ГЕРБЕРТ УЭЛЛС

THE SECRET PLACES OF THE HEART

Герберт Уэллс

The Secret Places of the Heart

Уэллс Г. Д.

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Содержание

H. G. Wells
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CHAPTER THE FIRST
THE CONSULTATION

Section 1

The maid was a young woman of great natural calmness; she was accustomed to let in visitors who had this air of being annoyed and finding one umbrella too numerous for them. It mattered nothing to her that the gentleman was asking for Dr. Martineau as if he was asking for something with an unpleasant taste. Almost imperceptibly she relieved him of his umbrella and juggled his hat and coat on to a massive mahogany stand. “What name, Sir?” she asked, holding open the door of the consulting room.

“Hardy,” said the gentleman, and then yielding it reluctantly with its distasteful three-year-old honour, “Sir Richmond Hardy.”

The door closed softly behind him and he found himself in undivided possession of the large indifferent apartment in which the nervous and mental troubles of the outer world eddied for a time on their way to the distinguished specialist. A bowl of daffodils, a handsome bookcase containing bound Victorian magazines and antiquated medical works, some paintings of Scotch scenery, three big armchairs, a buhl clock, and a bronze Dancing Faun, by their want of any collective idea enhanced rather than mitigated the promiscuous disregard of the room. He drifted to the midmost of the three windows and stared out despondently at Harley Street.

For a minute or so he remained as still and limp as an empty jacket on its peg, and then a gust of irritation stirred him.

“Damned fool I was to come here,” he said… “DAMNED fool!

“Rush out of the place?..

“I’ve given my name.”…

He heard the door behind him open and for a moment pretended not to hear. Then he turned round. “I don’t see what you can do for me,” he said.

“I’m sure *I* don’t,” said the doctor. “People come here and talk.”

There was something reassuringly inaggressive about the figure that confronted Sir Richmond. Dr. Martineau’s height wanted at least three inches of Sir Richmond’s five feet eleven; he was humanly plump, his face was round and pink and cheerfully wistful, a little suggestive of the full moon, of what the full moon might be if it could get fresh air and exercise. Either his tailor had made his trousers too short or he had braced them too high so that he seemed to have grown out of them quite recently. Sir Richmond had been dreading an encounter with some dominating and mesmeric personality; this amiable presence dispelled his preconceived resistances.

Dr. Martineau, a little out of breath as though he had been running upstairs, with his hands in his trouser pockets, seemed intent only on disavowals. “People come here and talk. It does them good, and sometimes I am able to offer a suggestion.

“Talking to someone who understands a little,” he expanded the idea.

“I’m jangling damnably…overwork…”

"Not overwork," Dr. Martineau corrected. "Not overwork. Overwork never hurt anyone. Fatigue stops that. A man can work – good straightforward work, without internal resistance, until he drops, – and never hurt himself. You must be working against friction."

"Friction! I'm like a machine without oil. I'm grinding to death… And it's so DAMNED important I SHOULDN'T break down. It's VITALLY important."

He stressed his words and reinforced them with a quivering gesture of his upraised clenched hand. "My temper's in rags. I explode at any little thing. I'm RAW. I can't work steadily for ten minutes and I can't leave off working."

"Your name," said the doctor, "is familiar. Sir Richmond Hardy? In the papers. What is it?"

"Fuel."

"Of course! The Fuel Commission. Stupid of me! We certainly can't afford to have you ill."

"I AM ill. But you can't afford to have me absent from that Commission."

"Your technical knowledge – "

"Technical knowledge be damned! Those men mean to corner the national fuel supply. And waste it! For their profits. That's what I'm up against. You don't know the job I have to do. You don't know what a Commission of that sort is. The moral tangle of it. You don't know how its possibilities and limitations are canvassed and schemed about, long before a single member is appointed. Old Cassidy worked the whole thing with the prime minister. I can see that now as plain as daylight. I might have seen it at first… Three experts who'd been got at; they thought *I'*d been got at; two Labour men who'd do anything you wanted them to do provided you called them 'level-headed.' Wagstaffe the socialist art critic who could be trusted to play the fool and make nationalization look silly, and the rest mine owners, railway managers, oil profiteers, financial adventurers…"

He was fairly launched. "It's the blind folly of it! In the days before the war it was different. Then there was abundance. A little grabbing or cornering was all to the good. All to the good. It prevented things being used up too fast. And the world was running by habit; the inertia was tremendous. You could take all sorts of liberties. But all this is altered. We're living in a different world. The public won't stand things it used to stand. It's a new public. It's – wild. It'll smash up the show if they go too far. Everything short and running shorter – food, fuel, material. But these people go on. They go on as though nothing had changed… Strikes, Russia, nothing will warn them. There are men on that Commission who would steal the brakes off a mountain railway just before they went down in it… It's a struggle with suicidal imbeciles. It's – ! But I'm talking! I didn't come here to talk Fuel."

