of heart to come to the rescue of an innocent man.

"And as far as I can help," said Harvey Deacon, "it will certainly never be done again." "I am as glad to see you as ever I was to see a man in my life, but I confess that I did not expect you."

It was just three days after the Doctor and the Admiral had congratulated each other upon the closer tie which was to unite their two families, and to turn their friendship into something even dearer and more intimate, that Miss Ida Walker received a letter which caused her some surprise and considerable amusement. No one could entertain more charmingly than she, for she moved about among the people with her amiable smile, setting everybody at their ease by her kindly natural manner, and by the conviction which she gave them that she was thoroughly at her ease herself.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety

to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. I had expected to find my Cousin Sibylle there, but to my surprise there was no sign of her, nor had she left any word to tell us whither she had gone. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. She spoke just now as if she had mentioned the plan which I had conceived to you. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. So I sized you down, and I'm bound to say that you came well out of it. Nothing but the worst news came to us from every side, – which is not to be wondered at, for if you look at the map you will see that we were right in the heart of it. I was speaking of your brother, Jem."

She looked so beautiful in her enthusiasm that I nearly brought down the whole level of the interview.

"Oh! She was gone. He was quite sharp enough to see that. I think it would be very nice." It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me.

"I think, after your kind attention to me, I cannot do less than relieve any curiosity that you may feel. Do you not think that it is a great pity?"

"Nay, it is surely plain enough to you now. "I would not have missed the investigation for anything."I am so sorry to trouble you, dear Ida," she said.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. The growing friendship of the three families, the engagement of Harold Denver with Clara Walker, the

engagement of Charles Westmacott with her sister, the dangerous fascination which the widow exercised over the Doctor, the preposterous behavior of the Walker girls and the unhappiness which they had caused their father, not one of these incidents escaped the notice of the two maiden ladies. No one could entertain more charmingly than she, for she moved about among the people with her amiable smile, setting everybody at their ease by her kindly natural manner, and by the conviction which she gave them that she was thoroughly at her ease herself. For the wealthy dignitaries of the Church, rolling in their carriages to their cathedrals, in order to preach the doctrines of their Master, who wore His sandals out in tramping over the countryside, he professed the most bitter contempt; nor was he more lenient to those poorer members of the clergy who winked at the vices of their patrons that they might secure a seat at their table, and who would sit through a long evening of profanity rather than bid good-bye to the cheesecakes and the wine flask.

The Professor purred with satisfaction. From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night. The growing friendship of the three families, the engagement of Harold Denver with Clara Walker, the engagement of Charles Westmacott with her sister, the dangerous fascination which the widow exercised over the Doctor, the preposterous behavior of the Walker girls and the unhappiness which they had caused their father, not one of these incidents escaped the notice of the two maiden ladies.

I knew that it was not so, but how could I bring myself to tell her? I would have taken you into my confidence, Charles, had it not been that your suspicions had wounded me deeply – for I did not at that time understand how strong the reasons were which had prejudiced you against me. I cannot expect the story to be believed, but it is so singular that I should feel that it was a breach of duty if I did not put it upon record – so here it is, and your belief or incredulity is your own affair.

‘I shall have your robes ready, and also the rooms of our guests,’ she answered, and so, with a bright smile to us, tripped away upon her duty. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. Oh! ‘What an eye! It is all right.’

‘I swear that you are mistaken,’ I replied.

“Nay, dear, you must go, for it may be the one great chance of your life. I am most anxious to be of use to you. Do sit down and talk it over. But what’s this you’ve brought, Tregellis, eh?” you villain! Oh! Oh, Clara, I do hope your heart won’t fail you.” ‘The best of fathers! I do wish you wouldn’t; for things are so much nicer as they are.’ What would your father say? Oh! Heavens! But it is

for you that I am frightened, dear.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. Oh, dear, dear, what is this I hear?" "Well, I love that you should think me so.

But suddenly I had understood it all. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him. Now her spirit seemed very near him, and his own was tempered by its presence. Never was as pleased at anything in my life! "See, my friends! All of this is surely tidings of great joy, and I repeat that it is not a vague faith or hope, but that it is supported by all the laws of evidence which agree that where many independent witnesses give a similar account, that account has a claim to be considered a true one. The girl, not a little transported at her good success, came and assured her friends that she would now be well.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form.

"Charles would be flattered if he could see the gracious way in which we receive his kindness," said she. As to his brightness, it really does not matter, for his aunt, Mrs. Westmacott, is very rich, much richer than you would think from her style of living, and she has made him a handsome provision."

"Certainly," said I; and that was the foundation of my friendship with Thomas Crabbe.

"My brother and I," said he, "were, as you may imagine, much excited as to the treasure which my father had spoken of. But you will know all about it soon enough. And yet my chance was a terribly long time coming, for many months had passed before the visit to Cliffe Royal gave me the opportunity which I longed for by day and dreamed of by night. I had seen his flaring yellow barouche flying through Friar's Oak many a time, and had halloaed and waved my hat with the others as it passed, but never in my wildest dreams had it entered my head that I should ever be called upon to look him in the face and answer his questions.

Well,' said she, there are some who call him a usurper, and wish him all evil; but for my own part I have never heard of anything that he has said and done which was not great and noble.

But in spite of gleams of sunshine, there was thunder in the air, and Champion

Harrison had just whispered in my ear that he was quite sure that we should never get through the night without trouble, and was advising me, if it got very bad, to take refuge under the table, when the landlord entered the room hurriedly and handed a note to my uncle. Oh! I told my brother last night that I should bring some friends." I could not bear to avow that which I had done. I think, 'I went on, as he followed me into the passage, 'that you will not say that your captivity hath been made very harsh for you. For my own part I fear that I betrayed myself, for the eye becomes more eloquent when the tongue is silent. I think it is safe to say that things can never be quite the same again.

The Emperors set face and firm manner showed it was hopeless, and yet my cousin persevered as no one but a woman who pleads for her lover would have dared to do. For my own part I was relieved at the explanation, for my father had left London in the full conviction that a vacancy would speedily be found for us both, and the one thing which had weighed upon my mind was that I might have found it hard to leave my uncle without interfering with the plans which he had formed. I had feared that the boy might receive evil from her, and had never dreamed in my blindness that she might get good from him. 'Now, sir,' she continued, 'I had no intention of telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I have no alternative.

"We can't all be Stanleys and Burtons," said I; "besides, we don't get the chance, – at least, I never had the chance." "I dare say your father would act for me, nephew?

"You believe in love, then?"

"Yes, dear, you are right. Nothing can be said to be certain upon this point.

"Oh! All of this is surely tidings of great joy, and I repeat that it is not a vague faith or hope, but that it is supported by all the laws of evidence which agree that where many independent witnesses give a similar account, that account has a claim to be considered a true one. Now I wish to __ prove __ it to you, and to show you that which is only a thought. I saw that I was suspected, and I saw, also, that even if I were to clear myself, it could only be done by a public confession of the infamy of my brother.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. "I am sure," said she, "that dear mother would like papa to do whatever would make him most happy.

"Your common sense will, I am sure, sustain my objection and realize that it was better that I should direct my own movements and appear only at the exact moment when my presence was needed. Between ourselves, I have very good reason to wish him to stay with me, and I am sure that, with his high spirit and his ideas, he would never settle down again after once he had a taste o' London. It was a two-roomed cottage, which had once belonged to some shepherd, but

had long been deserted, and was crumbling rapidly to ruin. There are plenty of little yachts and yawls at Calcutta or Madras which would serve our turn well.

"Harrison!" Mary cried. "You can wait, Austin. You must come and see us.

"I am sure that he would not." If you can but suggest how I can compensate you, you will find me ready and willing." But it was no time now for talk. I can understand that your father might not like to lose you. I must be in London by morning, for we hope that Danvers and Wildman may be able to raise the city. Well?" I doubt we shall never make a soldier of you,' he remarked. "It's life and death, you know.

When the good Professor finally fulfilled his promise, and published an account of what occurred, the narrative was so extraordinary that it was received with general incredulity.

CHAPTER XIII – LORD NELSON

My father's appointment with Lord Nelson was an early one, and he was the more anxious to be punctual as he knew how much the Admiral's movements must be affected by the news which we had heard the night before. And yet she did not like this secrecy, this disinclination upon the part of one so frank and honest as Ida to tell her what was passing. The event itself will always be marvellous, but the circumstances that we four were together at the time of this extraordinary episode came about in a most natural and, indeed, inevitable fashion. They were never at their ease, always upon the brink of a catastrophe, encouraged one day only to be rudely rebuffed the next, bullied in public and slighted in private, and yet, in spite of it all, the singular fact remains that they loved him and served him as no monarch has been loved and served. He ran towards me in his eagerness when he saw me come out from the door. I myself will drive you all to London." Could you help me so far?" I cannot ask you to share it." But we must waste no time. But one thing I now insist upon.

It was just three days after the Doctor and the Admiral had congratulated each other upon the closer tie which was to unite their two families, and to turn their friendship into something even dearer and more intimate, that Miss Ida Walker received a letter which caused her some surprise and considerable amusement. The growing friendship of the three families, the engagement of Harold Denver with Clara Walker, the engagement of Charles Westmacott with her sister, the dangerous fascination which the widow exercised over the Doctor, the preposterous behavior of the Walker girls and the unhappiness which they had caused their father, not one of these incidents escaped the notice of the two maiden ladies. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. But if it were not, then what could it be? I have no doubt that you feel the same way yourself, and that you would not care to stake the whole credit of the Gazette upon this adventure until we can meet the chorus of criticism and scepticism which such articles must of necessity elicit. That colour alone showed that she could be none other than the Empress; but the dignity of her carriage, the fierce authority of her magnificent dark eyes, and the perfect beauty of her haughty face, all proclaimed that it could only be that of Theodora who, in spite of her lowly origin, was the most majestic as well as the most maturely lovely of all the women in her kingdom.

“Come, come, my dear lady,” said he, “you speak vastly beyond my merits;” upon which encouragement she started again in a theatrical apostrophe to Britain’s darling and Neptune’s eldest son, which he endured with the same signs of gratitude and pleasure. Her heart was terribly diseased. And yet, when I knew that the fact was attested by three eye-witnesses, who were Lord Dunraven, Lord Lindsay, and Captain Wynne, all men of honour and repute, who were willing afterwards to take their oath upon it, I could not but admit that the evidence for this was more direct than for any of those far-off events which the whole world has agreed to accept as true. There was, however, no trace of exultation or satisfaction upon his face. But I had not got half through my story, and Jim, like the good fellow that he was, had just begun to forget his own troubles in his delight at my good fortune, when my uncle called to me from without.

I cannot end this little book better than by using words more eloquent than any which I could write, a splendid sample of English style as well as of English thought. But perhaps you would care to wait. Sextus might have done well, for he became clerk to Johnny Tranter the attorney; but he was of an enterprising turn, and he shifted the whole business, papers, cash, and all to the Lowlands, to the no small inconvenience of his employer, who hath never been able to lay hands either on one or the other from that day to this. Did she love the heroic and the spectacular for its own noble sake, or was it for the glory which might, without effort or sacrifice, be reflected upon herself? Often as I rode behind my caravan, and gazed at the grotesque figures which bore my wares in front of me, I found it hard to believe that it was indeed reality, and that it was I, I, Manuel Ducas, who lived near the Theodosian Gate of Constantinople, and shouted for the Green at the hippodrome every Sunday afternoon, who was there in so strange a land and with such singular comrades.

“I would suggest to your Excellency,” said I, “that I have only finished the work that was planned and carried out by Monsieur Hubert, who gave his life for the cause.” That was the style of the letter, and it ended by imploring me to leave the window-latch open, and to be in the front room at three in the morning, when he would come to receive my last kiss and to bid me farewell. I wish it to

be a great success. My fellow-lodger had kept her room; and, steeled as my mind was against her influence, I was yet conscious of a little throb of disappointment that she should allow me to depart without a word of farewell.

‘Shall we not make for it at once?’ said Mary. It is no pleasant matter for me to dwell upon, yet, convinced as I am that there is no such thing as chance either in the great or the little things of this world, I am very sure that the sacrifices of these brave men were not thrown away, and that their strivings were not as profitless as might at first sight appear. She is a clever woman, this Madame Grand. “What do you think of it, Watson?” It is no good whatever.”

“I am sure of it.

“Do you mind?” Good heavens!” I am quite sure that no one will interfere with you there.” Did I ever tell you that case where Nature divorced a most loving couple?

“Yes, indeed; and I hope you will come to my wedding, all of you.

“I am sure I wish we had,” answered her sister.

Was Mr. Stuart in his right mind again, or was it some coincidence of his delirium, that he should have chosen this for his song?

“May I come in?” I never heard. I wish it to be a great success. Go home and say that I am coming, and I will be round immediately afterwards.”

“Oh, there is no great hurry. Who knows what new turn matters may take?” Do not be satisfied with any evidence short of the best, but having got that, you can, it seems to me, wait for that short period when we shall all be re-united.

“So how long do you think it took you?” He paused and listened for an answer.

“It is very kind of you, ma’am. I am not likely to forget it.” I believe that you could do it better than any one. I did not, of course, believe in an anthropomorphic God, but I believed then, as I believe now, in an intelligent Force behind all the operations of Nature – a force so infinitely complex and great that my finite brain could get no further than its existence.

“Oh! You have had a great deal more than ever I had, but I dare say I can make shift to test it. Good day to you, and thank you.”

At least he did not refuse you,’ said I. It is as good as a promise that; should the cause be successful, you shall be so too.’

“Pray do.” I should be very glad to do it through your son.”

“I do hope that we shall not have to keep it up long.

“Oh! That is not so at all. I’m awfully sorry if I seemed to doubt you. Occasionally they were fantastic and cheerful.

“It’s just what I want. Surely it was the place of a loyal friend to rejoice at such news; yet I am ashamed to say that selfishness took me by the soul, and that

my heart turned as heavy as lead within me. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible."

"More than I can ever get. But I've something to do now which is more in my own line, and I need not trouble you any more."

"I need say no more, sir. It did not seem to be any personal concern of mine. All that is essential is both very simple and very sure." "If we and those whom we loved all passed over simultaneously, we should think no more of it than of changing our house." It is nothing. "Well, I think I am pretty sure of you, Berthier, for although I am fond of you for reasons of my own I do not think that you would be of much value to anyone else."

"Very clearly." I like it. There seemed a great multitude on every side of me, but I could see no one. "But no, perhaps it is as well. You would just hate yourself for ever after. If I marry, I do want to marry a famous man!" Good night! I shall be very glad to see the last of him.' She was gone. It is not a matter on which I can well speak to her direct. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters.

She raised no objection, and for my part I was overjoyed at the proposal, as it gave me an opportunity of learning more of this singular cousin of mine, who had told me so much and yet seemed to know so much more. This is a great pity. Young Wells, being a likely lad enough, well-spoken and high-spirited, was at once entered on the books as officer's servant, in which capacity he both gained great popularity on account of the freedom of his manners, and found an opportunity for indulging in those practical pleasantries for which he had all his life been famous. And yet it was at that very instant that the most terrible danger befell me. When I thought of the way in which he had spoken of his unhappy friend, Lord Avon, upon the evening before, and of the emotion which he showed as he told the horrible story, I was glad to think that there was the heart of a man there, however much it might please him to conceal it. Now that they had not only ceased to protect him, but had themselves become a source of trouble to him, he began to understand how great the blessing was which he had enjoyed, and to sigh for the happy days before his girls had come under the influence of his neighbor.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets;

that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. How was I to account for that? It would not be right nor honorable." They were not unlike each other, either in face or figure, though the Bristol man was a few years the older, and a murmur of critical admiration was heard as the two tall, lithe figures, and keen, clean-cut faces were contrasted. "I was sure that you were not a man who, to clear yourself from a little money difficulty, would sacrifice the happiness of your mother and the health of your father." I can only regret that your peace has been disturbed by our misfortunes, and I offer you in my sister's name and my own our apologies. Napoleon's self-confidence and his contempt of the world had the effect of making him careless as to what was thought or said of him, while Josephine, when she was carried away by jealousy, lost all the dignity and restraint which usually marked her conduct; so between them they gave some embarrassing moments to those who were about them. I had long determined that he should have a show for his life if he chose to take advantage of it.

"I never heard of such insolence in my life!" It was not for me, the guest, the captive, to make love to the sister of my host. How can I put such a public affront upon her? Not merely like you, you understand.

"It's not so bad as we thought," said he, "and yet it is bad enough.

"Oh!" "Don't struggle!" Then I recalled to mind that he had mentioned to us that his brother and he were twins. "Good heavens!" Your remarks are irrelevant and unintelligible. He never got a fair sight of it the whole time.

"It's not so bad as we thought," said he, "and yet it is bad enough.

'Shameful!' In fact, his dislike was rapidly deepening into absolute detestation. By heaven, I shall never forgive myself if she proves to have the heels of us!"

"Cruel!" I did not dare to think it."

It is true; and yet I never expected that I should be on such terms with you. Such a misfortune! Oh! What do you think of my nephew Charles?" It was your own good which I had chiefly at heart.

'I am glad to hear you say so,' I answered, 'for it makes it easier for me to say that I wish to go my own way, and to have nothing more to do with you.

"Oh! I wish you no harm, ma'am." "I am a practical man.

'When the report was presented last night, and he heard of your presence in that den of thieves, he was very anxious that you should be brought to him.

"Yes, I must go.

"Why should you not?" I thought it was they.

"To you, mademoiselle, I can refuse nothing. That would give about forty miles, but still it is, I fear, rather far for a rescue. I do not know if it is still standing, but I should think it likely, for it was not a place much given to change. Jonathan I shall leave to you, but if the other turns nasty I shall shoot him dead." I think that I'll just take my chance, and stay where I am, and as I see that it's nearly five o'clock, I must ask you to excuse me."

I could have explained that it was because he had betrayed his comrades, because his daughter hated him, because he had ill-used his wife, because my father regarded him as the source of all his troubles – but the salon of the Empress was no place for a family quarrel, so I merely shrugged my shoulders, and was silent. That same night the secretary of my Lord Clarendon came to me, and announced with much form and show that, in consideration of my long devotion and the losses which I had sustained, the King was graciously pleased to make me a lottery cavalier.

Thinking, as I did, that he was speaking of our own old Queen Charlotte, I could make no meaning out of this; but my father told me afterwards that both Nelson and Lady Hamilton had conceived an extraordinary affection for the Queen of Naples, and that it was the interests of her little kingdom which he had so strenuously at heart. Her face was pale, striking rather than pretty, but with two great dark eyes, so earnestly questioning, so quick in their transitions from joy to pathos, so swift in their comment upon every word and deed around her, that those eyes alone were to many more attractive than all the beauty of her younger sister. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable. I will not disguise from you that the matter is serious in the last degree, and that Marshal Lannes has chosen a cavalry officer because he can be better spared than an officer of infantry or of engineers. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning, Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention, as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever.

"I dare say that it has happened with you, sir," said my uncle at last, "that you have lost some dear messmate, in battle or wreck, and that you have put him

out of your mind in the routine of your daily life, until suddenly some word or some scene brings him back to your memory, and you find your sorrow as raw as upon the first day of your loss." At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over.'T is true that if La Jeune were dancing, or if Mrs. Bracegirdle or Mrs. Oldfield came upon the boards, we would hum and clap, but it was the fine woman that we applauded rather than the actress.' After you was gone he walked and he walked, up and down, and up and down, until I was weary of the sound of his footstep.

"There is a good reason for that," said I, "for Lord Avon was, as I have heard, your uncle's best friend; and it is but natural that he would not wish to speak of his disgrace." Finally, the conversation turned to music – I am not sure that my uncle did not artfully bring it there, and the Prince, hearing from him of my tastes, would have it that I should then and there sit down at the wonderful little piano, all inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which stood in the corner, and play him the accompaniment to his song.

"I promise you that you will understand this and a good deal more before we part, Sir Lothian," said Jim, with a curious smile playing over his face.

"Why?" What do you mean?"

He expected that he would receive some message or remonstrance from Young as to his conduct, and he was not mistaken, though it came in an unlooked-for manner.

"I do not know."

"Well, it is surely perfectly clear who took them away.

"Now?" "Well, I cannot wonder at it. —"

" — Egyptian! Some little tour-de-force of the sort is in excellent taste.

'And pray what are they?'

And I? "How much did you desire?" 'You are not yourself at present, but when you return to your right mind you will be ashamed of having made this public exposure of your weakness.

"I'm not much afraid of anything."

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

Jane, on being cross-questioned, refused to commit herself beyond the statement that it depended upon the gentleman, and also upon the oysters.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her.

"I cannot help it. I do not intend to marry yet."

"Tut, never think about her!

"Oh! But where is your uncle?" Where could I send her, and what could I do with her?

"I cannot help it." I should be loath to exercise any undue pressure upon my sister Ada; but I have given her to understand that there is no one whom I should prefer for a brother-in-law to my most brilliant scholar, the author of 'Some Remarks upon the Bile-Pigments, with special reference to Urobilin.' With your permission, I would ask the favor of an interview, as I feel strongly upon the

subject, and have certain suggestions which I could only elaborate in a personal conversation.

'I can be a very hard master when I like,' said he smiling.

"Well, it was, as far as anybody that could be of any good goes." "That would be more absurd still." I saw, too, that eccentricity was, as my uncle had told me, the fashion; and if the folk upon the Continent look upon us even to this day as being a nation of lunatics, it is no doubt a tradition handed down from the time when the only travellers whom they were likely to see were drawn from the class which I was now meeting.

"It is singular that I, who had never feared him in life, should be frightened at him now, and yet when I looked at him, and saw that all was motionless save the creeping stain upon the carpet, I was seized with a sudden foolish spasm of terror, and, catching up my knife, I fled swiftly and silently back to my own room, closing the panels behind me." "The death rattle!" 'And now, who may you be to whom I owe this interference which shortened the affair, though mayhap the result would have been the same had you left us to settle it amongst ourselves?'

"And why not?"

"Oh! dear! You will see from what I say that I can hardly be blamed in the matter. But as long as I cannot there is no use pretending that I can. I had no idea of it. How he took it I cannot say, for I never left the room, but there is no doubt that it was then, while I was opening cabinets and stooping to boxes, that he managed to abstract some of the devil's - foot root. Oh! Nonsense! It is no pleasant matter for me to dwell upon, yet, convinced as I am that there is no such thing as chance either in the great or the little things of this world, I am very sure that the sacrifices of these brave men were not thrown away, and that their strivings were not as profitless as might at first sight appear. When I thought of the way in which he had spoken of his unhappy friend, Lord Avon, upon the evening before, and of the emotion which he showed as he told the horrible story, I was glad to think that there was the heart of a man there, however much it might please him to conceal it. Oh, I am so glad." Two or three warriors spoke, and finally our young friend made a spirited harangue with such eloquent features and gestures that we could understand it all as clearly as if we had known his language.

"You are very good, sir."

"James!" Yes, I thought so. "I know very well that I am not clever or anything of that sort, but still I would do all I can to make you very happy. I can see him now with his foolish, angry eyes and his long, thin, puzzled face. And he is most amazingly strong. You meant well, I am sure." I took him in thousands, and here I am."

The lady, who had heard of his coming, was much surprised on learning of his departure. When fully equipped, both Saxon and my father agreed that I had all that was requisite for a well-appointed soldier.

"I have already explained to our young friend here," said Challenger (he has a way of alluding to me as if I were a school child ten years old), "that it is quite impossible that there should be an easy way up anywhere, for the simple reason that if there were the summit would not be isolated, and those conditions would not obtain which have effected so singular an interference with the general laws of survival. Here at least was a problem which would tax his sagacity to the utmost.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion.

My mother seemed to speak with a hushed voice when she mentioned this wonderful brother of hers, and always had done as long as I can remember, so that I had learned also to have a subdued and reverent feeling when I heard his name.

"That looks very nice and emancipated," said Ida, glancing round. Lady Holden was a small, alert woman with a kindly eye, and her expression as she glanced at him was a certificate of character to her husband. I could only think of one way of doing it. I do not know what to make of it." For my own part, if I were only assured that I was as clever and brave as the average man about me, I should be well satisfied. Twelve hundred pounds she's worth to me, Mary, my darling, and never again shall you soil your pretty fingers or pinch upon my beggarly pay.

It was a sight which I shall never forget until my dying day – so weird, so impossible, that I do not know how I am to make you realize it, or how in a few years I shall bring myself to believe in it if I live to sit once more on a lounge in the Savage Club and look out on the drab solidity of the Embankment. No, I have never heard of it."

'I am glad to hear you say so,' I answered, 'for it makes it easier for me to say that I wish to go my own way, and to have nothing more to do with you. There was never a better or more hard-working wife, but she ain't what you'd call a patron of sport, and that's a fact.' Walker was very nice about it, and made the most handsome apologies. But I had not got half through my story, and Jim, like the good fellow that he was, had just begun to forget his own troubles in his delight at my good fortune, when my uncle called to me from without.

"There's somebody knows something," said Belcher, "and there's nobody has a better right to know what it is than we. But this other money will be enough to cover everything, and it is all my own." She was weak and helpless, shaken in mind and nerve. "I am sure," said she, "that dear mother would like papa to do whatever would make him most happy.

Clara stared. As to his brightness, it really does not matter, for his aunt,

Mrs. Westmacott, is very rich, much richer than you would think from her style of living, and she has made him a handsome provision." It is difficult to think that some fifteen or twenty messages from various sources of which I have personal notes, all agree, and yet are all wrong, nor is it easy to suppose that spirits can tell the truth about our world but untruth about their own. Ah! Oh, Clara, I have it; I have it! That's the pinch. But, after all, it seems to me that we are as far as ever from learning how your unfortunate brother met his death."

"My dear Professor, let me congratulate you with all my heart. You have no cause to doubt it." But he feared above all things lest he should offend her, and so put an end to their present pleasant intimacy.

I began to feel uneasy. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him.

The minister explained in a few words that I had been received into the Emperor's personal service, and Josephine congratulated me upon it with the most kindly sympathy.

Having got so far, Defoe remarked that he thought he had given them a fair start, and handed over the story to Dean Swift, who, after premising that he feared he would find himself as much at sea as Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells, continued in this way: –

"For two days I drifted about in great distress, fearing that there should be a return of the gale, and keeping an eager look-out for my late companions. What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants? But all of them had my honour and my fame at heart, and I felt that their grief would be tinged with pride when they learned how I had ridden and how I had fought upon this last day.

It was just three days after the Doctor and the Admiral had congratulated each other upon the closer tie which was to unite their two families, and to turn their friendship into something even dearer and more intimate, that Miss Ida Walker received a letter which caused her some surprise and considerable amusement. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. This morning, however, for once, she found me in a listening mood, and with little prompting, proceeded to pour into my ears all that she knew of our beautiful visitor. It is horrible to think of. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil

of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. It was a frightful blow. In his whole life of struggle and success he had never felt such a glow of quiet contentment as suffused him at that instant when the grip of death was closing upon him. De Meneval has told me that for an hour at a time he has sometimes talked in this strain of the most intimate thoughts and aspirations of his heart, while his courtiers have stood round in silence waiting for the instant when he would return once more to his practical and incisive self.

A look of relief passed over my father's honest face, for he was never very easy in his brother-in-law's company. If his career in town has been a disappointment to me, the reason lies mainly in the fact that I am foolish enough to measure others by the standard which I have myself set.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Mrs. Harrison loved Jim as if he had been her own son, and her husband loved mine, so they came to my help, and may God bless them for their kindness to a distracted wife and mother!

"Then I accept it, sir, and I am much obliged to you."

"By all means. But now I know how precious it is. 'Now, sir,' she continued, 'I had no intention of telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I have no alternative. Now I've had another wire to say that she can't come to-morrow, but that she will pick up the ship at Falmouth on Wednesday. The chance of my overhearing a story told by young Mr. Stone here, which showed me that some one was using the secret chambers of Cliffe Royal, convinced me that Lord Avon was in hiding there, and I lost no time in seeking him out and offering to do him all the justice in my power.' If I thought it would darken your life afterwards or be a sad recollection to you I would not say another word." But, then, Champion Harrison told me how the fighting-men lived there, and my father how the heads of the Navy lived there, and my mother how her brother and his grand friends were there, until at last I was consumed with impatience to see this marvellous heart of England. I am sorry to state that I have had to seriously complain of his conduct in the train, and I should be wanting in frankness if I did not say that it has left a most unpleasant impression in my mind." That is why their case is not more constantly before the public, for if their cry for redress was as great as their grievance it would fill the world to the exclusion of all others. "If you will let me know how your investigations

go," he continued, "I shall be happy to give you any help I can. As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers.

"Holyrood!" She was balanced upon a giddy pinnacle, the highest in the world, and yet the higher the deeper the fall. The important, all-engrossing, delightful thing was that she could not look upon him as a casual acquaintance any more. Well, well, to think o' that! She will be glad to make your acquaintance." But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him.

It is your first entrance at Court, is it not, Monsieur de Laval,' said he, in his high-bred cordial manner; you should not feel lonely, for there are certainly many friends of your father here who will be overjoyed to make the acquaintance of your father's son. But I would fain have your name and style and what is it you purpose to do, so that we may perchance hear of each other in the years to come.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. How close is the connection between kindred souls over there is shown by the way in which Myers, Gurney and Roden Noel, all friends and co-workers on earth, sent messages together through Mrs. Holland, who knew none of them, each message being characteristic to those who knew the men in life – or the way in which Professor Verrall and Professor Butcher, both famous Greek scholars, collaborated to produce the Greek problem which has been analysed by Mr. Gerald Balfour in *The Ear of Dionysius*, with the result that that excellent authority testified that the effect COULD have been attained by no other entities, save only Verrall and Butcher. We do not recollect that there also everything is in proportion and in harmony so that the spirit scene or the spirit dwelling, which might seem a mere dream thing to us, is as actual to the spirit as are our own scenes or our own dwellings, and that the spirit body is as real and tangible to another spirit as ours to our friends. On the contrary, all his attention seemed to be concentrated upon her answer. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to

him. Your visit hath been a joy to me, and your return will be the same to them. We have been able to do it with ease." She felt that it was settled, that he had come to ask her for her sister's hand. The widow might fascinate him by her knowledge of the world, her dash, her strength, her unconventionality – all these qualities Clara was willing to allow her – but she was convinced that she would be unendurable as a life companion. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian's descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them. In his great goodness and self-abnegation he had, in his early declaration given forth at Lyme, declared that he should leave the choice of a monarch to the Commons of England, but having found that his enemies did most scandalously and basely make use of this his self-denial, and did assert that he had so little confidence in his own cause that he dared not take publicly the title which is due to him, he hath determined that this should have an end. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. And yet what are we to do?" For Truth is a stern mistress, and when one hath once started off with her one must follow on after the jade, though she lead in flat defiance of all the rules and conditions which would fain turn that tangled wilderness the world into the trim Dutch garden of the story-tellers. When I looked back upon my series of adventures, my wanderings in the salt-marsh, my entrance into the cottage, my discovery of the papers, my capture by the conspirators, the long period of suspense with Toussac's dreadful thumb upon my chin, and finally the moving scenes which I had witnessed – the killing of the hound, the capture of Lesage, and the arrival of the soldiers – I could not wonder that my nerves were overwrought, and that I surprised myself in little convulsive gestures, like those of a frightened child.

"To my surprise he demurred very much to the suggestion, and he explained that according to his religion it was an all-important matter that the body should be reunited after death, and so make a perfect dwelling for the spirit. – and perhaps after all it is only a feeling peculiar to myself. But I had no pride of that sort. I thought no more of its relation to my own nerves. For the wealthy dignitaries of the Church, rolling in their carriages to their cathedrals, in order to preach the doctrines of their Master, who wore His sandals out in tramping over the countryside, he professed the most bitter contempt; nor was he more lenient to those poorer members of the clergy who winked at the vices of their patrons that they might secure a seat at their table, and who would sit through a long evening of profanity rather than bid good-bye to the cheesecakes and the wine flask.

"I waited as it seemed to me for at least an hour; but I had no watch, and my

impatience was such that I dare say it really was little more than a quarter of that time.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. Encouraged by this concession, she gradually came to move the stool on which she sat nearer and nearer to my table, until after gaining a little every day during some weeks, she at last worked her way right up to me, and used to perch herself beside me whenever I worked.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

—

" _ Egyptian! For my own part I was not so very anxious that she should save this craven lover of hers, whose handsome face belied the poor spirit within him. To me it would seem a deplorable thing that we should in any way curtail by so much as a minute so wonderful an experience." And so you go to the Duke of Beaufort! I am so pleased. South America is a place I love, and I think, if you take it right through from Darien to Fuego, it's the grandest, richest, most wonderful bit of earth upon this planet. Perhaps we shall come upon some other indications as we proceed."

"Oh, that's the best explanation you can give, is it?" But who are the others? "Is your mother living?"

"I do not see any other way." I suppose they were ten miles off from me, yet even at that distance one could observe how, from time to time, they twinkled or were obscured as someone passed before them. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible." It is true that your name is still proscribed, but my influence with the Emperor will set that matter right.

But now I had to think of myself.

"Oh! Yes, I thought so. Now, what I thought is this. 'But I had forgot. Well, gentlemen, have I read you the riddle aright, or is there any point which you would query?"

"No, I cannot."

"I hope it's not very bad," he said. And then... And then... how can I tell you what happened then? He is very much in love with her, I assure you.

"My dear Clara!

'Nay, John, you are too absurd!' Self-sacrifice is all very well, you know, but we have had rather too much of it on our side, and should like to see a little on the other. I had no idea of it. "Od's fish!" I had felt the fellow's grip upon my arms, and I knew that I would be a child in his hands. And yet my chance was a terribly long time coming, for many months had passed before the visit to Cliffe Royal gave me the opportunity which I longed for by day and dreamed of by night. He said that he wished to have your promise that they should all have very good reward if they helped you to escape." If you do, all will be in vain.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night. To prevent any painful thoughts, I may assure you once for all, dear, that it is nothing of which I need be ashamed. I could not have believed it. From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night.

'It is a quarter of an hour since he got away.' "My fellow-officers, whom I never saw until last night, will not be content unless they catch another glimpse of me the first thing this morning."

But in spite of gleams of sunshine, there was thunder in the air, and Champion Harrison had just whispered in my ear that he was quite sure that we should never get through the night without trouble, and was advising me, if it got very bad, to take refuge under the table, when the landlord entered the room hurriedly and handed a note to my uncle.

"Where are you?" And yet it is so real with me, so entirely part of my very self, that I cannot help acting upon it. It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible." If ye can indeed pray, and if your soul-cursing conventicles have not driven all grace out of ye, drop on your knees and offer up thanks when I tell ye that he hath ordained that ye shall all have a free pardon.' "I will not say a word against our friend the Colonel, but it is not possible that a man should be fitted for everything. He was silent."Do not be angry with us. "I cannot see, however, how it affects your relation to my sister." And then there were my mother and my sisters to be thought of.

But her sister was of a more practical and less sentimental nature. But what do I see now? For my own part I was not so very anxious that she should save this craven lover of hers, whose handsome face belied the poor spirit within him.

‘It is true; and yet I never expected that I should be on such terms with you.

“Well, of course, I am aware that there is not any what you might call DEFINITE evidence. Oh, you must think him well over, for I want to speak to you about him.” I cannot expect the story to be believed, but it is so singular that I should feel that it was a breach of duty if I did not put it upon record – so here it is, and your belief or incredulity is your own affair. It seemed a poor return for all the courtesy which we encountered that we should deceive our hosts and benefactors, but under the circumstances we had really no alternative, and I hereby tell them that they will only waste their time and their money if they attempt to follow upon our traces. It is not my first affair, and I dare bet that it will not be my last.

“And have you anything to tell me?” I assure you, however, that I never even knew that you had a brother until you handed me the watch.”

“Oh! I have, as I said, done Mortimer some turns which he might remember, though it did not become me to remind him of them.” You know best what that is. Should we clear ourselves, which is no very easy matter, the justice will at least want to know whence we come and whither we go, which may lead to inquiries that may bode us little good. It may be that I am mistaken, but I have every confidence in the correctness of my reasoning.” ‘All things which love us and are necessary to our happiness in the world are with us here.’ You like one day what you cannot abide the next. “You seem to be altering your opinions.

“I never knew you forget yourself before,” said my uncle. I thought that you were never coming.

‘Madam, – I would not take the boldness of writing to your Majesty till I had shown the King how I do abhor the thing that I have done, and how much I desire to live to serve him. All this is the truth, and if I tell it to you, gentlemen, it is not to amuse you, – for you have not done me a very good turn, – but it is because I believe the best defence I can make is just to hold back nothing, but let all the world know how badly I have myself been served by Major Sholto, and how innocent I am of the death of his son.” “I was sure that you were not a man who, to clear yourself from a little money difficulty, would sacrifice the happiness of your mother and the health of your father.” You see I have a lot of special knowledge which I apply to the problem, and which facilitates matters wonderfully. “I’m not quite clear in my own mind how these things should be approached, – if they are to be approached at all, – but I am sure this is not the way. If I were sure that this would be done, it would be a great ease to my mind.’ It is no pleasant matter for me to dwell upon, yet, convinced as I am that there is no such thing as chance either in the great or the little things of this world, I am very sure that the sacrifices of these brave men were not thrown away, and

that their strivings were not as profitless as might at first sight appear. Ah! But here he comes, if I am not mistaken, to speak for himself."

"You will surely go in and see Mrs. Esdaile," she repeated, glancing up at him with eyes which had in them something between a challenge and a caress. I began to ask him questions exactly as if he were seated before me, and he sent his answers back with great speed and decision. Thus I got at his address." "Certainly," said she, "I should be well if I could touch him." Whatever come, you always find me here.

"Stuff and nonsense!" he said, and then again in a kind of whisper, "Hale!" Why do you turn your eyes away from me?" You did it very well, I must say that, and really I think that I like you better as you are.

"I wish you would. That was enough to decide me.

A heart! How could you have the heart to do it? 'Have we nothing to give the men?"

"You wish to kill me," said I; "it cannot matter to you how I die.

"And they?" I am so sorry to have disturbed you with my foolishness." I will do it. For my own part I was not so very anxious that she should save this craven lover of hers, whose handsome face belied the poor spirit within him.

Never in the world was a command obeyed so promptly as that one.

Mr. Gregson, who had listened to this address with considerable impatience, could contain himself no longer. Mrs. Harrison loved Jim as if he had been her own son, and her husband loved mine, so they came to my help, and may God bless them for their kindness to a distracted wife and mother! I had no time for it. There was something in the gentleness of his rebuke, and in his appeal to her mother, which brought the tears to her eyes, and in another instant she would have been kneeling beside him with everything confessed, when the door flew open and her sister Ida came bounding into the room. He hurried in, fearing that she might have taken some turn for the worse, but he was reassured to find her sitting up in her bed, with Clara and Ida Walker in attendance upon her. And yet how powerless she was to prevent it! It was agony to him to hear that she was about to straighten little Alec Turner's club-foot, and right at the fringe of the rumour came a note from his mother, the rector's wife, asking him if he would be so good as to act as chloroformist. And yet she did not like this secrecy, this disinclination upon the part of one so frank and honest as Ida to tell her what was passing. She must have been more than woman if she did not feel some uneasiness at the strange enterprise upon which we were embarking, yet her self-control was perfect, and she readily answered the few additional questions which Sherlock Holmes put to her. Do you not think that she may come to forget this man and to love me?" The widow might fascinate him by her knowledge of the world, her dash, her strength, her unconventionality – all these qualities Clara was willing to allow her – but she was convinced that she would be unendurable as a life companion.

“He shall not fall, Walker, and you shall not have occasion to be ashamed of the family into which your daughter is about to marry. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable. By degrees, however, as she came to realise my utter indifference, she became reconciled to the situation, and, as I have said before, profited by it, as our visitor performed much of the domestic work. But he feared above all things lest he should offend her, and so put an end to their present pleasant intimacy. They were never at their ease, always upon the brink of a catastrophe, encouraged one day only to be rudely rebuffed the next, bullied in public and slighted in private, and yet, in spite of it all, the singular fact remains that they loved him and served him as no monarch has been loved and served.

My cousin had not said one word or taken any notice of my presence, but at this joining of our names she glanced at me with the same hostile expression which I had already remarked. But the work was never congenial. She was altered in some subtle way. She could wish nothing better than that Ida should be the wife of Harold Denver, and from the words which she had overheard as they left the lawn that evening, she could not doubt that there was some understanding between them. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him. “If your friend,” she said, “would be good enough to stop, he might be of inestimable service to me.” I could not but observe, however, that her fall was very carefully executed, and that she was fortunate enough, in spite of her insensibility, to arrange her drapery and attitude into a graceful and classical design. It was John! And yet this lonely beautiful woman, with the strong will and the loyal heart, had touched my feelings, and I felt that I would help her to anything – even against my own better judgment, if she should desire it. “I am so sorry to trouble you, dear Ida,” she said. As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers. She could but refuse me, and better be a repulsed lover than an accepted brother. Sometimes his fierce taunts would bring some reply from the Empress, some gentle reproof to him for his gallantries, but each remonstrance only excited him to a fresh rush of vituperation. But if you refuse to speak, it is certain that you will never see her.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. 'No doubt for state reasons the Emperor had to tamper a little with Mahomedanism, and I daresay he would attend this Church of St. Paul's as readily as he did the Mosque at Cairo; but it would not do for a ruler to be a bigot. I knew it,' said she. But, then, Champion Harrison told me how the fighting-men lived there, and my father how the heads of the Navy lived there, and my mother how her brother and his grand friends were there, until at last I was consumed with impatience to see this marvellous heart of England.

'It was my father's before me,' I answered.

"Is that he?" What does he do then?

And they did talk about something else; but her left hand was still enclosed in his, and he knew, without asking again, that all was well. The longer I stay, the harder it will be to go. Ask him how he chanced to find How to leave the French behind, And he answers quick and smart, "English climate's best for Art." He had made up his mind, and he would do it in any case, he said; but it rested with me whether his death should be happy and easy or whether it should be most miserable.

"Come in, Sir Charles, and I am convinced that you will acknowledge that I could not have done otherwise.

"You will let me try?"

"Even that I cannot do," he answered; "but I doubt not that the landlord can inform us." I think I hear them coming, Charles. I answered that he must take the consequence of his own deed.

" 'It was not I who killed her father,' he cried. He said that he could not very well understand you, nor you him, and so he came to me."

" 'Does your brother know, then, of what you will do?'

"Yes, certainly."

"Why," said I, with some pride, "I ought to know it, seeing that my mother's brother, Sir Charles Tregellis, was the nearest friend of Lord Avon, and was at this card-party when the thing happened.

'Like not what?'

"Mr. Malone, I understand," said he. Doubtless a true man would have rendered this help to any damsel in distress, and yet it may add to your satisfaction to know that she whom you have served is no stranger to you.'

"And Clara is as bad, Clara who used to be so good and sweet, the very image of her poor mother." I cannot see, however, how it affects your relation to my sister." Whether it was the terrible death of her father or the effects of the hateful marriage into which she had been forced, poor Lucy never held up her head again, but pined away and died within a month. You know him and understand him.

"I tell you, Jinny, it's you and only you that I love," said he.

"Oh! No, no. I have never looked with the eyes of love upon another woman.

'It is true; and yet I never expected that I should be on such terms with you. You must give up all thought of it.'

"It is a strange story," said Jim, thoughtfully; "but when I asked my aunt about it, she would give me no answer; and as to my uncle, he cut me short at the very mention of it."

"I have no doubt whatever upon the point.

"And your brother?" If a man lead a life of virtue, what matter what he believes?

"You are very good."

And I? I can only tell you what I know.

"But how could I tell?"

"Does your brother know, then, of what you will do?"

Come, Sibylle,' said her father, you can assure your cousin Louis that, so far as you are concerned, any family misunderstanding is at an end.'

"Well?"

"Oh! Nay, there is but one chance for us. My mission might be dismissed as useless. And here you are, after all." I am old enough to remember your father when he was a young gallant, and you are his very double – though I may say, without flattery, that where there is a difference it is in your favour.

"I knew you fairly well, sir, in our youth; but you will allow me to observe that neither I nor any friend of yours ever heard of a wife or a son. But it is not as bad as you think." 'Why should not Micah and I go ourselves?' But where is your nephew Jim, and how did you come to know that you would be needed?"

It is your first entrance at Court, is it not, Monsieur de Laval,' said he, in his high-bred cordial manner; you should not feel lonely, for there are certainly many friends of your father here who will be overjoyed to make the acquaintance of your father's son. You're not looking quite yourself. It was all that I could do to persuade him to let me find out Miss Morstan's address and send her a detached pearl at fixed intervals, so that at least she might never feel destitute." "Did you think, then, that you were the only man in the world with a taste for solitude? It is for him to decide what he shall do, and

then to do it without interference from anyone. He would not resent it so much if he had not something to fear from it. I do not know now whether I can save you, but at least I will try." I have no doubt that you feel the same way yourself, and that you would not care to stake the whole credit of the Gazette upon this adventure until we can meet the chorus of criticism and scepticism which such articles must of necessity elicit. You will allow that my fears of you were not unnatural, since neither your dress nor your appearance were such as one would expect to meet with in such a place and at such a time.'

My story is one which you may well treasure up in your memories, and tell again to others, for it is not likely that in this whole county of Hampshire, or even perhaps in all England, there is another left alive who is so well able to speak from his own knowledge of these events, or who has played a more forward part in them. It must reach him to-day, or his army will be left behind and destroyed." But what use will you make of it?" But, then, Champion Harrison told me how the fighting-men lived there, and my father how the heads of the Navy lived there, and my mother how her brother and his grand friends were there, until at last I was consumed with impatience to see this marvellous heart of England.

"They will know no better. I had heard much of the beauty of the daughter of this Governor, but one day as I walked out with Parmes we met her, borne upon the shoulders of her slaves. Now I will do my very best for you, Admiral! But as to handing her over to you, when it is clear she fears and hates you, I won't do it.

She looked so beautiful in her enthusiasm that I nearly brought down the whole level of the interview.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. Hilary Joyce found himself in the presence of a short, thick-set officer, with a gentle voice and a placid expression which covered a remarkably acute and energetic spirit.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. When our sins come to be weighed, much may be forgiven us for the sake of those unselfish days."

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether

he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over.

Reuben had said not a word since she had uncovered her face, and bore the face of a man who finds himself in some pleasant dream and is vexed only by the fear lest he wake up from it. If love had not come to her yet, there was at least pity and sympathy, which are nearly akin to it. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I would not believe them, I _ could _ not believe them – for I did not know that there was upon this earth a thing so contemptible. Never for an hour had she given him cause to regret it; but this lawyer brother of hers had, as I understood, offended my father by his slavish obsequiousness in days of prosperity and his venomous enmity in the days of trouble. It was agony to him to hear that she was about to straighten little Alec Turner's club-foot, and right at the fringe of the rumour came a note from his mother, the rector's wife, asking him if he would be so good as to act as chloroformist. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter

to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

But retreat was not so easy. The clock was on the stroke of eleven as we returned to our own men, and at that very moment King Monmouth rode out from the inn where he was quartered, and trotted with his staff down the High Street. The groom was away, and I had to send a lad in search of him, while with the help of the livery-man I dragged the curricule from the coach-house and brought the two mares out of their stalls. When I looked back upon my series of adventures, my wanderings in the salt-marsh, my entrance into the cottage, my discovery of the papers, my capture by the conspirators, the long period of suspense with Toussac's dreadful thumb upon my chin, and finally the moving scenes which I had witnessed – the killing of the hound, the capture of Lesage, and the arrival of the soldiers – I could not wonder that my nerves were overwrought, and that I surprised myself in little convulsive gestures, like those of a frightened child. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no

pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. And yet, so strong is habit, that, even in this extremity of emotion he assumed the deferential air of the high-class valet, and his sentences formed themselves in the sonorous fashion which had struck my attention upon that first day when the curricule of my uncle had stopped outside my father's door.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. Never have I travelled at such a pace, and never have I felt such a sense of exhilaration from the rush of keen upland air upon our faces, and from the sight of those two glorious creatures stretched to their utmost, with the roar of their hoofs and the rattle of our wheels as the light curricule bounded and swayed behind them. I took the precaution of walking the horse very quietly until we were some distance from the house, for I had told Reuben nothing of my intended journey, and I was convinced that if he knew of it neither discipline, nor even his new ties of love, would prevent him from coming with me. As he stood, with the high collar of his greatcoat raised to his ears, he might have seen from the reflection in the glass-case before him that his appearance was a singular one. At this supreme moment all the great deeds of my life rose in a vision before me, and I felt that this, my last exploit, was indeed a worthy close to such a career. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to

him. "I should be loath to exercise any undue pressure upon my sister Ada; but I have given her to understand that there is no one whom I should prefer for a brother-in-law to my most brilliant scholar, the author of 'Some Remarks upon the Bile-Pigments, with special reference to Urobilin.'"

"Then what can it be?" said Mary. Is not this so?"

My uncle's fears as to our being blocked upon the road were only too well founded, for after we passed Reigate there was such a procession of every sort of vehicle, that I believe for the whole eight miles there was not a horse whose nose was further than a few feet from the back of the curricule or barouche in front.

"How dear of you to say that!

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting.

"I thank you, sir, for the kind interest which you take in me," said I.

"But you must be a credit to me. It is difficult to imagine, then, how an outsider could have made so terrible an impression upon the company, nor have we found any possible motive for so strange and elaborate an attempt.

'I have thought better of it,' he answered, with a smile.

"And so have I. You cannot expect me to believe that you have read all this from his old watch!

"If you will read our philosophers, and above all the divine Plato, you will find that there are other guides who may take you to the same end. Have you a clue?" Quick, behind the tapestry!"

"Oh! After many adventures which I need not describe, and after traveling a distance which I will not mention, in a direction which I withhold, we came at last to a tract of country which has never been described, nor, indeed, visited save by my unfortunate predecessor.

"No, indeed." On arriving at the Castle we found that the King had not yet come out from his chamber, but we were shown into the great hall to await him, a fine room with lofty windows and a noble ceiling of carved woodwork. I am aware that all these accounts of life beyond the grave differ in detail – I suppose any of our accounts of the present life would differ in detail – but in the main there is a very great resemblance, which in this instance was very far from the conception either of myself or of either of the two ladies who made up the circle. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. How dare you stand in my way?' The height of the trees and the thickness of the boles exceeded anything which I in my town-bred

life could have imagined, shooting upwards in magnificent columns until, at an enormous distance above our heads, we could dimly discern the spot where they threw out their side-branches into Gothic upward curves which coalesced to form one great matted roof of verdure, through which only an occasional golden ray of sunshine shot downwards to trace a thin dazzling line of light amidst the majestic obscurity. Have you not all that heart could desire?

"Oh! I am not likely to forget it."

Shall we take him to the strong room, your Grace?' But what use will you make of it?" Is it not a shocking thing -- a thing to drive a reasoning man into absolute Materialism -- to think that you may have a fine, noble fellow with every divine instinct and that some little vascular change, the dropping, we will say, of a minute spicule of bone from the inner table of his skull on to the surface of his brain may have the effect of changing him to a filthy and pitiable creature with every low and debasing tendency? Finding that in my weak and dazed state all efforts were of no avail, I lay sullen and watchful, taking no heed of the random blows which were still showered upon me. As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the Hypnoidal' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is absolutely unknown; that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

"Oh! Lucy, dear, it was dreadful!" It was just as you say. But it would not do! You are my Gladys, are you not – little Gladys Hungerton?" How now, then?

"Of course after that there was nothing more to be done. It may have been the hypnotic lullaby of this gentle susurrus, or it may have been the result of my tiring day, but after many dozings and many efforts to regain my clearness of perception, I fell at last into a deep and dreamless sleep. At eleven it had increased to a gale, and by midnight the most furious storm was raging which I ever remember upon that weather-beaten coast.

Now this poor reward of merit Rankled so in Peter's spirit, It was more than he could bear; -LSB- 17 -RSB- So one night in mad despair He took his canvas for the year ("Isle of Wight from Southsea Pier"), And he hurled it from his sight, Hurling it blindly to the night, Saw it fall diminuendo From the open lattice window, Till it landed with a flop On the dust-bin's ashen top, Where, 'mid damp and rain and grime, It remained till morning time. While doing so, I shall make it my business, with infinite tact and delicacy, to throw out a few remarks which may arouse the interest of the audience and cause some of them to desire to go more deeply into the matter. It is quite certain that the thief or thieves were well acquainted with the house, for Mr. Jones's well-known technical knowledge and his powers of minute observation have enabled him to prove conclusively that the miscreants could not have entered by the door or by the window, but must have made their way across the roof of the building, and so through a trap-door into a room which communicated with that in which the body was found.

"I'm not much afraid of anything."

"What!" Of course, it must be the same chalk quarry into which the underground passage of Grosbois opened, and no doubt during his treasonable meetings with my uncle he had learned the secret. Could you help me so far?" No, Mr. Malone, I will place no restriction upon your correspondence, since the ventilation of the facts is the object of your journey; but I demand that you shall give no particulars as to your exact destination, and that nothing be actually published until your return. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"Perhaps you will think that this is an imitation also," said Lytton bitterly, and leaning back in his chair with a morose countenance, he continued the narrative in this way: –

"Our unfortunate hero had hardly stretched himself upon the straw with which his dungeon was littered, when a secret door opened in the wall and a venerable old man swept majestically into the apartment. Yet when we think how narrow

and how devious this path of Nature is, how dimly we can trace it, for all our lamps of science, and how from the darkness which girds it round great and terrible possibilities loom ever shadowly upwards, it is a bold and confident man who will put a limit to the strange by-paths into which the human spirit may wander. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

' I falter where I firmly trod, And falling with my weight of cares Upon the great world's altar stairs, Which slope through darkness up to God,

' I stretch lame hands of faith and grope And gather dust and chaff, and call To what I feel is Lord of all, And faintly trust the larger hope.'

"Oh! No, no. Now go."

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. Again, if Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth life of which he could not have cognisance, and if those things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also. And she is not afraid of the Emperor.

All this I shall some day write at fuller length, and amidst these more stirring days I would tenderly sketch in these lovely summer evenings, when with the deep blue sky above us we lay in good comradeship among the long grasses by the wood and marveled at the strange fowl that swept over us and the quaint new creatures which crept from their burrows to watch us, while above us the boughs of the bushes were heavy with luscious fruit, and below us strange and lovely flowers peeped at us from among the herbage; or those long moonlit nights when we lay out upon the shimmering surface of the great lake and watched with wonder and awe the huge circles rippling out from the sudden splash of some fantastic monster; or the greenish gleam, far down in the deep water, of some strange creature upon the confines of darkness. I have some dim remembrance of an ancient church upon an eminence, and of a quaint stone cross within the

market-place, but assuredly, of all the recollections which I retain of Bruton there is none so pleasing as that of the buxom landlady's face, and of the steaming dishes which she lost no time in setting before us.

"No one who was not good could be so absolutely happy as she seems to be. The height of the trees and the thickness of the boles exceeded anything which I in my town-bred life could have imagined, shooting upwards in magnificent columns until, at an enormous distance above our heads, we could dimly discern the spot where they threw out their side-branches into Gothic upward curves which coalesced to form one great matted roof of verdure, through which only an occasional golden ray of sunshine shot downwards to trace a thin dazzling line of light amidst the majestic obscurity. It is not a matter on which I can well speak to her direct.

Now this poor reward of merit Rankled so in Peter's spirit, It was more than he could bear; -LSB- 17 -RSB- So one night in mad despair He took his canvas for the year ("Isle of Wight from Southsea Pier"), And he hurled it from his sight, Hurl'd it blindly to the night, Saw it fall diminuendo From the open lattice window, Till it landed with a flop On the dust-bin's ashen top, Where, 'mid damp and rain and grime, It remained till morning time. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"Holyrood!" Oh, it was glorious! And yet it was inconceivable that an undergraduate could keep a woman in his rooms without being instantly detected. Some little tour-de-force of the sort is in excellent taste. Marbles and gold, velvet and silver, glittering mosaics, wonderful carvings, ivory screens, curtains of Armenian tissue and of Indian silk, damask from Arabia, and amber from the Baltic – all these things merged themselves in the minds of the two simple provincials, until their eyes ached and their senses reeled before the blaze and the glory of this, the most magnificent of the dwellings of man. As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers. The height of the trees and the thickness of the boles exceeded anything which I in my town-bred life could have imagined, shooting upwards in magnificent columns until, at an enormous distance above our heads, we could dimly discern the spot where they threw out their side-branches into Gothic upward curves which coalesced to form one great matted roof of verdure, through which only an occasional golden ray of sunshine shot downwards to trace a thin dazzling line of light amidst the majestic obscurity. The height of the trees and the thickness of the boles

exceeded anything which I in my town-bred life could have imagined, shooting upwards in magnificent columns until, at an enormous distance above our heads, we could dimly discern the spot where they threw out their side-branches into Gothic upward curves which coalesced to form one great matted roof of verdure, through which only an occasional golden ray of sunshine shot downwards to trace a thin dazzling line of light amidst the majestic obscurity.

Professor Challenger answered that Mr. Summerlee appeared to be confusing the Amazon with the Thames; that it was in reality a somewhat larger river; that Mr. Summerlee might be interested to know that with the Orinoco, which communicated with it, some fifty thousand miles of country were opened up, and that in so vast a space it was not impossible for one person to find what another had missed. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian's descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them.

Following our fair guide we passed into a very large and lofty room, the walls of which were wainscoted with carved oak, and hung at either end with tapestry. It was but for an instant, and yet that momentary view struck a thrill of fear and astonishment through me, for in my very path, not twenty yards before me, there stood a woman, the livid light beating upon her face and showing up every detail of her dress and features.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. There was no sign of the monster, however, nor could I hear any sound from above. On arriving at the Castle we found that the King had not yet come out from his chamber, but we were shown into the great hall to await him, a fine room with lofty windows and a noble ceiling of carved woodwork. At no time would he show him any mark of respect, and my temper often rose within me when I saw the quiet acquiescence of the old Doctor, and his patient tolerance of this monstrous treatment. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and

feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

His words died away into a whisper, and we all stood in motionless amazement. "I did not dare to think it." That monstrous breadth of shoulder! What can it be? Why then should we exist; Look up and see if you can see aught of it.' Long before I could pass the lines it would be broad daylight. I remember also my wondering whether I could get home before midnight.

She was still gazing at the brown medal and wondering what the "Dulce et decorum est" might mean, which was inscribed upon the edge, when there came a sudden tapping and shuffling upon the stair, and there at the door was standing the very man who had been so often in her thoughts. Is it not a shocking thing – a thing to drive a reasoning man into absolute Materialism – to think that you may have a fine, noble fellow with every divine instinct and that some little vascular change, the dropping, we will say, of a minute spicule of bone from the inner table of his skull on to the surface of his brain may have the effect of changing him to a filthy and pitiable creature with every low and debasing tendency? "I admit your plateau, because I have seen it; but I have not as yet satisfied myself that it contains any form of life whatever." I have no doubt that you feel the same way yourself, and that you would not care to stake the whole credit of the Gazette upon this adventure until we can meet the chorus of criticism and scepticism which such articles must of necessity elicit. "If I am not mistaken, there is some possibility of another matrimonial event occurring in the family.

We all looked from one to the other, but though many faces were doubtful or desponding, none had a word to say against the night attack, for it was clear that our action in any case must be hazardous, and this had at least the merit of promising a better chance of success than any other.

"It is singular that I, who had never feared him in life, should be frightened at him now, and yet when I looked at him, and saw that all was motionless save the creeping stain upon the carpet, I was seized with a sudden foolish spasm of terror, and, catching up my knife, I fled swiftly and silently back to my own room, closing the panels behind me. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. She not being herewith satisfied at the first attempt of touching his glove only, but her mind was she must touch some part of his bare skin, she, weighing his coming

forth, intended a second attempt. At this she seemed somewhat hurt, and the tears sprang into her eyes, but she followed me into the sitting-room and watched me wistfully. So far all had been kindly, however far apart our desires might be; but we felt well assured that our actual plans of a descent must be kept secret, for we had reason to fear that at the last they might try to hold us by force. And yet she did not like this secrecy, this disinclination upon the part of one so frank and honest as Ida to tell her what was passing. Her queenly figure was moulded upon large and noble lines, while her face, though already tending to become somewhat heavy and coarse, was still remarkable for the brilliancy of the complexion, the beauty of the large, light blue eyes, and the tinge of the dark hair which curled over the low white forehead.

It was the eve of my departure from Kirkby-Malhouse that we sat upon the green bank in the garden, she with dark, dreamy eyes looking sadly out over the sombre fells; while I, with a book upon my knee, glanced covertly at her lovely profile and marvelled to myself how twenty years of life could have stamped so sad and wistful an expression upon it. Ah, that is a curious sight, is it not?" "The night air is chill, Mr. Upperton," said she, and so swept swiftly away, leaving me to muse over the strange words which had fallen from her lips. It is impossible for him to be anything else. How he took it I cannot say, for I never left the room, but there is no doubt that it was then, while I was opening cabinets and stooping to boxes, that he managed to abstract some of the devil's - foot root. That's the worst of it. But if this is true, then the case is at an end.

I have no idea what backward sweep of memory had brought the matter fresh to his mind, or what freak had caused him to desire that I should recount it; but I hasten, before another cancelling telegram may arrive, to hunt out the notes which give me the exact details of the case and to lay the narrative before my readers. But he, the honest seaman, so incapable of deceit or affectation that he could not suspect it in others, ran madly to the bell, shouting for the maid, the doctor, and the smelling-salts, with incoherent words of grief, and such passionate terms of emotion that my father thought it more discreet to twitch me by the sleeve as a signal that we should steal from the room. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with

us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

Whilst in that comfortable lethargic condition which accompanies both digestion and poisoning by nicotine, I suddenly became aware of the extraordinary fact that my little drawing-room had elongated into a great _ salon _, and that my humble table had increased in proportion. The majority, however, looked upon him as a young man of great promise, and many comparisons were made as they left the hall between his dignified conduct and the levity of his professor, who during the above remarks was laughing heartily in a corner, by no means abashed at the failure of the experiment.

She never went more than a few yards from the house, and indeed never put her foot over the threshold without looking carefully out of each window in order to be sure that there was nobody about. My respect for his powers of analysis increased wondrously. Among other things, he found that the height of the building was seventy-four feet, but on adding together the heights of all the separate rooms, and making every allowance for the space between, which he ascertained by borings, he could not bring the total to more than seventy feet. For my own part, if I were only assured that I was as clever and brave as the average man about me, I should be well satisfied.

"Then I'll think no more of it," said I with as much cheerfulness as I could assume at so short a notice. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

It was March and the evenings were chill, so Jane had lit the fire, but the wind drove the smoke downwards and the air was full of its acrid taint.

This last address, delivered with a perfect shriek of rage, had the effect of sending good Madame von Baumgarten flying along the passage and through the kitchen, where she locked herself up in the scullery and went into violent hysterics. It was but two nights before the date I had fixed upon for my change of dwelling, when I was conscious of a bustle in the house beneath, with the bearing of heavy burdens up the creaking stair, and the harsh voice of my landlady, loud in welcome and protestations of joy. I had never ceased to be an earnest theist, because it seemed to me that Napoleon's question to the atheistic professors on the starry night as he voyaged to Egypt: "Who was it, gentlemen, who made these stars?" She had not spoken more than three or four times with her nephew, and knew nothing

more of him than he had told her on the evening before. I would have left the room without another word, but he clung to me, and tore the ruffle from my wrist in his attempt to hold me back, and to prevail upon me to promise to say nothing to you or Sir Lothian Hume. It chanced, however, that the unhappy sheep, which was quietly engaged in sleeping off the effects of its unusual potations, was awakened by the noise of his approach, and finding herself in such an unusual position, sprang out of bed and rushed furiously for the door, bleating wildly, and rolling about like a brig in a tornado, partly from intoxication and partly from the night-dress which impeded her movements. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal* state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. Oh, I am so glad." From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night.

"Then let us go and look at the room." There is the window. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things

easier. If I had not penetrated her secret I should often have thought that she forgot even that I was in the house. "She shall not be buried in that," he cried with a fierce snarl, and before an alarm could be raised sprang down the stairs and was gone. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. She had opened her eyes, and was blinking at them in the lamplight. It would not be difficult for me to ride across country, and I was well horsed at that time, for I had not only Violette and Rataplan, who were two of the finest mounts in the army, but I had the splendid black English hunter which I had taken from Sir Cotton. As I stood with my back to the narrow window, I had around me every smallest detail upon which my young eyes had looked; nor was I conscious that my own heart and feelings had undergone much change.

"I could not sleep," she answered. On this she sprang out of her chair with a cry of great joy, and holding the garment which she was mending over her head, and swaying it from side to side with the motion of her body, she danced as lightly as a feather all round the room, and then out through the open door into the sunshine. And yet she did not like this secrecy, this disinclination upon the part of one so frank and honest as Ida to tell her what was passing. The door was open. she cried, with pretty wonder. From afar, when the breeze came from the north, the dull, low roar of the great city might be heard, like the breaking of the tide of life, while along the horizon might be seen the dim curtain of smoke, the grim spray which that tide threw up. From the moment we rose until we closed our eyes in sleep the thought was always with us, and we felt dishonoured that he, our chief and master, should be so humiliated without our being able to move a hand to help him. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after

a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

My fears told me that it might be my own very great discomfiture, but I did not say so.

And she – ah, if you could have seen the look she gave me, the flushed cheek, the moist eye, the tremulous lip! It was absolutely and completely empty. There could not be the least doubt that it was this which the fellow had striven so frantically to conceal upon the first alarm of the approach of a stranger. All was not yet lost. I could not but observe, however, that her fall was very carefully executed, and that she was fortunate enough, in spite of her insensibility, to arrange her drapery and attitude into a graceful and classical design. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then she pursed up her lips and shook her stern, brown face in disapproval. The curious convulsive wriggle of one of his arms, which always showed when he was excited, gradually died away, and after looking for some time at the papers of de Meneval – who had written away like an automaton during all this uproar – he came across to the fire with a smile upon his lips, and a brow from which the shadow had departed.

I have no idea what backward sweep of memory had brought the matter fresh to his mind, or what freak had caused him to desire that I should recount it; but I hasten, before another cancelling telegram may arrive, to hunt out the notes which give me the exact details of the case and to lay the narrative before my readers. Alas! And then the light went out, smothered in that which had grown round it. It is not altogether a favourable case, but still it might be much worse. said she, after a few minutes of embarrassed silence. Since the spirit is by its

very nature invisible, we cannot see these comings and goings, but we see their effect in the body of the subject, now rigid and inert, now struggling to narrate impressions which could never have come to it by natural means. Cosmos is impenetrable. A frightful cry – a long-drawn scream of terror and of pain – rang through it as we entered. cried Mycroft, springing to his feet. I forced the end of this into the chink of the planks, and I was about to twist them outward when the sound of rapid footsteps caused me to pause and to listen. I can say no more. It chanced, however, that the unhappy sheep, which was quietly engaged in sleeping off the effects of its unusual potations, was awakened by the noise of his approach, and finding herself in such an unusual position, sprang out of bed and rushed furiously for the door, bleating wildly, and rolling about like a brig in a tornado, partly from intoxication and partly from the night-dress which impeded her movements. But the long night had to be passed somehow, and for me at least, sleep seemed to be out of the question. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible." "But, anyhow, universal death is dreadful." It was not a single cry, such as the hounds had uttered when they were on the scent, but a continuous deep-mouthed uproar, so fierce and so prolonged, that we could not doubt that they had come to the end of their run. However, as I cast my mind back over the events of the morning, and as I reconsider the fatuous conduct of my companions, I find it easy to believe that some poison of an exciting kind was responsible for their symptoms." What can it mean? How could you possibly know? But where can it have gone? They have a strange effect upon me, and I begin to Ossianise. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable. There was much to be done in very little time, so much that many would have thought it hopeless to attempt it. She groaned aloud, and buried herself yet deeper amid the silken cushions, clutching them frantically with convulsed and twitching hands. My ears were so accustomed to the noises of nature, the sighing of the breeze and the sob of the waves, that any other sound made itself heard at a great distance. Thus, when my wife came downstairs and I was impelled to slip behind the door and alarm her by some wild cry as she entered, I was able to stifle the impulse and to greet her with dignity and restraint. Then from out of the silence, imminent and threatening, there came once more that low, throaty croaking, far louder and closer than before. It chanced, however, that the unhappy sheep, which was quietly engaged in sleeping off the effects of its unusual potations, was awakened by the noise of his approach, and finding herself in such an unusual position, sprang out of bed and rushed furiously for the door, bleating wildly, and rolling about like a brig in a tornado, partly from intoxication and partly from the night-dress which impeded her movements.

Then when morning brought reflection, He was shamed at his dejection, And he thought with consternation Of his poor, ill-used creation; Down he rushed, and found it there Lying all exposed and bare, -LSB- 18 -RSB- Mud-bespattered,

spoiled, and botched, Water sodden, fungus-blotched, All the outlines blurred and wavy, All the colours turned to gravy, Fluids of a dappled hue, Blues on red and reds on blue, A pea-green mother with her daughter, Crazy boats on crazy water Steering out to who knows what, An island or a lobster-pot? There was something in the gentleness of his rebuke, and in his appeal to her mother, which brought the tears to her eyes, and in another instant she would have been kneeling beside him with everything confessed, when the door flew open and her sister Ida came bounding into the room. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

She gave him a swift, penetrating glance. I started as I looked at the picture. Would it not be a cruel thing to leave them in their distress? It was modern in appearance, and yet it was far less so than its neighbours, all of which were crudely and painfully new. "If your friend," she said, "would be good enough to stop, he might be of inestimable service to me." When she had vanished from his sight, he realized that a crisis had come in his life, and that neither silver speculations nor any other questions could ever be of such importance to him as this new and all-absorbing one. He was dressed in a heavy broadcloth frock coat and waistcoat, with light-coloured trousers, and immaculate collar and cuffs. A wondrous subtle thing is love, for here were we two who had never seen each other before that day, between whom no word or even look of affection had ever passed, and yet now in an hour of trouble our hands instinctively sought for each other. I remember that at Leipsic, when I was serving my first campaign, I got a candlestick, which I was forced to sell to a Jew broker for a fourth of its value; yet even at his price it sufficed to fill my haversack with broad pieces. Mrs. Cooper was of opinion that if I were to call it might alarm him, so it was agreed between us that she should send him up in the evening on some pretext to my consulting-room, which would give me the opportunity of having a chat with him and, if I were convinced of his insanity, of signing his certificate. She seemed surprised at my agitation. Why not add one good one to your account, by risking your life for the reformed faith? Suddenly, with a sharp, quick gesture which had in it something of _ abandon _ and recklessness, she held out her hand to her companion. Nothing less than a miracle could preserve us from defeat, and most of us were of opinion that the days of the miracles were past. We can well believe that the most frivolous and foolish would be awed into decency by so tremendous an experience, but impressions soon become blunted, the old nature may soon reassert itself in new surroundings, and the frivolous still survive, as our seance rooms can testify. My energies shall now be devoted to devising some means by which spirits may be able to recollect what occurs to them in their free state, and I trust that when I have worked this out, I may have the pleasure of meeting you all once again in this hall, and demonstrating

to you the result."

"How could you leave me so, Jinny? By heaven, I shall never forgive myself if she proves to have the heels of us!" Her mouth, too, was small and amiable, and her most frequent expression was a smile, which seldom broadened into a laugh, as she had her own reasons for preferring that her teeth should not be seen. It was his only fault. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

"Tis best so," said I; 'you could not have settled down to a life of toping and ease. The novelty of her presence had brought a few curious invalids into her consulting-rooms, and, once there, they had been so impressed by the firmness of her manner and by the singular, new-fashioned instruments with which she tapped, and peered, and sounded, that it formed the core of their conversation for weeks afterwards.

In that instant there flashed before Theodora's mind a vision of all her enemies, of all those who envied her rise, of all whose hatred and contempt would rise into a clamour of delight could they see the daughter of the bearward hurled down again into that abyss from which she had been dragged. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. This could not be seen by me, even had I been fully awake, in the dusk; but catching me across the breast as Covenant trotted under it, it had swept me off and dashed me with great force to the ground. For the mariners, giving up all hope of saving the ship, and being in momentary expectation that

she would founder, pushed off in the long-boat, whereby I fear that they met the fate which they hoped to avoid, since I have never from that day heard anything of them. beautiful! I wish we could crown ourselves with flowers.

“But how could I tell?” Had it been an accident?

“You must not think of leaving your aunt,” she said. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

“If you like, my darling.” You will feel so much better.” You see I have a lot of special knowledge which I apply to the problem, and which facilitates matters wonderfully. While doing so, I shall make it my business, with infinite tact and delicacy, to throw out a few remarks which may arouse the interest of the audience and cause some of them to desire to go more deeply into the matter.

Thus the account we give may be partial, but still such as it is it is very consistent and of extraordinary interest, since it refers to our own destiny and that of those we love.

“Surely you do not attribute any such base motive to me!” It was a fine, clear spring night, the moon was shining out of an unclouded sky, and I, having already left many miles behind me, was inclined to walk slowly and look about me. “I have never been so questioned,” he cried.

“I am glad to come if I can do any good by coming.” The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes. My thanks once more, and may pleasant dreams await ye.’

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her.

I had seated myself, sick and dazed, upon the settee, for scenes of bloodshed were new to me then, and this one had been enough to shock the most hardened. For you may remember, my children, that I stated when I first took it in hand to narrate to you these passages of my life, that the hopes of Monmouth’s party rested very much upon the raid which Argyle and the Scottish exiles had made upon Ayrshire, where it was hoped that they would create such a

disturbance as would divert a good share of King James's forces, and so make our march to London less difficult. That was six years ago. For some time I was sustained in my scepticism by the consideration that many famous men, such as Darwin himself, Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, derided this new branch of knowledge; but when I learned that their derision had reached such a point that they would not even examine it, and that Spencer had declared in so many words that he had decided against it on a priori grounds, while Huxley had said that it did not interest him, I was bound to admit that, however great, they were in science, their action in this respect was most unscientific and dogmatic, while the action of those who studied the phenomena and tried to find out the laws that governed them, was following the true path which has given us all human advance and knowledge. I will promise, however, that your request be carried to him, though I warn you that it cannot be granted.' It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me.

"Once a week Harrison used to bring me up provisions, passing them through the pantry window, which I left open for the purpose.

The abbot, who had made several visits to Constantinople upon the business of his monastery, walked with the assured step of one who knows his ground; while the boy, alarmed and yet pleased by the rush of people, the roar and clatter of passing chariots, and the vista of magnificent buildings, held tightly to the loose gown of his guide, while staring eagerly about him in every direction. It is as well, for I have already made up my mind that my duty to you, my son, outweighs that which I owe, and have at such bitter cost fulfilled, to my brother and my family." "Tree-cutting and wood-carrying will seem but dull work after such a sight as this."

"How is it now?" asked Ida.

"What do you say, Norah?" It's for men to do them, and for women to reserve their love as a reward for such men. "I think he will be the most useful at this task. The farm was a very fertile one, and contained some of the best grazing land in those parts, so that my father was enabled to lay by money to the extent of a thousand crowns, which he laid out in an adventure to the Indies with such surprising success that in less than three years it had increased fourfold. Again, if Miss Julia Ames can tell Mr. Stead things in her own earth life of which he could not have cognisance, and if those things are shown, when tested, to be true, then one is more inclined to think that those things which cannot be tested are true also. 'Were I to be the judge, he would lose not only his merchandise, but his life also, if he did not accept the faith.' But now when I am faced with the alternative of telling the facts about my brother, or of wronging my son, I can only act in one fashion, and the more so since I have reason to hope that a way may be found by which what I am now about to disclose to you need never come to the public ear." All this is the truth, and if I tell it to you, gentlemen, it is not to amuse you, – for you have not done me a very good turn, – but it is because I believe the best defence I can make is just to hold back nothing, but

let all the world know how badly I have myself been served by Major Sholto, and how innocent I am of the death of his son." There was nothing in it which was not literally true. But if you would come out with me into that forgotten world; if you would know Boy Jim and Champion Harrison; if you would meet my father, one of Nelson's own men; if you would catch a glimpse of that great seaman himself, and of George, afterwards the unworthy King of England; if, above all, you would see my famous uncle, Sir Charles Tregellis, the King of the Bucks, and the great fighting men whose names are still household words amongst you, then give me your hand and let us start.

If I had to die I was determined that my end should be worthy of my life. Then the mystery of his silence was explained.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. At last, however, his long-drawn breathing assured me that he was asleep, and I was able to settle down to a few hours of welcome rest.

"I suppose he thought we had come to the hotel that he had mentioned, for he got out without another word, and followed me down the garden. she murmured. I begin to suspect that this matter may turn out to be much deeper and more subtle than I at first supposed. The event itself will always be marvellous, but the circumstances that we four were together at the time of this extraordinary episode came about in a most natural and, indeed, inevitable fashion. What could she do? Professionally, he was always at their service. And I should be obliged to you if you would use your influence with my daughter to dissuade her." But he may ask. How I wish I could reproduce the glamour of his discourses, the peculiar mixture of accurate knowledge and of racy imagination which gave them their fascination, until even the Professor's cynical and sceptical smile would gradually vanish from his thin face as he listened. 'But why did you not tell me so?' The fort is safe enough. He may have observed it, for there was a touch of defiance in his voice and manner as he proceeded. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

'Because I did not wish you to come here.' cried Miss Adams, indignantly. But if by whisper or rumour I have reason to think that you have failed me, then you and your monks and your monastery will have such an end as will be a lesson for ever to those who would break faith with their Empress." The present was our own. I do not know if it is still standing, but I should think it likely, for it

was not a place much given to change.

“Neither my mother nor I could imagine. It was enough. As already remarked, she had a great antipathy to him, and if ever he ventured into the house it was on sufferance, and under the protection of the Professor. If he had his time again! But she must not think of herself. She still held her handkerchief before her eyes, but it was chiefly, I think, to conceal the effect which her tears had had upon her cheeks.

“I suppose he thought we had come to the hotel that he had mentioned, for he got out without another word, and followed me down the garden. It stood high, and commanded a view on the one side of the grey roofs and bristling spires of Northern London, and on the other of the well-wooded and beautiful country which fringes the great city. So out we went together into the sweet coast-land air, the sweeter for the gale of the night before, and we walked through the old yew-lined paths, and out into the park, and so round the castle, looking up at the gables, the grey pinnacles, the oak-mullioned windows, the ancient wing with its crenulated walls and its meurtriére windows, the modern with its pleasant verandah and veil of honeysuckle. No one could entertain more charmingly than she, for she moved about among the people with her amiable smile, setting everybody at their ease by her kindly natural manner, and by the conviction which she gave them that she was thoroughly at her ease herself. De Meneval has told me that for an hour at a time he has sometimes talked in this strain of the most intimate thoughts and aspirations of his heart, while his courtiers have stood round in silence waiting for the instant when he would return once more to his practical and incisive self.

Out of my window as I write I can see my own great lad in the garden, and if I were to call out “Nelson!”

It did not surprise me, therefore, that we should find the large room in which we supped crowded with naval men, but I remember that what did cause me some astonishment was to observe that all these sailors, who had served under the most varying conditions in all quarters of the globe, from the Baltic to the East Indies, should have been moulded into so uniform a type that they were more like each other than brother is commonly to brother.

At four o’clock Monmouth held a last council of war upon the square tower out of which springs the steeple of Bridgewater parish church, whence a good view can be obtained of all the country round. They were never at their ease, always upon the brink of a catastrophe, encouraged one day only to be rudely rebuffed the next, bullied in public and slighted in private, and yet, in spite of it all, the singular fact remains that they loved him and served him as no monarch has been loved and served. If he had his time again! You also loved her. But I had not got half through my story, and Jim, like the good fellow that he was, had just begun to forget his own troubles in his delight at my good fortune, when my uncle called to me from without. So absorbed was he in his thoughts, I remember, that he stumbled over the watering-pot, upset its contents, and

deluged both our feet and the garden path. I do not know you sufficiently to be able to say what natural gifts you have." In point of fact he had just turned his thirtieth year. "Now, Mr. Malone," he continued, with a great accession of dignity, "this way, if YOU please."

"No, no, not at all. I do not know why they should be so coupled, and they never were with Jim.

And at the words that little conventional spirit which had never known until that night the capacity for fierce agony which lay within it, learned for the second time that there were springs of joy also which it had never tapped before.

"Make what, Mr. Stephens?" As to myself, I shall let my story explain the growth of my own nature.

DECEMBER'S SNOW -LSB- 99 -RSB-

The bloom is on the May once more, The chestnut buds have burst anew; But, darling, all our springs are o'er, 'T is winter still for me and you.

"And a good man too!" I felt light and happy, in spite of all. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. And what will you do, Sadie?" Yes, yes, I insist upon it, for I know that you must be cold. It is very wet. said I. "The one that stands in its own park?"

"You know, pa," said Ida, "it seems to us that we really have a very great advantage in having Mrs. Westmacott living so near." Or perhaps it may not be so.

Taking the narrow sheep path which ran by this stream, I strolled along it for some hundred yards, and had turned to retrace my steps, when the moon was finally buried beneath an ink-black cloud, and the darkness deepened so suddenly that I could see neither the path at my feet, the stream upon my right, nor the rocks upon my left. For myself, I confess that I retained a vague distrust of the man, and was determined to avoid putting faith in him more than was needful. From his wife to his groom there was not one of those who were about him who did not live in dread of being held up to ridicule and infamy before a smiling crowd, whose amusement was only tempered by the reflection that each of them might be the next to endure the same exposure. He concealed his fears from his daughter, however, and affected to make light of the whole matter, though she, with the keen eye of love, saw plainly that he was ill at ease. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of

gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters.

“With fond and loving words I overcame her doubts, and yet she hesitated. And then there were my mother and my sisters to be thought of.

-LSB- Illustration: Certain that I would not leave you here p152 -RSB-

It was the nearest approach to tenderness which he had ever put into a speech, and the girl looked at him in surprise.

“I tell you that I saw her do it. I love you, and I have never ceased to love you, though you had forgotten me.” “At the end of that time she shall give her answer.” But she – she was admirable.

“Why should he not take your mother with him?” But it would not do! Her voice was full of tears, and what she said was so simple, so true, that we both seemed to see the dead babe stretched there on the carpet before us, and we could have joined in with words of pity and of grief.

‘And so have I, mate,’ he answered, in a softer voice. “S’pose he were only twenty, then he couldn’t be less than six-and-eighty now, at the lowest.” It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters.

“I like him very much indeed.

‘I should have been there!’ All which has been discovered to us by the mother and daughter, and by neighbours that know her.

“What a very attractive woman!” And yet she was very handsome.

‘Are there any papers in the cottage?’ “But you must have known the nature of your complaint, why otherwise should you have come to me?” Was Etienne Gerard in despair? How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. The awful thought had come upon her that this ambassadress had come to her as a proxy with a proposal of marriage. It had been an epoch of weak and cruel men. Do you not think that she may come to forget this man and to love me?” If love had not come to her yet, there was at least pity and sympathy, which are nearly akin to it.

“Well, your dad can teach you something in history yet,” he cried, looking in triumph at my mother.

I could have explained that it was because he had betrayed his comrades, because his daughter hated him, because he had ill-used his wife, because my father regarded him as the source of all his troubles – but the salon of the Empress was no place for a family quarrel, so I merely shrugged my shoulders, and was silent. I hope, madam, by the King's generosity and goodness, and your intercession, I may hope for my life which if I have shall be ever employed in showing to your Majesty all the sense imaginable of gratitude, and in serving of the King like a true subject. Here it is. "I was sure that you were not a man who, to clear yourself from a little money difficulty, would sacrifice the happiness of your mother and the health of your father." I have been very selfish and thoughtless."

There was nothing which the Emperor loved more than to suddenly produce little scenes of this sort which made everybody very uncomfortable, for no one could tell what awkward or compromising question he was going to put to them next. Oh, lack-a-day, lack-a-day! It's disgusting to see that brute with her. I have seen him look pained, it is true, after some peculiarly outrageous exhibition, but he gave me the impression that it was always on account of the scholars or of me, never on account of himself.

I thought of the solicitude which he had shown over my toilet in the morning, his anxiety that I should make a favourable impression, his displeasure when she had been cold to me, and the smile upon his face when he had seen us hand in hand. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. It will be ready in half an hour. Thus, pacing slowly, we returned to Bridgewater, where Reuben was carried to our quarters, and I bore the little maid of the marshes to kind townsfolk, who promised to restore her to her home when the troubles were over. What was the meaning of this obscure warning which she had given me against her father, and why was she so frankly anxious to know about my love affairs?

But it was no easy thing for me to think seriously of anything in the hamlet; for I was in some way, my dear children, though I say it myself, a favourite with the young and with the old, so that I could not walk ten paces without some greeting or address. Since the spirit is by its very nature invisible, we cannot see these comings and goings, but we see their effect in the body of the subject, now rigid and inert, now struggling to narrate impressions which could never have come to it by natural means.

He nodded his head, and even in the gloom I could see that he was smiling the gentle, wistful smile which I connected with him. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian's descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was

before them.

John Ferrier uttered these consoling remarks in a very confident tone, but she could not help observing that he paid unusual care to the fastening of the doors that night, and that he carefully cleaned and loaded the rusty old shotgun which hung upon the wall of his bedroom. "It is splendid!" Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. With this small stock of letters I might have fared badly, had it not happened that my master, Mr. Thomas Chillingfoot, had himself a good library, and took a pleasure in lending his books to any of his scholars who showed a desire to improve themselves. Her voice was soft and sweet, and persuasive at the first, but louder it rang and louder as it spoke of wrongs and freedom and the joys of death in a good cause, until it thrilled into my every nerve, and I asked nothing more than to run out of the cottage and to die then and there in the cause of my country. I have not had time to examine this room yet, but with your permission I shall do so now." For the last few days prisoners had been tried in batches of ten and twenty, but now the whole of us were taken in a drove, under escort, to the court-house, where as many as could be squeezed in were ranged in the dock, while the rest were penned, like calves in the market, in the body of the hall. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

CHAPTER VII

"To-morrow we Disappear into the Unknown"

I will not bore those whom this narrative may reach by an account of our luxurious voyage upon the Booth liner, nor will I tell of our week's stay at Para (save that I should wish to acknowledge the great kindness of the Pereira da Pinta Company in helping us to get together our equipment). For some time I was sustained in my scepticism by the consideration that many famous men, such as Darwin himself, Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, derided this new branch of knowledge; but when I learned that their derision had reached such a point that they would not even examine it, and that Spencer had declared in so many words that he had decided against it on a priori grounds, while Huxley had said that it did not interest him, I was bound to admit that, however great, they were in science, their action in this respect was most unscientific and dogmatic, while the action of those who studied the phenomena and tried to find out the laws that governed them, was following the true path which has given us all human advance and knowledge. Some say that she loved another man, and that it was just the riches of the old Lord which tempted her to be false to her lover, and that now she is eating her heart out because she has lost the one without being any nearer to the other, for she might be the poorest woman in the parish for all the money that she has the handling of."

Straightway my uncle began to question him about the sea service, and for the whole meal my father was telling him of the Nile and of the Toulon blockade, and the siege of Genoa, and all that he had seen and done. All this may in time be forgotten. Finding conditions entirely different from anything for which either scientific or religious teaching had prepared them, it is no wonder that they look upon their new sensations as some strange dream, and the more rigidly orthodox have been their views, the more impossible do they find it to accept these new surroundings with all that they imply. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. No one could entertain more charmingly than she, for she moved about among the people

with her amiable smile, setting everybody at their ease by her kindly natural manner, and by the conviction which she gave them that she was thoroughly at her ease herself. There I stayed for some time at a private hotel in the Strand, leading a comfortless, meaningless existence, and spending such money as I had, considerably more freely than I ought. I could not catch what Stangerson said to that, but the other burst out swearing, and reminded him that he was nothing more than his paid servant, and that he must not presume to dictate to him. The lady smoothed down her dress, pushed back her hair under her little felt hat, and strode in through the hall-door, which was closed behind her. But Justinian! That colour alone showed that she could be none other than the Empress; but the dignity of her carriage, the fierce authority of her magnificent dark eyes, and the perfect beauty of her haughty face, all proclaimed that it could only be that of Theodora who, in spite of her lowly origin, was the most majestic as well as the most maturely lovely of all the women in her kingdom. She began to praise you, I said what I felt, and then in an instant it was all out."

'I falter where I firmly trod, And falling with my weight of cares Upon the great world's altar stairs, Which slope through darkness up to God,

'I stretch lame hands of faith and grope And gather dust and chaff, and call To what I feel is Lord of all, And faintly trust the larger hope.' There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. He had long nerved himself to the sacrifice, however, and the thought of the honour and happiness of his daughter outweighed any regret at his ruined fortunes.

As to the Emperor, some faint shadow of whom I have tried in these pages to raise before you, you have heard from history how, despairing of gaining command of the Channel, and fearing to attempt an invasion which might be cut off from behind, he abandoned the camp of Boulogne. But there was something more here. Had she not herself told me that her very life might be at stake? The most that she would concede was that she would not openly interfere with anything which her companions might say or do. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean,

his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. The attitude of the greater part of the public might be described as one of attentive neutrality. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. Now, you will remember also that Mrs. Porter, the housekeeper, told us that she herself fainted upon entering the room and had afterwards opened the window. What was it, then?" said she in surprise.

"Entirely, sir – entirely!"

"Why should he allow your mother to die and be buried without coming back?"

"Here he has sat for seven years. Ten years before, a wretched woman, whose very name was an offence throughout the eastern world, where she was as infamous for her dishonour as famous for her beauty, had come to the monastery gate, and had persuaded the monks to take charge of her infant son, the child of her shame.

"But what am I to do with these now?"

"No, Jim, I left the boards when – when I was weary of them. In truth, I was huffed with you when last we parted, but I have had you in my mind for all that."

Jeremiah's blood ran cold a frightened man was e, But he butted through the bushes just to see what' e could see, And there beneath their shadow, blood drippin' from his jaws, Was an awful creature standin' with aound beneath its paws. What can it be? What would your father say? And yet it was at that very instant that the most terrible danger befell me. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and

then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. "But, by Jove, it was a close call!" Did I not, in my truest thoughts, always recurring and always dismissed, see past the beauty of the face, and, peering into the soul, discern the twin shadows of selfishness and of fickleness glooming at the back of it? Poor young man!" It was agony to him to hear that she was about to straighten little Alec Turner's club-foot, and right at the fringe of the rumour came a note from his mother, the rector's wife, asking him if he would be so good as to act as chloroformist. When he said, therefore, that he hoped to see my mother very soon, and when he said that he had nothing to be ashamed of in that dark room, you may rely upon it that he meant it."

"Worse and worse! In spite of the darkness my companion walked with great assurance, never hesitating for an instant, and keeping up a stiff pace which was welcome to me in my sodden and benumbed condition.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. I was too soon, then, since he had not extinguished his candles. "Then why not retire?" At last, however, his long-drawn breathing assured me that he was asleep, and I was able to settle down to a few hours of welcome rest. Can I be of any assistance? I could see in his brutal eyes the satisfaction which it would give him if he could find some excuse for plunging it into my body.

You will observe that from the beginning of this affair I had never once opened my mouth, nor said a word in my defence, which made me mightily pleased with myself afterwards, though my silence came rather from pride than from courage. We had not so much to fear from them during the day, but they would be very likely to rush us by night; so the sooner we got away from their neighborhood the better. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar

thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. When he spoke of seeing her again so soon, he was referring to her own approaching death, which he had been assured could not be delayed more than a very few months. He concealed his fears from his daughter, however, and affected to make light of the whole matter, though she, with the keen eye of love, saw plainly that he was ill at ease. Avarice, revenge, anxiety, love, and pity have all been known to have this effect. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called lying asleep' - a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the Hypnoidal' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. It was familiar ground to me, and I needed no guiding as we ascended the bleak stone staircase and made our way down the long corridor with its vista of whitewashed wall and dun-coloured doors. We cannot say what it may lead to." In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous,

a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. At the end of it, at the foot of the stairs, Mrs. Deacon was lying senseless, struck down by the sight which she had seen.

I handed him over the watch with some slight feeling of amusement in my heart, for the test was, as I thought, an impossible one, and I intended it as a lesson against the somewhat dogmatic tone which he occasionally assumed.

But in spite of gleams of sunshine, there was thunder in the air, and Champion Harrison had just whispered in my ear that he was quite sure that we should never get through the night without trouble, and was advising me, if it got very bad, to take refuge under the table, when the landlord entered the room hurriedly and handed a note to my uncle. What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants? Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. It told him that it was half-past seven, and that he had been gone an hour and a quarter.

III

B. 24

I told my story when I was taken, and no one would listen to me. Upon the third day, towards evening, I observed to my extreme surprise that the ship was under the influence of a very powerful current, which ran to the north-east with such violence that she was carried, now bows on, now stern on, and occasionally drifting sideways like a crab, at a rate which I cannot compute at less than twelve or fifteen knots an hour. I have some dim remembrance of an ancient church upon an eminence, and of a quaint stone cross within the market-place, but assuredly, of all the recollections which I retain of Bruton there is none so pleasing as that of the buxom landlady's face, and of the steaming dishes which she lost no time in setting before us. And she, the polluted one, had risen to the dignity, had cut herself sternly away from all that related to her past life, and had shown signs already of being a great Queen, stronger and wiser than her husband, but fierce, vindictive, and unbending, a firm support to her friends, but a terror to her foes.

It was a sight which I shall never forget until my dying day – so weird, so impossible, that I do not know how I am to make you realize it, or how in a few years I shall bring myself to believe in it if I live to sit once more on a lounge in the Savage Club and look out on the drab solidity of the Embankment. Neither could have been aware of the existence of the other, and yet the two accounts

are so alike as to be practically the same. She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. “If my gracious master – the ever-glorious Emperor Justinian – does not disdain to take me into his most intimate confidence in all things, it would be strange if there were any subject within your knowledge which I might not hear. Her aunt on one side of her and Mr. Stephens on the other did all they could to soothe her, and at last the weary, over-strung girl relapsed into something between a sleep and a faint, hanging limp over her pommel, and only kept from falling by the friends who clustered round her. She agreed that religion was based upon the Bible, but the Bible was a book which contained much that was obscure, and unless that obscurity were cleared away by a duly elected and consecrated servant of God, a lineal descendant of the Disciples, all human wisdom might not serve to interpret it aright.

I promised to do so if possible.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. Mrs. Cooper was of opinion that if I were to call it might alarm him, so it was agreed between us that she should send him up in the evening on some pretext to my consulting-room, which would give me the opportunity of having a chat with him and, if I were convinced of his insanity, of signing his certificate. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*' state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are

unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. We have been together so many years. For this reason I asked you to return with me, as I was minded to make your further acquaintance. If love had not come to her yet, there was at least pity and sympathy, which are nearly akin to it.

She started, and turned upon me her great dark, questioning eyes with a look in which surprise, incredulity, and something akin to horror seemed to be struggling for mastery. Clara's reserved and refined nature shrank somewhat from the boisterous frankness and strange manners of the widow, and yet her feminine instinct told her that beneath all her peculiarities there lay much that was good and noble. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. She carried herself in the most stately fashion, so that as I looked at her majestic entrance, and at the pose which she struck as she glanced at my father, I was reminded of the Queen of the Peruvians as, in the person of Miss Polly Hinton, she incited Boy Jim and myself to insurrection.

"It is singular that I, who had never feared him in life, should be frightened at him now, and yet when I looked at him, and saw that all was motionless save the creeping stain upon the carpet, I was seized with a sudden foolish spasm of terror, and, catching up my knife, I fled swiftly and silently back to my own room, closing the panels behind me. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. So artfully had the site of his cottage been chosen, that when we looked back to give him a last greeting both he and his dwelling had disappeared already from our view, nor could we, among the many mounds and hollows, determine where the cottage lay which had given us such welcome shelter.

I could have explained that it was because he had betrayed his comrades, because his daughter hated him, because he had ill-used his wife, because my father regarded him as the source of all his troubles – but the salon of the Empress was no place for a family quarrel, so I merely shrugged my shoulders, and was silent.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night.

I thought of the solicitude which he had shown over my toilet in the morning, his anxiety that I should make a favourable impression, his displeasure when she had been cold to me, and the smile upon his face when he had seen us hand in hand. I believe that you could do it better than any one. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Upon the third day, towards evening, I observed to my extreme surprise that the ship was under the influence of a very powerful current, which ran to the north-east with such violence that she was carried, now bows on, now stern on, and occasionally drifting sideways like a crab, at a rate which I cannot compute at less than twelve or fifteen knots an hour.

“My mother and I were gradually compelled to sell the furniture and to dismiss the servants, until now, as you see, I am living unattended in a single room. It was no wonder that from below we had not observed the place, as the cliffs curved overhead and an ascent at the spot would have seemed so impossible as to discourage close inspection. There could not be the least doubt that it was this which the fellow had striven so frantically to conceal upon the first alarm of

the approach of a stranger. Then she took her taper and walked quickly into the room from which we had come. She began to praise you, I said what I felt, and then in an instant it was all out."

It was indeed wonderful how, with the self-respect and sense of propriety of the British housekeeper, the lady had within a few minutes adorned the central table with a snow-white cloth, laid the napkins upon it, and set forth the simple meal with all the elegance of civilization, including an electric torch lamp in the centre. I wish to goodness she had called me." That vicious, threatening smile which might once have thrilled them left them now unmoved – or stirred them at most to vague resentment. It may not be against you, but I know not what else can have angered him. 'O Miss Adams, Miss Adams, it is they!' 'When the castle passed into my hands, one of the very first things which I did was to cut a new opening at the end of it, for I foresaw that in these troublesome times it might be of use to me; indeed, had it been in repair it might have made the escape of your mother and father a very much easier affair.' I was not any nearer to escape than I had been before, for there was no other wooden wall which I could penetrate and the spring lock of the door had been closed. I had expected to find my Cousin Sibylle there, but to my surprise there was no sign of her, nor had she left any word to tell us whither she had gone. This I concealed where no one has ever discovered it; but my fears would not allow me to go back for the other, as I might perhaps have done, had I foreseen how terribly its presence might tell against my master. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. So far all had been kindly, however far apart our desires might be; but we felt well assured that our actual plans of a descent must be kept secret, for we had reason to fear that at the last they might try to hold us by force. She could not forget the scrap of conversation which she had heard the night before, nor the secret which her sister had refused to confide to her. For an hour I could hear the dialogue beneath – the high voice and the low, with clatter of cup and clink of spoon, until at last a light, quick step passed my study door, and I knew that my new fellow-lodger had sought her room. He had no desire to be offensive. By ignoring the fact of her being a human being, and looking upon her as a useful automatic machine, I accustomed myself to her presence so far as to miss her on the few occasions when she was not at her post. Colonel Gerard!" she asked, with something appealing in her voice and expression. said he, in amazement. Good Lord! She did not try to draw it back from him. How came you there?" How came he into the room?"

"I wonder whence that stair leads?" he replied earnestly. "If the cave does not go through I do not understand why this person, who has every reason to mean us well, should have drawn our attention to it.

'I have no doubt that you would like to have nothing more to do with me,' he cried. He did not appear to be paying the least attention to me, but it seems that he was really watching me closely, for he turned upon me when he had finished his dictation. She was at the doorway, and came down to meet him. I could not see the door by which he had entered, nor could I see him where he stood, but I heard all that he had to say. As a matter of fact we have had least to bear, for it has been our task from the beginning to guard the base of the peninsula upon which this extraordinary town is built.

When the Doctor came down to the dining-room next morning, he was surprised to find that his daughters had already been up some time.

"Hush, mother!" Is there anything else?"

"No, no, not at all. So I did not look up till all was finished.

"I waited as it seemed to me for at least an hour; but I had no watch, and my impatience was such that I dare say it really was little more than a quarter of that time." You are pale. I am afraid that I have been somewhat carried away by it." If I did not make the course of events clear to you, you would hardly understand the influences which had such an effect upon my whole history.

"No, I have not." We've had a good time together.

"Did you enter __ all __ the rooms?"

"Oh! Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"But you must leave me," said Miss Adams, earnestly. How came he into the room?"

"No, no, I'll not go first." I must go.

"It is an old one now – fourteen years old – and yet they have not got to the end of it. Stern facts here, – no room for theories." If now my hour be truly come, Ah well, it must be now!"

It was not until he had received his apology that our touchy friend would suffer himself to be appeased. He closed the door behind them and paced slowly up and down the room. You had a letter from him inviting you to leave England and to come here, had you not?"

"No – but deeply disappointed." I have just promised Mrs. Westmacott that I will do so.

"Well, well! Promise me!" But this should puzzle 'em." I have heard the name."
"But you will make me a promise?" It is true that this, like every other power, may be abused if we lose our general sense of proportion and of reason. Your wife's heart is not strong, and she has some symptoms which I do not like. Occasionally they were fantastic and cheerful. Your mother will think that I am clean crazy, and I'd never dare to look her in the eye if anything went wrong with us. Where could I send her, and what could I do with her?

"No."

"I have said that the conditions are entirely different." "It was nothing. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I have never looked with the eyes of love upon another woman. It is not much, but I can do it well.' Since the spirit is by its very nature invisible, we cannot see these comings and goings, but we see their effect in the body of the subject, now rigid and inert, now struggling to narrate impressions which could never have come to it by natural means. She had a good deal to say for herself on that also.

"Very good, sarr! And indeed it was no wonder, for that name was never mentioned unless it were in connection with something brilliant and extraordinary. The lady came, not altogether with the approval of her husband, and though she never gave indications of any very great psychic force, we were able, at least, to obtain those usual phenomena of message-tilting which are at the same time so puerile and so inexplicable.

Do not judge my father by his words, but by his deeds,' said she, with a warning finger upraised; and, above all, Cousin Louis, unless you wish to have my life upon your conscience, never let him suspect that I have said a word to set you on your guard.' We were all taking the matter much more seriously than we had ever done before. My mother had been unable to accept the possibility up to now, but when I told her this she collapsed and fainted. Well, as luck would have it, she developed rheumatic fever, which left her heart very much affected. But now he felt that he was really of some use to her, that every hour she was learning to turn to him as one turns to one's natural protector; and above all, he had begun to find himself – to understand that there really was a strong, reliable man behind all the tricks of custom which had built up an artificial nature, which had imposed even upon himself. For twenty minutes or more he continued his researches, measuring with the most exact care the distance between marks which were entirely invisible to me, and occasionally applying his tape to the walls in an equally incomprehensible manner. In five minutes he died.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the chirurgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good.

'I am he,' said my father.

"Yes, that is so." "If the ladies had not seen you, I should never have ventured to believe it." I cannot think how the historian of the future can hope to understand them, when I, who knew one of them so well, and bore his blood in my veins, could never quite tell how much of him was real, and how much was due to the affectations which he had cultivated so long that they had ceased to deserve the name. For my own part I was not so very anxious that she should save this craven lover of hers, whose handsome face belied the poor spirit within him.

"I am sure that he would be very glad to see you, sir.

Until my comrade returns, Sir Gervas,' said I, you might, since the subject does not appear to be a painful one to you, let us know how these evil times, which you bear with such philosophy, came upon you.' "What have you done?" Where will you – where will your city be within the year? "I see," he said, "you are the Mormons." If that is your view, you will permit me to say that you know very little of the matter. Does that satisfy you?" What do you want to aggravate him for?" Sometimes you learn that it has been Roman, sometimes Egyptian, sometimes all record of its name or origin has been absolutely lost, You ask yourself in amazement why any race should build in so uncouth a solitude, and you find it difficult to accept the theory that this has only been of value as a guard-house to the richer country down below, and that these frequent cities have been so many fortresses to hold off the wild and predatory men of the south.

"My dear Mrs. Westmacott," cried Clara, "I assure you that I have not the least idea what it is that you are talking of."

I had gone down with them, and after I had seen Lucia in tears it appeared to me that the plaster would crack if it were taken from the support of the wall.

A STRAGGLER OF' 15. It was absolutely and completely empty. Then, just as I had hoped that all was settled, in came young Mr. Brummell, who promised to be an even greater exquisite than my uncle, and the whole matter had to be thrashed out between them. As it was, I was helpless. cried the woman, bitterly. It was not until he had signed and sent it off that the full significance of all that he had done broke upon him. Above all, I could not conceal from myself that his past life was not such as to make even so abominable a crime

as this impossible to him. What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants? What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants? She hated him so that she would even lower her pride to take such a man as me into her confidence if she could gain her end by doing so. I learned that Parmes had seen her before I did, and had shown her that he too loved her, but I could smile at his passion, for I knew that her heart was mine. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. But, as I afterwards learned, their conversation was to be about myself and my own prospects, so I was despatched to my room, whence far into the night I could hear the deep growl of my father and the rich tones of my uncle, with an occasional gentle murmur from my mother, as they talked in the room beneath. I never dreamed of giving nor did he of claiming it.

It was no affectation upon my part to say that the prospect of my night's adventure was an agreeable one. She and I never took to each other very much; but now I hope all that may be ended, and when I marry she will come and stay with me." She went on to say that the sphere she inhabited was all round the earth; that she knew about the planets; that Mars was inhabited by a race more advanced than us, and that the canals were artificial; there was no bodily pain in her sphere, but there could be mental anxiety; they were governed; they took nourishment; she had been a Catholic and was still a Catholic, but had not fared better than the Protestants; there were Buddhists and Mohammedans in her sphere, but all fared alike; she had never seen Christ and knew no more about Him than on earth, but believed in His influence; spirits prayed and they died in their new sphere before entering another; they had pleasures – music was among them. She spoke just now as if she had mentioned the plan which I had conceived to you.

In that instant there flashed before Theodora's mind a vision of all her enemies, of all those who envied her rise, of all whose hatred and contempt would rise into a clamour of delight could they see the daughter of the bearward hurled down again into that abyss from which she had been dragged.

My story is one which you may well treasure up in your memories, and tell again to others, for it is not likely that in this whole county of Hampshire, or even perhaps in all England, there is another left alive who is so well able to speak from his own knowledge of these events, or who has played a more forward part in them.

This was a question on which, as may be imagined, Saxon had much to say, and the pair were soon involved in a heated discussion, in which the experiences of Roundway Down and Marston Moor were balanced against the results of a score of unpronounceable fights in the Styrian Alps and along the Danube. I doubt not that where more loud-tongued and assertive dames might be cowed, the Mayor's soft-voiced daughter would begin to cast off her gentler disposition, and to show the stronger nature which underlay it. "If it were not for our great ancestors and for our beloved country, the Queen of the Waters," said he, "I could find it in my heart to be glad at this destruction which has come upon this vain and feeble generation.

"But," I cried, "surely the whole experience of the human race is not to be set aside on account of a single sketch" – I had turned over the leaves and ascertained that there was nothing more in the book – "a single sketch by a wandering American artist who may have done it under hashish, or in the delirium of fever, or simply in order to gratify a freakish imagination." "We have passed the Pawnees, and there are no other tribes until we cross the great mountains." There could not be the least doubt that it was this which the fellow had striven so frantically to conceal upon the first alarm of the approach of a stranger. "If it were not for our great ancestors and for our beloved country, the Queen of the Waters," said he, "I could find it in my heart to be glad at this destruction which has come upon this vain and feeble generation. All this is the truth, and if I tell it to you, gentlemen, it is not to amuse you, – for you have not done me a very good turn, – but it is because I believe the best defence I can make is just to hold back nothing, but let all the world know how badly I have myself been served by Major Sholto, and how innocent I am of the death of his son."

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

This, then, as well as the waters which join us to the world, has done something to tinge us with romance. She began to praise you, I said what I felt, and then in an instant it was all out." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her

death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. The only words of which she could think were "My goodness me!" Mr. James Stephens has refused to put his version of the matter into writing, but as these proofs have been submitted to him, and no correction or deletion has been made in them, it may be supposed that he has not succeeded in detecting any grave misstatement of fact, and that any objection which he may have to their publication depends rather upon private and personal scruples. He had faithfully promised to stay where he was, and we had not a doubt that he would be as good as his word. And how strangely made!

It was the eve of my departure from Kirkby-Malhouse that we sat upon the green bank in the garden, she with dark, dreamy eyes looking sadly out over the sombre fells; while I, with a book upon my knee, glanced covertly at her lovely profile and marvelled to myself how twenty years of life could have stamped so sad and wistful an expression upon it. She began to praise you, I said what I felt, and then in an instant it was all out." It is not a mere picture upon which I look.

"My Lady Avon and gentlemen," said he, "if I have sinned in this matter, and I freely confess that I have done so, I only know one way in which I can atone for it, and that is by making the full and complete confession which my noble master, Lord Avon, has demanded." You heard the missus say that if she let me off this time I was never to ask again. I will not enter into any argument or speculation. He knew Jeremiah and he mistrusted him, however; so instead of giving him all that he meant him to have he handed me over a part of it, telling me, with what was almost his dying breath, to hold it in trust for my brother, and to use it in his behalf when he should have squandered or lost all that he had. "Thank God! I am myself again. It was a frightful blow. Yet I dare say if he could have seen into his wife's mind – but there, I say no more! She's got to be worse, poor dear, before she can be better. But I know your plans, and my Cousin Louis knows them also, and I can assure you that there is just as much chance of his agreeing to them as there is of my doing so. I hope, madam, by the King's generosity and goodness, and your intercession, I may hope for my life which if I have shall be ever employed in showing to your Majesty all the sense imaginable of gratitude, and in serving of the King like a true subject. In my heart I longed that the time would come, for I was weary of the quiet life of the village, and was anxious to see the great world of which I had heard and read so much. I told him who was his father. In spite of his smile, I was more conscious than ever that my whole soul shrank from him, and that I should not be at my ease until I had broken this companionship which had been so involuntarily

formed."I am as glad to see you as ever I was to see a man in my life, but I confess that I did not expect you." But I cannot pretend to understand how this matter stands, and you must allow me to say that I have not heard you advance anything yet which seems to me to justify you in abandoning your engagements at a moment's notice." From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night. I have never looked with the eyes of love upon another woman. Dear me, dear me, you poor souls, how my heart does bleed for you!

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion. Even worse, however, did this marriage appear when looked at from the point of view of her father's future. I saw him at breakfast, but afterward neither he nor his horse was to be seen. cried the clerk, and the tears were running down his cheeks. It was not until I had kissed her and kissed her again upon her lips, her cheeks, her hair, that I could persuade myself that she was indeed really there. There was no event in life, from a christening to a marriage, but had some appropriate food or drink in my mother's vocabulary, and no ailment for which she had not some pleasant cure in her well-stocked cupboards. My fellow-lodger had kept her room; and, steeled as my mind was against her influence, I was yet conscious of a little throb of disappointment that she should allow me to depart without a word of farewell. At this she seemed somewhat hurt, and the tears sprang into her eyes, but she followed me into the sitting-room and watched me wistfully. And she, the polluted one, had risen to the dignity, had cut herself sternly away from all that related to her past life, and had shown signs already of being a great Queen, stronger and wiser than her husband, but fierce, vindictive, and unbending, a firm support to her friends, but a terror to her foes.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. Besides," she added, slyly, "it is just possible that if we did come to the States we might not find you there." Mrs. Harrison loved Jim as if he had been her own son, and her husband loved mine, so they came to my help, and may God bless them for their kindness to a distracted wife and mother! She did not withdraw it. At this she seemed somewhat hurt, and the tears sprang into her eyes, but she followed me into the sitting-room and watched me wistfully. I shall be here in The Wilderness, but all day I shall be by your office table at Throgmorton Street in spirit, and if ever you should be sad you will hear my little whisper in your ear, and know that there is one client whom you will never be able to get rid of – never as long as

we both live, dear." To your father and to your mother, at least, I know that none of them are unfamiliar.

"No one who was not good could be so absolutely happy as she seems to be. There are my father and mother at Bedford.

"No, Mr. Stephens, I've had such a good time all my life, that I don't think, when I look back, that I ever had any real cause for sorrow."

This is the letter which I read:

"MY EVER DEAREST WIFE, –

"Since Sir William told me how weak your heart is, and how harmful any shock might be, I have never talked about my business affairs to you.

"No, no, sir, it was worse than that. But you are sad, Jim." And you will do it soon?"

Come, Sibylle,' said her father, you can assure your cousin Louis that, so far as you are concerned, any family misunderstanding is at an end.'

"Well, I forgive you for your desertion, Ambrose," said my uncle; "and," he added, "I should be vastly obliged to you if you would re-arrange my tie."

"My brothers!" Jim!

"Clara," said he, as she came towards him with words of greeting, "I am sorry to bring ill news to you, but things have gone wrong in the City, and – and I think that I ought to release you from your engagement."

-LSB- Illustration: Don't miss your grip of it p111 -RSB-

Miss Adams felt what it was which he had slipped into her hand, and she looked at him for a moment in bewilderment.

"Quick, Policles, quick!" she cried, "what is it that I have done? Besides, so far as I can see it is not worth discussing, since we can't get down, even if we wanted."

"He shall not fall, Walker, and you shall not have occasion to be ashamed of the family into which your daughter is about to marry. It is too much to be balked by so petty an obstacle, when all else had been overcome.

"I promise you that we shall," answered my uncle, grimly. I know not whether he had indeed come upon some sudden pit which had engulfed him, or whether in his despair he had cast himself down of set purpose. I do not intend to marry yet." I feel that we have gone too far already." "I should be loath to exercise any undue pressure upon my sister Ada; but I have given her to understand that there is no one whom I should prefer for a brother-in-law to my most brilliant scholar, the author of 'Some Remarks upon the Bile-Pigments, with special reference to Urobilin.'"

'This is what he saith,' I continued, and proceeded to read the very letter which I now read to you. "We must keep a bold face and brazen it out until the last moment."

But there was another reason besides the death of my father and the receipt of this letter from my uncle.

"No, no, share and share alike," he cried. I was not aware that it was necessary to ask your permission before smiling at a harmless pleasantry."

'I am glad to hear you say so,' I answered, 'for it makes it easier for me to say that I wish to go my own way, and to have nothing more to do with you. It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me. You need not fear to tell me, dear, for you will find that I am worthy to be loved by such a soldier.'

Faith, Mistress Ruth has taught you to make pretty speeches,'
said I, but methinks she ought to be here amid the beauty of Taunton.'

"And Clara is as bad, Clara who used to be so good and sweet, the very image of her poor mother.

"It was my father!"

"This I tell you as a magistrate. One o'clock at Victoria."

'And your noble friends?'

"No – certainly not." I should not like to suggest false hopes, Miss Morstan, but is there any resemblance between this hand and that of your father?" "Roddy, darling, here's your father!" He said that he wished to have your promise that they should all have very good reward if they helped you to escape." Your sister at least knew." Now that they had not only ceased to protect him, but had themselves become a source of trouble to him, he began to understand how great the blessing was which he had enjoyed, and to sigh for the happy days before his girls had come under the influence of his neighbor. Your husband's position could not possibly be as hopeless as mine was." "But what a strange thing unconsciousness is!" Why, what the –" and she broke into such language as I had never heard from a man's lips before. Is that not true?" I am so glad you have come, Mr. Thaddeus, sir!" "And no one who has not lived with her and known her intimately can tell how charming and good she is.

Another point which is capable of being used against us is this: The spirits have the greatest difficulty in getting names through to us, and it is this which makes many of their communications so vague and unsatisfactory. When I heard that, I saw my way in the snap of a petronel.' "If I may read your life, I would venture to say that you were destined to fulfil the lot of women – to make some good man happy, and to shed around, in some wider circle, the pleasure which your society has given me since first I knew you." It is all over with Britain. He is an old soldier and a most trustworthy man. "I should wish Ida to be my sister, and

you my wife." He, on his part, showed me no ill-will, but met me rather with a coarse joviality, and a rough familiarity which he meant to be ingratiating.

"Yes, he looks happy, mother," he repeated, with a chuckle.

" 'Perhaps, Alice, you had better leave us together,' she said, and her daughter withdrew. I certainly think that she is a woman whom you may very well take as your model.

"I am very sorry, Mr. Weld," said he, "but I am afraid that I shall be compelled to dispense with your services." I return to Southampton to-morrow, and I shall hope to see you in the course of the next week."

"What is it to me whether you have it now or then? There are some things, you know, which are fine. It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me. I have never been so insulted in my life."

"Then came the thing that I mind best of all.

My fears told me that it might be my own very great discomfiture, but I did not say so.

"There is a good reason for that," said I, "for Lord Avon was, as I have heard, your uncle's best friend; and it is but natural that he would not wish to speak of his disgrace." For my own part, believing as I do that there is nothing of chance in the affairs of this world, I felt that I had been exposed to this trial in order to dispose me to serious thought, and that I had been saved that I might put those thoughts into effect. As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers. You would not think it, to look at them. I have no wish to do you any hurt if you will but acknowledge your error, and so set a better example to my household here assembled." What's all this?

"No," said I, "I do not." What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants?

"I assure you that it was all a mystery to him as it is to you and to all of us. They may have something to do with it."

I was at my wit's ends what to do, whether to be silent, or to tell her of the terrible position in which her lover was placed; but, even as I hesitated, she, with the quick intuition of a woman, read the doubts which were in my mind.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether

he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants? "If it were not for our great ancestors and for our beloved country, the Queen of the Waters," said he, "I could find it in my heart to be glad at this destruction which has come upon this vain and feeble generation. The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. I was not clear that these professions could be made to agree with the speech in which Kenna had promised a hundred hides of land to every man on the ship; but on my making this remark, the three chiefs seemed very surprised and hurt by my suspicions, and explained very plausibly that, as the Britons needed them as a guard, they could not aid them better than by settling on the soil, and so being continually at hand in order to help them. Besides," she added, slyly, "it is just possible that if we did come to the States we might not find you there." I should not like to suggest false hopes, Miss Morstan, but is there any resemblance between this hand and that of your father?" I'll let him take his own way."

I could only suggest that he probably wanted it at once.

"Oh, half that will be ample.

"I suppose that since we are all here we may begin at once," said Sir Lothian, taking no notice of the other's manner. Her brother was not a man who permitted mistakes. Perhaps even now, if this strange fanatic would show his sorrow for what he had done, it might be possible to spare him. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning, Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention, as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever. He also narrated how a certain field-chaplain Grant, of Desborough's regiment, having after a hot and dusty day drunk sundry flagons of mum, had thereafter sung certain ungodly songs, and danced in a manner

unbecoming to his sacred profession. But after his death there was no reason why I should not return to the land of my birth, and my desire was the stronger because Eugenie – the same Eugenie who has been thirty years my wife – was of the same way of thinking as myself. But when I found that we were actually to sleep out there without covering every night, and that he proposed that our food should be the sheep of the Downs (wild goats he called them) cooked upon a fire, which was to be made by the rubbing together of two sticks, my heart failed me, and on the very first night I crept away to my mother. I am very happy to have been of service." I should be delighted to come with you, sir, if I can be of any use." I return to Southampton to-morrow, and I shall hope to see you in the course of the next week."

"Well, well, we must go by averages of course." There is no time to get any. You are not fit to go out. If a thing must be done, then take a lead in it, whatever it may be. I think that it would be a pleasure to my friend here to take the box round to the young lady to whom half of it rightfully belongs. "My fellow-officers, whom I never saw until last night, will not be content unless they catch another glimpse of me the first thing this morning."

CHAPTER VII

"To-morrow we Disappear into the Unknown"

I will not bore those whom this narrative may reach by an account of our luxurious voyage upon the Booth liner, nor will I tell of our week's stay at Para (save that I should wish to acknowledge the great kindness of the Pereira da Pinta Company in helping us to get together our equipment). I do not speak upon this subject as an amateur, nor, I may add, as a popular lecturer, but I speak as one whose scientific conscience compels him to adhere closely to facts, when I say that Mr. Waldron is very wrong in supposing that because he has never himself seen a so-called prehistoric animal, therefore these creatures no longer exist. It is good to be in contact with brave men. We've been goin' this twenty year, but now we'll draw aside and let our betters get to the front; so if you wish to find what that note means, I can only advise you to do what you are asked, and to drive over to Cliffe Royal, where you will find out." Now come on or we shall be late. I shall let you have a report before evening, but I warn you in advance that you have little to expect." I give ye my word that only a week gone last Friday I stopped a grazier coming from Blandford fair, and I took seven hundred guineas off him in these paper cheques, as they call them – enough, had it been in gold, to have lasted me for a three month rouse. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the Hypnoidal' state); that, after

a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. I shall be back in an hour." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

'Shoot away! she asked, with a solemn face. And why?

"Why!" How could you possibly know? Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good.

"Oh! Not a word!

'Very likely, but I have not had time to read it.

"Well, what do you think of that?" But if it be for you, then it cannot be from any one of much importance."

O'Brien smiled. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible." I told him that out of consideration for our family I should make no public exposure of him, but that he must never again in his life lay his hand upon a card, and that the money which he had won must be returned next morning with an explanation.

I had thought it was some delusion of my own, but all could see it now. Good-bye." But I must go, Clara, I must not seem to shirk.

There was nothing which the Emperor loved more than to suddenly produce little scenes of this sort which made everybody very uncomfortable, for no one could tell what awkward or compromising question he was going to put to them next. On the contrary, all his attention seemed to be concentrated upon her answer. She was very good over the matter, but every now and again _ he _ would fetch a hollow groan, and I noticed that he held his right hand just under the sheet all the time, where I had no doubt that it was clasped by her left. How

was I to account for that? But where is your nephew Jim, and how did you come to know that you would be needed?"

"But I may not be here this afternoon." When I thought of the way in which he had spoken of his unhappy friend, Lord Avon, upon the evening before, and of the emotion which he showed as he told the horrible story, I was glad to think that there was the heart of a man there, however much it might please him to conceal it. Like all human kind, they flitted from the gloom into the light, and so back into the gloom once more. My son is on leave just now, but I did not tell him anything of all this, for his temper is violent, and he is passionately fond of his sister. What had you to do with her or with us? There was no sound in the woods – not a leaf moved upon the trees, and all was peace around us – but we should have been warned by our first experience how cunningly and how patiently these creatures can watch and wait until their chance comes. How long its effect may last – how long mankind may preserve the humility and reverence which this great shock has taught it – can only be shown by the future. What a foundation for a career! I wish to goodness she had called me." He made no advances to us, however, nor would we have dreamed of doing so to him, as it was well known that it was his love of seclusion which caused him to spend the greater part of the intervals between his journeys in a small bungalow buried in the lonely wood of Beauchamp Arriance. If it should be so –!"

"Yes, if it would end right here one might say so. She sprang up the steps and was gone in an instant.

Professor Challenger answered that Mr. Summerlee appeared to be confusing the Amazon with the Thames; that it was in reality a somewhat larger river; that Mr. Summerlee might be interested to know that with the Orinoco, which communicated with it, some fifty thousand miles of country were opened up, and that in so vast a space it was not impossible for one person to find what another had missed.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. The great green leaves swished slowly above them; they heard the low hum of the Arab talk, and the dull champing of the camels, and then in an instant, by that most mysterious and least understood of miracles, one was in a green Irish valley, and another saw the long straight line of Commonwealth Avenue, and a third was dining at a little round table opposite to the bust of Nelson in the Army and Navy Club, and for him the swishing of the palm branches had been transformed into the long-drawn hum of Pall Mall.

They had left him for an instant and were sitting in the front room, where Norah was preparing tea, when of a sudden they heard a shout that rang through the house. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a

letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"Your argument is not very good," said he. You are aware that this mansion is one of the oldest in England; but you are not aware that it has been built with a very special eye to concealment, that there are no less than two habitable secret chambers, and that the outer or thicker walls are tunnelled into passages. It may be a good change. If my view of the case is correct, and I have every reason to believe that it is, this man would rather risk anything than lose the ring.

I could not tell whether it was the wine which he had taken at supper or the excitement of Boy Jim's victory which was affecting Harrison, but his usually placid face wore a most disturbed expression, and his manner seemed to betray an alternation of exultation and embarrassment.

He gave me the amused hand-shake and encouraging smile which the head master bestows upon the small boy, and, having greeted the others and helped to collect their bags and their cylinders of oxygen, he stowed us and them away in a large motor-car which was driven by the same impassive Austin, the man of few words, whom I had seen in the character of butler upon the occasion of my first eventful visit to the Professor.

To every traveller it was a sight of beauty, but to me it was the world – the great wide free world – and my heart thrilled and fluttered as the young bird's may when it first hears the whirr of its own flight, and skims along with the blue heaven above it and the green fields beneath. Oh! But still I do not wish you or Felix to enter that room. Do you not think that it is a great pity? It just wanted that to make her the most beautiful woman I had ever seen in my life.

"Well, I'll take your word without trying," said Miss Adams, with a decision which made every one smile.

"Well if your conscience can stand it –"

"It has never failed me yet." Oh! My word, look at the little birds under the trees!"

"Oh, that's the prettiest, is it?"

"Then to do good is your object?" I think I hear them coming, Charles. This cottage is mine.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. In the presence of an agonized world,

hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction.

An hour later the shepherd was well on his way to his mountain home, and about the same time the Emperor, having received the Chaplet of Olympia for the incomparable excellence of his performance, was making enquiries with a frowning brow as to who the insolent person might be who had dared to utter such contemptuous criticisms. But we dine at eight, Captain Joyce. No, I have never heard of it."

I could not tell whether it was the wine which he had taken at supper or the excitement of Boy Jim's victory which was affecting Harrison, but his usually placid face wore a most disturbed expression, and his manner seemed to betray an alternation of exultation and embarrassment. Her parents were a branch of the de Choiseuls, and their prejudices were even stronger than those of my father. They were never at their ease, always upon the brink of a catastrophe, encouraged one day only to be rudely rebuffed the next, bullied in public and slighted in private, and yet, in spite of it all, the singular fact remains that they loved him and served him as no monarch has been loved and served.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived.

CHAPTER VII

"To-morrow we Disappear into the Unknown"

I will not bore those whom this narrative may reach by an account of our luxurious voyage upon the Booth liner, nor will I tell of our week's stay at Para (save that I should wish to acknowledge the great kindness of the Pereira da Pinta Company in helping us to get together our equipment). To prevent any painful thoughts, I may assure you once for all, dear, that it is nothing of which I need be ashamed. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others,

and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. If I return to my home I do but bring trouble and danger to those whom I love. Good God, it's dreadful to think of! But he had no hold over me, and there was no reason why _ I _ should stand his insolence, so I came away -- and I very much expect to see you do the same." But I've something to do now which is more in my own line, and I need not trouble you any more." But I had not got half through my story, and Jim, like the good fellow that he was, had just begun to forget his own troubles in his delight at my good fortune, when my uncle called to me from without. The expense of the special mission' business hardly justifies the result, and, of course, in any case it would only be an experienced man with a name that would command public confidence who would get such an order. Having passed the summit, you will perceive the full extremity of the second cataract, embracing wild natural beauties of the most dreadful variety. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible." It was not the first time, my friends, as you are well aware, and you know the reasons that I had to trust that neither nerve nor judgment would ever fail me. I hope, madam, by what I have said to the King to-day will satisfy how sincere I am, and how much I detest all those people who have brought me to this. I see that you look askance at me, Sir Charles Tregellis, but you should pray to God, sir, that you may never have the chance of finding out what you would yourself be capable of in the same position." He felt that he had come very badly out of it. She and I never took to each other very much; but now I hope all that may be ended, and when I marry she will come and stay with me." He would never trouble me again, and he begged only that I would hand over to him the sum which I held in trust for him. "Have I not said that you were the greatest that ever came, and yet behold here is already one who is greater. But after his death there was no reason why I should not return to the land of my birth, and my desire was the stronger because Eugenie -- the same Eugenie who has been thirty years my wife -- was of the same way of thinking as myself. I then reflected that since he had certainly been in London some time -- as we had evidence that he maintained a continual watch over Pondicherry Lodge -- he could hardly leave at a moment's notice, but would need some little time, if it were only a day, to arrange his affairs. I could not see the door by which he had entered, nor could I see him where he stood, but I heard all that he had to say. It has, therefore, been in the hands of your eldest brother." When I thought of the way in which he had spoken of his unhappy friend, Lord Avon, upon the evening before, and of the emotion which he showed as he told the horrible story, I was glad to think that there was

the heart of a man there, however much it might please him to conceal it. I had forgotten that he might see me do this through that crack by the hinges, but when I went out again, to show him his way and so get rid of him, my eye caught the gap, and I at once realised that he had seen my action, and that it must have aroused his curiosity to such an extent that it would be quite certain that he would think and speak of it. If I have been a failure in town, I am none the less conscious of your kindness in trying to advance my interests, and I hope that, should I receive my commission, I may be a credit to you yet." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. When Saxon had ceased to speak I sat as one stunned, trying to realise what he had said to me. But I thought at the time -- and I was not the only one -- that this man's name and work would not be forgotten, and that there would be a curse on the place that had done such a deed. I know well that I have it in me to make my name famous. For some time I was sustained in my scepticism by the consideration that many famous men, such as Darwin himself, Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, derided this new branch of knowledge; but when I learned that their derision had reached such a point that they would not even examine it, and that Spencer had declared in so many words that he had decided against it on a priori grounds, while Huxley had said that it did not interest him, I was bound to admit that, however great, they were in science, their action in this respect was most unscientific and dogmatic, while the action of those who studied the phenomena and tried to find out the laws that governed them, was following the true path which has given us all human advance and knowledge. "I should be loath to exercise any undue pressure upon my sister Ada; but I have given her to understand that there is no one whom I should prefer for a brother-in-law to my most brilliant scholar, the author of *Some Remarks upon the Bile-Pigments*, with special reference to Urobilin."

And, after all, this opening chapter will seem to the reader to have nothing to do with my narrative; and yet there would have been no narrative without it, for it is only when a man goes out into the world with the thought that there are heroisms all round him, and with the desire all alive in his heart to follow any which may come within sight of him, that he breaks away as I did from the life he knows, and ventures forth into the wonderful mystic twilight land

where lie the great adventures and the great rewards. it all went to confirm me in my first horrible suspicion, and to turn it into a certainty. She had forgotten the Emperor, the Empress, everything, in her revulsion of feeling against this craven whom she had loved. I was heart-weary of this empty life, for which I was so ill-fashioned, and weary also of that intolerant talk which would make a coterie of frivolous women and foolish fops the central point of the universe. Me to revictual her day by day:“ No, I have never heard of it.”

“Come, come, my dear lady,” said he, “you speak vastly beyond my merits;” upon which encouragement she started again in a theatrical apostrophe to Britain’s darling and Neptune’s eldest son, which he endured with the same signs of gratitude and pleasure. “You see, Clara,” she cried, “the charm works already. You may think me ill-bred to say it, sir,” she remarked, but I cannot but marvel where you have been, or what you have done all your life. I want you to see what I have seen.” Sibylle is a charming girl, and you must not allow yourself to be prejudiced against her by any ill temper which she may have shown towards me. I do not know why they should be so coupled, and they never were with Jim.

“And as far as I can help,” said Harvey Deacon, “it will certainly never be done again.”

“Yes, yes; I admit I cannot explain them.” I felt that if I did not discharge my pistol Lord Dacre’s honour might feel hurt, and yet it was quite impossible for me, after hearing what this lady has said, to aim it at her husband. Anyhow, it is absurd to suppose that because a murderer chooses to fly from justice –”

“I won’t have you use that word, Sir Lothian,” cried my uncle, sharply.

“I have little more to say, and it’s as well, for I am about done up. As to his brightness, it really does not matter, for his aunt, Mrs. Westmacott, is very rich, much richer than you would think from her style of living, and she has made him a handsome provision.” If he does not tak them t’ others will, so we had raither that they go to the good cause.

I knew that it was not so, but how could I bring myself to tell her?

“I am sure that he would not.”

“For God’s sake come at once!

John Ferrier bowed coldly.

“Well, I must say that I do not admire the result. He said that he could not very well understand you, nor you him, and so he came to me.” However, there is no great harm done, and it will not seriously disarrange my plans. He is very much in love with her, I assure you.

And yet somehow the possibility and even the probability of it had occurred to me from the beginning, and I believe that it had to Harrison also, for I had

noticed that his face grew grave and troubled from the very moment that there was talk of the stranger below.

“Judging by its effect upon my brother, I should think it must be a most extraordinary one.”

But I must warn you also that, if you think you will find much that is of interest in your guide, you are destined to disappointment. Also, how he had afterwards explained that such backslidings were not to be regarded as faults of the individual, but rather as actual obsessions of the evil one, who contrived in this manner to give scandal to the faithful, and selected the most godly for his evil purpose.

“I do believe that you are all the time enjoying it, Mr. Stephens,” said Sadie, with some bitterness. There was scarcely a fault which a General could commit which Feversham had not been guilty of. She stopped herself with an effort, and spoke no more upon the subject.

Having got so far, Defoe remarked that he thought he had given them a fair start, and handed over the story to Dean Swift, who, after premising that he feared he would find himself as much at sea as Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells, continued in this way: –

“For two days I drifted about in great distress, fearing that there should be a return of the gale, and keeping an eager look-out for my late companions. For my own part I was relieved at the explanation, for my father had left London in the full conviction that a vacancy would speedily be found for us both, and the one thing which had weighed upon my mind was that I might have found it hard to leave my uncle without interfering with the plans which he had formed.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I had forgotten that he might see me do this through that crack by the hinges, but when I went out again, to show him his way and so get rid of him, my eye caught the gap, and I at once realised that he had seen my action, and that it must have aroused his curiosity to such an extent that it would be quite certain that he would think and speak of it.

I was at my wit's ends what to do, whether to be silent, or to tell her of the terrible position in which her lover was placed; but, even as I hesitated, she,

with the quick intuition of a woman, read the doubts which were in my mind. she asked, coolly enough. Now that they had not only ceased to protect him, but had themselves become a source of trouble to him, he began to understand how great the blessing was which he had enjoyed, and to sigh for the happy days before his girls had come under the influence of his neighbor. "Oh, Monica!" It is my belief that she is merely stunned, and that she is in no danger at all." For as long as we can see it, how can we be truly happy?"

"But why should you leave her?"

"Oh! It had really been so, then.

"I cannot understand, then, how you can say that there is no such danger.

"So how long do you think it took you?" No, I couldn't possibly. For as long as we can see it, how can we be truly happy?" It was evident that she had seen my exit, but had not observed my return. In short, the higher is palpably gone, and the lower, the sense of fear, of sensual impression, of self-preservation, is functioning all the more vividly because it is relieved from the higher control. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. Mrs. Harrison loved Jim as if he had been her own son, and her husband loved mine, so they came to my help, and may God bless them for their kindness to a distracted wife and mother!

"I am sure, Monsieur Fardet," said Mrs. Belmont, "that you, who are a Frenchman, and therefore a man of gallantry and honour, would not permit your own wounded feelings to interfere with the fulfilment of your promise and your duty towards three helpless ladies." In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. But when once we were on the road I could tell by the drumming of their hoofs how far distant they were, and it seemed to me that the sound grew perceptibly louder, as if they were slowly gaining upon me. A second time it appeared before I reached the cottage, and there was something in the stealthy manner in which it peeped and whisked away, and peeped once more, which filled me with surprise, and with a certain vague apprehension. "What is the matter? At the time there were reasons, now happily long gone past, which made me determine that the son was better apart from the mother, whose absence at that age he would not miss.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion. As she could not speak a word of the language, however, and was unable to make any of the delinquents understand what it was that she wanted, her passage up the Nile left the immemorial East very much as she had found it, but afforded a good deal of sympathetic amusement to her fellow-travellers. At the time there were reasons, now happily long gone past, which made me determine that the son was better apart from the mother, whose absence at that age he would not miss.

I was at my wit's ends what to do, whether to be silent, or to tell her of the terrible position in which her lover was placed; but, even as I hesitated, she, with the quick intuition of a woman, read the doubts which were in my mind. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

She spoke in a beautiful, rich voice, with the most heart-broken thrill in it, but I could not conceal from myself that she appeared to be one of the most robust persons that I had ever seen, and I was surprised to notice that she shot arch little questioning glances at me, as if the admiration even of so insignificant a person were of some interest to her. You still stand between me and Sophie. Her face was pale, striking rather than pretty, but with two great dark eyes, so earnestly questioning, so quick in their transitions from joy to pathos, so swift in their comment upon every word and deed around her, that those eyes alone were to many more attractive than all the beauty of her younger sister. You have remarked more than once since I have been in the room that you had all the evidence which you require. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning, Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention, as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever. "Your dear mother would not have liked it, Clara," said he. I am so pleased. Well, sir, let us do what we can to curtail this visit, which can hardly be agreeable to you, and is inexpressibly irksome to me.

"Goodness! To me!"

"Shall I tell you?" Oh! What shall I do?

"Au revoir," said our visitor, and, with a bright, kindly glance from one to the other of us, she replaced her pearl-box in her bosom and hurried away.

"There is no use deceiving ourselves, Mrs. Belmont," said he; "we may as well face the truth. My father was his only son. Her voice had fallen suddenly to a quivering whisper and she was pointing to the Westmacotts' house. A second question from us failed to elicit any answer at all, save a plaintive bleat from his wife to the effect that her husband was in a very violent temper already, and that she hoped we would do nothing to make it worse. She and I never took to each other very much; but now I hope all that may be ended, and when I marry she will come and stay with me." "You are doing so well now that it would be a pity for anyone to interfere." "I am sure I am very sorry if I have asked a foolish question. I learned that Parmes had seen her before I did, and had shown her that he too loved her, but I could smile at his passion, for I knew that her heart was mine. When he spoke of seeing her again so soon, he was referring to her own approaching death, which he had been assured could not be delayed more than a very few months. Oh dear, here he is! My father's good wishes had been won by his piety and by the sacrifices which he claimed to have made for the faith. We are to have a week for plundering the town, and then one army corps is to take possession of Scotland and another of Ireland.' That however is surely impossible. I could not – must not – fail.

"My dear Mrs. Westmacott," cried Clara, "I assure you that I have not the least idea what it is that you are talking of." One must give way to the other. I am so sorry to cause you any disappointment, and I appreciate most highly the honour which you do me, but what you ask is quite impossible." "If you will let me know how your investigations go," he continued, "I shall be happy to give you any help I can." Can you tell me if Mr. Brewster lives here?"

"Yes, and I cannot be sure when he will be back.

"Come, then!

She raised no objection, and for my part I was overjoyed at the proposal, as it gave me an opportunity of learning more of this singular cousin of mine, who had told me so much and yet seemed to know so much more. "But I am quite certain that I would not leave you here." "And yet I agree with you that we cannot go back until we have tried." You are not as aggressive as I should wish, Clara, but still I like you very much. My father, however, had either never heard of it, or had forgotten the circumstance. 'It is but six miles to Amesbury, where at the Cecil Arms ye shall find, I doubt not, all that is needful for man and for beast.'

"Ah, yes!" Still, I should have thought that you might have found a more probable one, and one which would entail less serious consequences." And then... And then... how can I tell you what happened then? I would ask you to give your parole that you will remain in this dwelling for twenty-four hours, and take no steps to inform anyone of our movements."

We stood listening in breathless silence. I don't whine about what I have deserved, and so far I have had no more than I have deserved. Oh! Shall I say anything to him?" Good Lord! What would your father say? Or once again, if Raymond can tell us of a photograph no copy of which had reached England, and which proved to be exactly as he described it, and if he can give us, through the lips of strangers, all sorts of details of his home life, which his own relatives had to verify before they found them to be true, is it unreasonable to suppose that he is fairly accurate in his description of his own experiences and state of life at the very moment at which he is communicating?

I could have explained that it was because he had betrayed his comrades, because his daughter hated him, because he had ill-used his wife, because my father regarded him as the source of all his troubles – but the salon of the Empress was no place for a family quarrel, so I merely shrugged my shoulders, and was silent.

"I hate the place. cried Reuben, in a faltering voice.

Alas! 'Now, sir,' she continued, 'I had no intention of telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I have no alternative. I confess that I have seldom known a case which at first sight presented a more singular problem.' It is no pleasant matter for me to dwell upon, yet, convinced as I am that there is no such thing as chance either in the great or the little things of this world, I am very sure that the sacrifices of these brave men were not thrown away, and that their strivings were not as profitless as might at first sight appear.

Everything which the girl said seemed to be meant as an insult to me, and yet I could not imagine how I had ever offended her. "I am sure I am very sorry if I have asked a foolish question. As it proved, it was the very best thing that he could have done." Do not be angry with us. 'You say that an example must be made. I confess that at the beginning I did not tell him what I had seen, and my excuse must be that he disappeared before I had time to determine what I should do. But this is too much.

"You know," I answered with some emotion, for I have never seen so much of Holmes's heart before, "that it is my greatest joy and privilege to help you." Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

"Oh, nothing. Do you not think that it is over-accentuated? When we do, ma'am, there's no one we would look to sooner than to you." Get your things on, and I'll be ready at the door by ten o'clock." Let it be daturon. She could wish nothing better than that Ida should be the wife of Harold Denver, and from the words which she had overheard as they left the lawn that evening, she could not doubt that there was some understanding between them.

Ida gave a sigh of relief. Her voice was full of tears, and what she said was so simple, so true, that we both seemed to see the dead babe stretched there on the carpet before us, and we could have joined in with words of pity and of grief. It came from the door of the house. To prevent any painful thoughts, I may assure you once for all, dear, that it is nothing of which I need be ashamed. "Ah, Gerard," said he one evening – but it is not for me to repeat the words. If any of you gentlemen have ever pined for a thing, and longed for it during twenty long years, and then suddenly found it within your reach, you would understand my feelings. Who could have expected it?' For the rest, he was an excellent man of business, fair and even generous in his dealings, respected by all and loved by few, for his nature was too self-contained to admit of much affection. It is inconceivable and horrible. Had I seen you before the thing was done, I might have put it beyond your power to oppose me or to raise an alarm. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. What else could it point to? I will confess that she had some reason to be annoyed at the turn which things had taken. I would have taken you into my confidence, Charles, had it not been that your suspicions had wounded me deeply – for I did not at that time understand how strong the reasons were which had prejudiced you against me.

"It was last night. But the long night had to be passed somehow, and for me at least, sleep seemed to be out of the question. It chanced, however, that the unhappy sheep, which was quietly engaged in sleeping off the effects of its unusual potations, was awakened by the noise of his approach, and finding herself in such an unusual position, sprang out of bed and rushed furiously for the door, bleating wildly, and rolling about like a brig in a tornado, partly from intoxication and partly from the night-dress which impeded her movements. And yet, though I read a mutual love in their glances, I read also mutual horror, and recognised in her face some reflection of that stealthy fear which I had detected in his. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction.

VI

THE SEALED ROOM

A solicitor of an active habit and athletic tastes who is compelled by his hopes of

business to remain within the four walls of his office from ten till five must take what exercise he can in the evenings. He had hardly completed his arrangements before the farmer returned with his daughter all dressed and ready for a start. In one case the first message to the mother came through a stranger to whom the correct address of the mother was given. Why, then, should we risk so many evils to bring that about which time and patience must, perforce, accomplish between them? said she; and was gone ere I could say a word in answer to her extraordinary request. If I have not said much about it before, it was, of course, that the Professor's earnest desire was that no possible rumor of the unanswerable argument which we carried should be allowed to leak out until the moment came when his enemies were to be confuted. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. As he had withdrawn his head, however, entirely beneath the bedclothes, there was nothing more to be said, so I descended to the lower room, where I found my father busily engaged fastening a new buckle to his sword-belt while my mother and the maid were preparing the morning meal. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. Twice during our meal she rose from her chair and withdrew into a cupboard at the end of the room, and each time I saw Jim's face cloud, for we heard a gentle clink of glass against glass. It is not for nothing that I expended an hour last night in focusing my mind upon the situation. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him. "Ah, here is breakfast at last!" She felt that it was settled, that he had come to ask her for her sister's hand. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning, Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention, as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever. Her face was pale, striking rather than pretty, but with two great dark eyes, so earnestly questioning, so quick in their transitions from joy to pathos, so swift in their comment upon every word and deed around her, that those eyes alone were to many more attractive than all the beauty of her younger sister. But new considerations have at last compelled me to alter my resolution.

'I will know here and now,' she cried. "I think that we had better tell Mary

that we are not at home.” All that I know I shall endeavour soberly and in due order to put before you. I confess to you that I cannot imagine anything more convenient than that we should unite in order to settle once for all every question as to which branch of the family shall hold the estates.’ He had himself been appointed to the *Cato*, 64, with post rank, whilst a note had come from Lord Nelson at Portsmouth to say that a vacancy was open for me if I should present myself at once.

“I will tell you about him – or a little about him, for he has done much which I would not care to talk of, nor you to listen to. There was no hope for my mission now, and I had done all that I could do.

‘I understand that it did not really represent your Grace’s thoughts.’ You will not refuse me?” I trust that if we can ensure an atmosphere hyper-oxygenated to a certain point, we may be able to retain our senses. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship’s were the dearest thing in all the world to him.

It seemed to me that he was only too anxious to remove me at once from the influence of this extraordinary colleague, and I was glad to go, for the conversation had become embarrassing. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Yes, it was indeed so. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. There was something in the gentleness of his rebuke, and in his appeal to her mother, which brought the tears to her eyes, and in another instant she would have been kneeling beside him with everything confessed, when the door flew open and her sister Ida came bounding into the room.

“Oh, when I __ am __ miserable I am just too miserable for words. I wish her every success, for we have no reason at all to fear this miserable poet, while the other is

formidable. There we left him then in the dim-lit London drawing-room, beside himself with pity for this shallow and most artificial woman, while without, at the edge of the Piccadilly curb, there stood the high dark berline ready to start him upon that long journey which was to end in his chase of the French fleet over seven thousand miles of ocean, his meeting with it, his victory, which confined Napoleon's ambition for ever to the land, and his death, coming, as I would it might come to all of us, at the crowning moment of his life. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I give you my word that when I went to London last fall the sight of an overworked, raw-backed cart-horse straining with its load, and flogged for not doing that which it could not do, gave me greater qualms than did the field of Sedgemoor, or that greater day when ten thousand of the flower of France lay stretched before the earthworks of Landen.

"Yes," she said at last, "I had a feeling that there was something on his mind." He would talk, too, to his two daughters of her strength of character, her decisive mind, and of the necessity of their cultivating her acquaintance and following her example, until at last it had become his most common topic of conversation. What did I do ten months ago which inspired you with such a particular affection for me? said she; and was gone ere I could say a word in answer to her extraordinary request.

I think that it may have been his purpose – for he never did anything without a purpose – to give me an object-lesson of his own capacity for governing, with the idea, perhaps, that I might in turn influence others of the Emigres by what I told them. From his wife to his groom there was not one of those who were about him who did not live in dread of being held up to ridicule and infamy before a smiling crowd, whose amusement was only tempered by the reflection that each of them might be the next to endure the same exposure. I did not know that he belonged to these horrible people, or I should not have admitted him. Never for an hour had she given him cause to regret it; but this lawyer brother of hers had, as I understood, offended my father by his slavish obsequiousness in days of prosperity and his venomous enmity in the days of trouble. If I had not penetrated her secret I should often have thought that she forgot even that I was in the house. Was it not obvious that he or she would feel bound to return some result for money received, and that the temptation to fraud would be an overpowering one?

"Why, I cannot say that, but she seemed very set upon it, and women have their fancies. It is not altogether a favourable case, but still it might be much worse. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to

think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I have, as I said, done Mortimer some turns which he might remember, though it did not become me to remind him of them.

We all looked from one to the other, but though many faces were doubtful or desponding, none had a word to say against the night attack, for it was clear that our action in any case must be hazardous, and this had at least the merit of promising a better chance of success than any other. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants?

During the whole of that day they struggled on through the defiles, and by evening they calculated that they were more than thirty miles from their enemies.

I should have wished to have limited my story to Beaufort and his message, but as the council seemed to be intent upon hearing a full account of my journey, I told in as short and simple speech as I could the various passages which had befallen me – the ambuscado of the smugglers, the cave, the capture of the gauger, the journey in the lugger, the acquaintance with Farmer Brown, my being cast into prison, with the manner of my release and the message wherewith I had been commissioned. She said nothing, but that face of hers was one long wail of fear. I look back at the chain of incidents, my interview with McArdle, Challenger's first note of alarm in the Times, the absurd journey in the train, the pleasant luncheon, the catastrophe, and now it has come to this – that we linger alone upon an empty planet, and so sure is our fate that I can regard these lines, written from mechanical professional habit and never to be seen by

human eyes, as the words of one who is already dead, so closely does he stand to the shadowed borderland over which all outside this one little circle of friends have already gone.

The Empress had graciously offered me a seat in her berline, and all the way to the village, entirely forgetful apparently of the scene through which she passed, she chatted away, asking me a thousand personal questions about myself and my affairs, for a kindly curiosity in the doings of everyone around her was one of her most marked characteristics. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good. Never have I travelled at such a pace, and never have I felt such a sense of exhilaration from the rush of keen upland air upon our faces, and from the sight of those two glorious creatures stretched to their utmost, with the roar of their hoofs and the rattle of our wheels as the light curricule bounded and swayed behind them. I pursued her with some thoughts of an explanation, but she flew down the drive, and some minutes afterwards I was able to pick her out with my field-glasses traveling very rapidly in a south-westerly direction.

She worked upon me so, partly with her scorn and partly with this money that she held before my eyes, that I believe I should have yielded and taken my chances upstairs, had it not been that I saw her eyes following the struggle within me in such a crafty, malignant fashion, that it was evident she was bent upon making me the tool of her revenge, and that she would leave me no choice but to do the old man an injury or to be captured by him. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around one the wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone to, I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied was not merely a study of a force outside the rules of science, but that it was really something tremendous, a breaking down of the walls between two worlds, a direct undeniable message from beyond, a call of hope and of guidance to the human race at the time of its deepest affliction. From the first glance I saw that she was mine. said the same gentle voice which had spoken first.' As such, they were not likely to have any great love for the Government, or desire to uphold King James in any way.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Then I had a sudden happy thought. He had certainly a strange audience to harangue: his wife perfectly acquiescent and absolutely ignorant of his meaning,

Summerlee seated in the shadow, querulous and critical but interested, Lord John lounging in a corner somewhat bored by the whole proceeding, and myself beside the window watching the scene with a kind of detached attention, as if it were all a dream or something in which I had no personal interest whatever.

We all looked from one to the other, but though many faces were doubtful or desponding, none had a word to say against the night attack, for it was clear that our action in any case must be hazardous, and this had at least the merit of promising a better chance of success than any other. They were never at their ease, always upon the brink of a catastrophe, encouraged one day only to be rudely rebuffed the next, bullied in public and slighted in private, and yet, in spite of it all, the singular fact remains that they loved him and served him as no monarch has been loved and served. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep'** -- **a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. But I shall speak of a time when the love of a mother was the only love I knew, and if you seek for something more, then it is not for you that I write.

"You understand everything now, Colonel Gerard," said he, "and you will forgive me if I did not take you into my complete confidence before.

'I am much beholden to you, sir,' I answered, but I fear that there is no help which you can give me, unless, indeed, you could convey news to my friends in the army of what hath befallen me.' she

murmured. Now, sir, 'she continued,' I had no intention of telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I have no alternative. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. During the twelve years that she had kept house for him, his younger sister had never

known him a second behind his time.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. She must have been more than woman if she did not feel some uneasiness at the strange enterprise upon which we were embarking, yet her self-control was perfect, and she readily answered the few additional questions which Sherlock Holmes put to her. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. His blood hath through his daughter been transmitted to the ten of us, though I rejoice to say that I, being the tenth, it had by that time lost much of its virulence, and indeed amounts to little more than a proper pride, and a laudable desire to prosper.'

And yet somehow the possibility and even the probability of it had occurred to me from the beginning, and I believe that it had to Harrison also, for I had noticed that his face grew grave and troubled from the very moment that there was talk of the stranger below. "I'm sorry to gainsay you, lad, but there are reasons why I had rather you stayed down here with your aunt." Ah! "Poor papa! But we shall hold your money, my friend, and it will strengthen us to feel that it is there."

Nay, dear friends, do not look sad, for what can be happier than a life completed in honour and made beautiful with friendship and love?

"I dare not go down alone, dear, but if you will come with me. I have but seen them this once in ten years, and it may be ten more, for all I know, ere I see them again.

"No one who was not good could be so absolutely happy as she seems to be. All I ask is that you read it – just read it – and then that you make an inquiry or two about the private character of this" lady" Mannering, if she still keeps the name that she had three years ago, when to my sorrow and ruin I came to meet her. She and I never took to each other very much; but now I hope all that may be ended, and when I marry she will come and stay with me." Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good.

They walked on together side by side, she brooding over some thought of her own, and he a little crossed and disappointed at her caprice and the lost commission for Harold. It seemed a poor return for all the courtesy which we encountered that we should deceive our hosts and benefactors, but under the circumstances we had really no alternative, and I hereby tell them that they will only waste their time and their money if they attempt to follow upon our traces. But I thought at the time – and I was not the only one – that this man's name and work would not be forgotten, and that there would be a curse on the place that had done such a deed.

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. He had not yet attained his full six foot of stature, but no judge of a man (and every woman, at least, is one) could look at his perfect shoulders, his narrow loins, and his proud head that sat upon his neck like an eagle upon its perch, without feeling that sober joy which all that is beautiful in Nature gives to us – a vague self-content, as though in some way we also had a hand in the making of it. What did I do ten months ago which inspired you with such a particular affection for me?

Thinking, as I did, that he was speaking of our own old Queen Charlotte, I could make no meaning out of this; but my father told me afterwards that both Nelson and Lady Hamilton had conceived an extraordinary affection for the Queen of Naples, and that it was the interests of her little kingdom which he had so strenuously at heart. Mrs. Cecil Forrester was out for the evening, she explained, and likely to be very late. In the early morning my landlady found me stretched senseless before the silver mirror, but I knew nothing myself until three days ago I awoke in the deep peace of the doctor's nursing home. "This fellow may be very clever," I said to myself, "but he is certainly very conceited." It's not a pleasant side, I am afraid, but if it is good enough for Providence to create, it is good enough for us to try and understand.

But in spite of the evident hatred of her husband's family, the Empress appeared to be entirely unconcerned and at her ease as she strolled about among the groups of her guests with a kindly glance and a pleasant word for each of them. He had not imagination enough to realise that the experience which seemed so appallingly important to him, was the merest everyday matter of business to the medical man who could not have lived for a year had he not, amid the rush of work, remembered what was due to his own health. Never shall I forget the sudden flash of hope which shone in his dark eyes when he saw a comrade burst into the room, or the look of despair which followed as he understood that I had come not to change his fate but to share it. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance

now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I'll tell you some day. "It's all so beautiful and natural until this kind of thing comes in! So I did not look up till all was finished. But Gladys – was it not the very opportunity of which she spoke? As it was, we very nearly lost it at the last moment."

"I knew you would not shrink at the last," said he, and for a moment I saw something in his eyes which was nearer to tenderness than I had ever seen.

'I am glad to hear you say so,' I answered, **for it makes it easier for me to say that I wish to go my own way, and to have nothing more to do with you.** For myself, I don't fear a wet jacket or a tarry hand for the cause, and I doubt not ye are all of my way of thinking. But when I had written it, it seemed so dreadfully stiff that I had to put a little beginning and end of my own, which seemed to brighten it up a good deal." Do you recall the hour?"

"Do it!" Oh! Five-and-fifty.

"Remarkable, is it not? Rum is good, and so is schnapps, but I'd as lief have tea as either." "I know very well that I am not clever or anything of that sort, but still I would do all I can to make you very happy. I was his favourite aide-de-camp.

'Madam, – I would not take the boldness of writing to your Majesty till I had shown the King how I do abhor the thing that I have done, and how much I desire to live to serve him. And besides, he is forced to be a good man. He's not the same man he used to be, though I make free to say that he was never quite one of my gentlemen, like Mr. Hastie or yourself, sir. And his daughter – what was to become of her after he was gone? You have heard, no doubt, of Curupuri?"

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. My only claim to being taken into your confidence is that during my many residences here I have come to know this family of Tregennis very well – indeed, upon my Cornish mother's side I could call them cousins – and their strange fate has naturally been a great shock to me. For you may remember, my children, that I stated when I first took it in hand to narrate to you these passages of my life, that the hopes of Monmouth's party rested very much upon the raid which Argyle and the Scottish exiles had made upon Ayrshire, where it was hoped that they would create such a disturbance as would divert a good share of King James's forces, and so make our march to London less difficult.

Her companions would not believe her, for they could see nothing, but there are

moments when our mortal senses are more acute than those who have never put their whole heart and soul into them can ever realise. I took the precaution of walking the horse very quietly until we were some distance from the house, for I had told Reuben nothing of my intended journey, and I was convinced that if he knew of it neither discipline, nor even his new ties of love, would prevent him from coming with me. She was a unit, a factor, – nothing more.

I was at my wit's ends what to do, whether to be silent, or to tell her of the terrible position in which her lover was placed; but, even as I hesitated, she, with the quick intuition of a woman, read the doubts which were in my mind.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion. I did not know that he belonged to these horrible people, or I should not have admitted him. Up to now it has been capricious in the places which it has attacked, but the difference is only a matter of a few hours, and it is like an advancing tide which covers one strip of sand and then another, running hither and thither in irregular streams, until at last it has submerged it all. I had long determined that he should have a show for his life if he chose to take advantage of it.

The innkeeper scratched his head and looked at me in despair, but it was very evident to me that it was neither for France nor for Belgium that this woman cared, but that it was the safety of her own house that was nearest her heart.

"After all," said he, "it is stupid to pray all your life, and not to pray now when we have nothing to hope for except through the goodness of Providence." Never fret about that! Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. It may be an evil one. You'll understand that I really do love you when I tell you that, if it were not that I knew you were frightened and unhappy, these last two days in which we have been always together would have been infinitely the happiest of my life."

It was upon the 4th of March, as I have good reason to remember, that I rose somewhat earlier than usual, and found that Sherlock Holmes had not yet finished his breakfast.

'I do not care what you require of me. That is all that I can say.'

How foolish of me, the old, broken man, to dwell upon these successes, and yet I will confess that my age has been very much soothed and comforted by the

memory of the women who have loved me and the men whom I have overcome. "I'll look in once a week or so, and see how you are."

I have no idea what backward sweep of memory had brought the matter fresh to his mind, or what freak had caused him to desire that I should recount it; but I hasten, before another cancelling telegram may arrive, to hunt out the notes which give me the exact details of the case and to lay the narrative before my readers. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. For an hour or more my poor mother and I did what we could to soothe him, while the children whimpered in a corner, until at last he staggered slowly to his feet, and in brief broken words ordered us to our rooms. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. I did not know that he belonged to these horrible people, or I should not have admitted him. The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes.

He expected that he would receive some message or remonstrance from Young as to his conduct, and he was not mistaken, though it came in an unlooked-for manner. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her

death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier.

The Doctor had walked home from the station in a peaceable and relenting frame of mind, feeling that, perhaps, he had said too much in the morning, that his daughters had for years been models in every way, and that, if there had been any change of late, it was, as they said themselves, on account of their anxiety to follow his advice and to imitate Mrs. Westmacott. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. Having described the genesis of their journey, and paid a handsome tribute to his friend Professor Challenger, coupled with an apology for the incredulity with which his assertions, now fully vindicated, had been received, he gave the actual course of their journey, carefully withholding such information as would aid the public in any attempt to locate this remarkable plateau. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. I took the precaution of walking the horse very quietly until we were some distance from the house, for I had told Reuben nothing of my intended journey, and I was convinced that if he knew of it neither discipline, nor even his new ties of love, would prevent him from coming with me. For some time I was sustained in my scepticism by the consideration that many famous men, such as Darwin himself, Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, derided this new branch of knowledge; but when I learned that their derision had reached such a point that they would not even examine it, and that Spencer had declared in so many words that he had decided against it on a priori grounds, while Huxley had said that it did not interest him, I was bound to admit that, however great, they were in science, their action in this respect was most unscientific and dogmatic, while the action of those who studied the phenomena and tried to find out the laws that governed them, was following the true path which has given us all human advance and knowledge. Neither of the others seemed very fond of him, for they were each, as was easy to see, proud of their chieftainship, and anxious to use their authority, referring continually to those noble ancestors from whom it was derived; while Lanc though he was equally well born, took

the view of the common men upon every occasion, claiming that the interests of the many were superior to the privileges of the few. I am aware that all these accounts of life beyond the grave differ in detail – I suppose any of our accounts of the present life would differ in detail – but in the main there is a very great resemblance, which in this instance was very far from the conception either of myself or of either of the two ladies who made up the circle.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion.

De Caulaincourt had moved on to speak with some lady, and I was again left to my own thoughts, which turned upon this extraordinary man, who presented himself at one moment as a hero and at another as a spoiled child, with his nobler and his worse side alternating so rapidly that I had no sooner made up my mind about him than some new revelation would destroy my views and drive me to some fresh conclusion.

“I should wish to be near and dear to both of you,” said he, as he took her hand. cried Lady Hamilton, and straightway she began to talk of the admiral and of his doings with such extravagance of praise and such a shower of compliments and of epithets, that my father and I did not know which way to look, feeling shame and sorrow for a man who was compelled to listen to such things said in his own presence. What did it matter to me if she hated the sound of his voice, or if he put every indignity upon her in the hope of breaking her spirit, and spoke to her as he would never have dared to speak to one of his servants? If love had not come to her yet, there was at least pity and sympathy, which are nearly akin to it.

Thinking, as I did, that he was speaking of our own old Queen Charlotte, I could make no meaning out of this; but my father told me afterwards that both Nelson and Lady Hamilton had conceived an extraordinary affection for the Queen of Naples, and that it was the interests of her little kingdom which he had so strenuously at heart. He concealed his fears from his daughter, however, and affected to make light of the whole matter, though she, with the keen eye of love, saw plainly that he was ill at ease.

Again I had to confess that he had beaten me. He was married to the second daughter of Sir James Ovington; and as I have seen three of his grandchildren within the week, I fancy that if any of Sir Lothian’s descendants have their eye upon the property, they are likely to be as disappointed as their ancestor was before them. For some time I was sustained in my scepticism by the consideration that many famous men, such as Darwin himself, Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, derided this new branch of knowledge; but when I learned that their derision had reached such a point that they would not even examine it, and

that Spencer had declared in so many words that he had decided against it on a priori grounds, while Huxley had said that it did not interest him, I was bound to admit that, however great, they were in science, their action in this respect was most unscientific and dogmatic, while the action of those who studied the phenomena and tried to find out the laws that governed them, was following the true path which has given us all human advance and knowledge. Then, when I taxed him with the matter, he had the strongest reasons for wishing me out of the way, before I could convey my knowledge to any one else. He divided his great wealth among his many nephews, and I found myself with sufficient to provide amply for my wants during the remainder of my life, and became at the same time the owner of a bleak tract of land upon the coast of Caithness, which I think the old man must have bestowed upon me in derision, for it was sandy and valueless, and he had ever a grim sense of humour. How spirits may see things in a different light as they progress in the other world is shown by Miss Julia Ames, who was deeply impressed at first by the necessity of forming a bureau of communication, but admitted, after fifteen years, that not one spirit in a million among the main body upon the further side ever wanted to communicate with us at all since their own loved ones had come over. But when I ventured to glance at Lord Nelson I found, to my surprise, that, far from showing any embarrassment, he was smiling with pleasure, as if this gross flattery of her ladyship's were the dearest thing in all the world to him. From that time I have never heard him allude to the matter, nor did he ever give us any reason why he should so confidently have expected the second coming upon that particular night. How close is the connection between kindred souls over there is shown by the way in which Myers, Gurney and Roden Noel, all friends and co-workers on earth, sent messages together through Mrs. Holland, who knew none of them, each message being characteristic to those who knew the men in life – or the way in which Professor Verrall and Professor Butcher, both famous Greek scholars, collaborated to produce the Greek problem which has been analysed by Mr. Gerald Balfour in *The Ear of Dionysius*, with the result that that excellent authority testified that the effect COULD have been attained by no other entities, save only Verrall and Butcher. My plans were already formed. As for me, I had sprung to the side of the old friend of my boyhood, and was trying to tell him my joy at his good fortune, and listening to his assurance that nothing that could ever befall him could weaken the love that he bore me. She had not spoken more than three or four times with her nephew, and knew nothing more of him than he had told her on the evening before. For some time I was sustained in my scepticism by the consideration that many famous men, such as Darwin himself, Huxley, Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, derided this new branch of knowledge; but when I learned that their derision had reached such a point that they would not even examine it, and that Spencer had declared in so many words that he had decided against it on a priori grounds, while Huxley had said that it did not interest him, I was bound to admit that, however great, they were in science, their action in this respect was most unscientific and dogmatic, while the action of those who studied the phenomena and tried to find out the laws that governed them, was following the true path which has given

us all human advance and knowledge. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called **lying asleep' -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with theHypnoidal'** state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is 'absolutely unknown,' that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters.

"But, Fritz," the Professor cried, very much startled by this view of the matter, "I had relied upon your assistance in the attempt. But, then, Champion Harrison told me how the fighting-men lived there, and my father how the heads of the Navy lived there, and my mother how her brother and his grand friends were there, until at last I was consumed with impatience to see this marvellous heart of England. He needs no more." Belcher was half frenzied by this sudden ending of all the pains which he had taken in the training, and could only rave out threats at Berks and his companions, with terrible menaces as to what he would do when he met them.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. I know their ways, and we must be ready for it. A second question from us failed to elicit any answer at all, save a plaintive bleat from his wife to the effect that her husband was in a very violent temper already, and that she hoped we would do nothing to make it worse.

"My father was a man who was noted for his almost morbid love of truth. I

forgave him the trick by which he had caught me and the selfish fears to which he had been willing to sacrifice me. My mind had been too much excited by all that had occurred, and the strangest fancies and surmises crowded into it. In most armies it would have been conceded that my father was within his rights in punishing promptly so rank an act of mutiny, but the soldiers of Cromwell had so high a notion of their own importance and privileges, that they resented this summary justice upon their companion. Then there was a silence, which lasted until her death; and then came a letter to me of so private a nature that I cannot show it to you, begging me never to think evil of him, giving me much good advice, and saying that the sealing of the room was of less importance now than during the lifetime of my mother, but that the opening might still cause pain to others, and that, therefore, he thought it best that it should be postponed until my twenty-first year, for the lapse of time would make things easier. For this cause, though not wanting in natural courage, they did little service during the war, and were a hindrance rather than a help to the army. And so also, when the ring has become as extinct as the lists, we may understand that a broader philosophy would show that all things, which spring up so naturally and spontaneously, have a function to fulfil, and that it is a less evil that two men should, of their own free will, fight until they can fight no more than that the standard of hardihood and endurance should run the slightest risk of being lowered in a nation which depends so largely upon the individual qualities of her citizens for her defence.

“My dear sir,” said I, “if I may speak with the frankness of a professional adviser, I should say that it is very clear that your father had the strongest reasons for keeping out of the country, and that, if nothing has been proved against him, he at least thought that something might be, and refused to put himself within the power of the law. Even my furious and distempered mind recognised it as being a solemn and courteous leave-taking. With a stony face and an unsympathetic manner he had received, upon his return to Haifa, all the commiserations about the dreadful way in which his privations had blanched him, and then diving into his cabin, he had reappeared within an hour exactly as he had been before that fatal moment when he had been cut off from the manifold resources of civilisation.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. Still, I could not see what harm could come to me by complying with his request, and certainly I could not have devised any arrangement which would give me such an opportunity of satisfying my curiosity. You need no chart of directions now, since you will have the inestimable advantage of my own guidance. Her mother, despairing of preserving her sight, and being not of ability to send her

to London to be touched by the king, being miserably poor, having many poor children, and this girl not being able to work, her mother, desirous to have her daughter cured, sent to the surgeons for help, who tampered with it for some time, but could do no good.

I heard nothing more of the matter for some time, and had almost feared that it would prove to be one of those fleeting experiences which drift away from our direct observation and end only in a hope or a suspicion. I cannot think how the historian of the future can hope to understand them, when I, who knew one of them so well, and bore his blood in my veins, could never quite tell how much of him was real, and how much was due to the affectations which he had cultivated so long that they had ceased to deserve the name. It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters. The management was all that could be desired. I have no more time to waste on the matter." His money, which had ruined what might have been a great life, was divided amongst many bequests, an annuity to his valet, Ambrose, being amongst them; but enough has come to his sister, my dear mother, to help to make her old age as sunny and as pleasant as even I could wish.

The first of these occurred when I was so young that I can remember neither what went before nor what immediately after it. Since the spirit is by its very nature invisible, we cannot see these comings and goings, but we see their effect in the body of the subject, now rigid and inert, now struggling to narrate impressions which could never have come to it by natural means. Thus, pacing slowly, we returned to Bridgewater, where Reuben was carried to our quarters, and I bore the little maid of the marshes to kind townsfolk, who promised to restore her to her home when the troubles were over. Since the spirit is by its very nature invisible, we cannot see these comings and goings, but we see their effect in the body of the subject, now rigid and inert, now struggling to narrate impressions which could never have come to it by natural means. Or when Mr. Arthur Hill receives messages from folk of whom he never heard, and afterwards verifies that they are true in every detail, is it not a fair inference that they are speaking truths also when they give any light upon their present condition?

The sudden gush of tenderness in the last few lines made the tears spring to my eyes, and yet I could scarce forbear from smiling at the whole composition, for my dear mother had little time to cultivate the graces of style, and it was evidently her thought that in order to make her instructions binding it was needful to express them in some sort of legal form. He answered that he had been able lately to prove the marriage, and if some persons are not lately dead, of which he would inform himself, he would yet be able to prove it. But it comforts my heart, my friends, and it brings the tears to my eyes, to think how great I was upon that last day of my soldier life, and to remember that of all the

remarkable exploits which have won me the love of so many beautiful women, and the respect of so many noble men, there was none which, in splendour, in audacity, and in the great end which was attained, could compare with my famous ride upon the night of June 18th, 1815.

CHAPTER VII – THE HOPE OF ENGLAND

My uncle drove for some time in silence, but I was conscious that his eye was always coming round to me, and I had an uneasy conviction that he was already beginning to ask himself whether he could make anything of me, or whether he had been betrayed into an indiscretion when he had allowed his sister to persuade him to show her son something of the grand world in which he lived. It is a real joy and privilege to me, sir, to make your distinguished acquaintance. I could find no one to join me in my appreciation, and solitary admiration for one's self, however genuine, becomes satiating after a time. At first his interest was merely excited by the fact of seeing a man of so venerable an appearance in such a disgraceful condition, but as he approached nearer, he became convinced that he knew the other well, though he could not recall when or where he had met him. Never for an hour had she given him cause to regret it; but this lawyer brother of hers had, as I understood, offended my father by his slavish obsequiousness in days of prosperity and his venomous enmity in the days of trouble. My father, the descendant of one of the proudest and oldest families in France, had chosen beauty and virtue rather than rank in his wife. But those who knew him best at times when a man may be best known, said that the old soldier had a young man's heart and a young man's spirit, – so that if he wished to keep a young man's colour also it was not very unreasonable after all. The less experienced a doctor is, the higher are his notions of professional dignity, as I need not remind you, my young friend, so I was about to refuse the commission with indignation, when I bethought me that, quite apart from medicine, we were gentleman and lady, and that she had asked me to do something for her which was evidently of the greatest possible importance in her eyes.

The Johnstones were one of the Redesdale families, second cousins of the Armstrongs, and connected by marriage to –"

"Perhaps, Sir Walter," interrupted Thackeray, "you would take the responsibility off our hands by yourself dictating the commencement of a story to this young literary aspirant." I find," he continued, glancing over the pages of his ledger, "that within the last twelve months we have supplied no fewer than seven Latin masters to Willow Lea House Academy, four of them having left so abruptly as to forfeit their month's salary, and none of them having stayed more than eight weeks." It was a life which even in those limited records shows us no trait which is not beautiful – a life full of easy tolerance for others, of kindly charity, of broad-minded moderation, of gentle courage, always progressive and open to new ideas, and yet never bitter to those ideas which He was really supplanting, though He did occasionally lose His temper with their more bigoted and narrow supporters.

“My name is Sawyer – her’s is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her – and a smart, clean lad, too, as long as he’s at sea, and no steward in the company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what with liquor shops –”

“Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer,” I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my companion; “it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to be able to restore it to the rightful owner.” From his wife to his groom there was not one of those who were about him who did not live in dread of being held up to ridicule and infamy before a smiling crowd, whose amusement was only tempered by the reflection that each of them might be the next to endure the same exposure. At any rate I obtained, at various times, statements (as my contemporary notes show) to the effect that, in this persisting state of existence, they have bodies which, though imperceptible by our senses, are as solid to them as ours to us, that these bodies are based on the general characteristics of our present bodies but beautified; that they have no age, no pain, no rich and poor; that they wear clothes and take nourishment; that they do not sleep (though they spoke of passing occasionally into a semiconscious state which they called *lying asleep*’ -- a condition, it just occurs to me, which seems to correspond roughly with the *Hypnoidal*’ state); that, after a period which is usually shorter than the average life-time here, they pass to some further state of existence; that people of similar thoughts, tastes and feelings, gravitate together; that married couples do not necessarily reunite, but that the love of man and woman continues and is freed of elements which with us often militate against its perfect realization; that immediately after death people pass into a semi-conscious rest-state lasting various periods, that they are unable to experience bodily pain, but are susceptible at times to some mental anxiety; that a painful death is ‘absolutely unknown,’ that religious beliefs make no difference whatever in the after-state, and that their life altogether is intensely happy, and no one having ever realised it could wish to return here.

“No, no, Sir Charles. – Challenger.

VIII

BEHIND THE TIMES

My first interview with Dr. James Winter was under dramatic circumstances. This is a queer old book I picked up at a stall yesterday – ‘*De Jure inter Gentes*’ – published in Latin at Liege in the Lowlands, in 1642. I have just found, on consulting the back files of the Times, that Major Sholto, of Upper Norword, late of the 34th Bombay Infantry, died upon the 28th of April, 1882." We traveled entirely by compass, and once or twice there were differences of opinion between Challenger and the two Indians, when, to quote the Professor’s indignant words, the whole party agreed to “trust the fallacious instincts of undeveloped savages rather than the highest product of modern European culture.”

MYCROFT.