"You think there may be a smash-up?"

"I lie awake at night, thinking of it."

"A social smash-up."

"Economic. Social. Yes. Don't you?"

"A social smash-up seems to me altogether a possibility. All sorts of people I find think that," said the doctor. "All sorts of people lie awake thinking of it."

"I wish some of my damned Committee would!"

The doctor turned his eyes to the window. "I lie awake too," he said and seemed to reflect. But he was observing his patient acutely – with his ears.

"But you see how important it is," said Sir Richmond, and left his sentence unfinished.

"I'll do what I can for you," said the doctor, and considered swiftly what line of talk he had best follow.

Section 2

"This sense of a coming smash is epidemic," said the doctor. "It's at the back of all sorts of mental trouble. It is a new state of mind. Before the war it was abnormal – a phase of neurasthenia. Now it is almost the normal state with whole classes of intelligent people. Intelligent, I say. The others

always have been casual and adventurous and always will be. A loss of confidence in the general background of life. So that we seem to float over abysses."

"We do," said Sir Richmond.

"And we have nothing but the old habits and ideas acquired in the days of our assurance. There is a discord, a jarring."

The doctor pursued his train of thought. "A new, raw and dreadful sense of responsibility for the universe. Accompanied by a realization that the job is overwhelmingly too big for us."

"We've got to stand up to the job," said Sir Richmond. "Anyhow, what else is there to do? We MAY keep things together… I've got to do my bit. And if only I could hold myself at it, I could beat those fellows. But that's where the devil of it comes in. Never have I been so desirous to work well in my life. And never have I been so slack and weak-willed and inaccurate… Sloppy… Indolent… VICIOUS!.."

The doctor was about to speak, but Sir Richmond interrupted him. "What's got hold of me? What's got hold of me? I used to work well enough. It's as if my will had come untwisted and was ravelling out into separate strands. I've lost my unity. I'm not a man but a mob. I've got to recover my vigour. At any cost."

Again as the doctor was about to speak the word was taken out of his mouth. "And what I think of it, Dr. Martineau, is this: it's fatigue. It's mental and moral fatigue. Too much effort. On too high a level. And too austere. One strains and fags. FLAGS! 'Flags' I meant to say. One strains and flags and then the lower stuff in one, the subconscious stuff, takes control."

There was a flavour of popularized psychoanalysis about this, and the doctor drew in the corners of his mouth and gave his head a critical slant. "M'm." But this only made Sir Richmond raise his voice and quicken his speech. "I want," he said, "a good tonic. A pick-me-up, a stimulating harmless drug of some sort. That's indicated anyhow. To begin with. Something to pull me together, as people say. Bring me up to the scratch again."

"I don't like the use of drugs," said the doctor.

The expectation of Sir Richmond's expression changed to disappointment. "But that's not reasonable," he cried. "That's not reasonable. That's superstition. Call a thing a drug and condemn it! Everything is a drug. Everything that affects you. Food stimulates or tranquillizes. Drink. Noise is a stimulant and quiet an opiate. What is life but response to stimulants? Or reaction after them? When I'm exhausted I want food. When I'm overactive and sleepless I want tranquillizing. When I'm dispersed I want pulling together."

"But we don't know how to use drugs," the doctor objected.

"But you ought to know."

Dr. Martineau fixed his eye on a first floor window sill on the opposite side of Harley Street. His manner suggested a lecturer holding on to his theme.

"A day will come when we shall be able to manipulate drugs – all sorts of drugs – and work them in to our general way of living. I have no prejudice against them at all. A time will come when we shall correct our moods, get down to our reserves of energy by their help, suspend fatigue, put off sleep during long spells of exertion. At some sudden crisis for example. When we shall know enough to know just how far to go with this, that or the other stuff. And how to wash out its after effects… I quite agree with you, – in principle… But that time hasn't come yet… Decades of research yet… If we tried that sort of thing now, we should be like children playing with poisons and explosives… It's out of the question."

"I've been taking a few little things already. Easton Syrup for example."

"Strychnine. It carries you for a time and drops you by the way. Has it done you any good – any NETT good? It has – I can see – broken your sleep."

The doctor turned round again to his patient and looked up into his troubled face.

"Given physiological trouble I don't mind resorting to a drug. Given structural injury I don't mind surgery. But except for any little mischief your amateur drugging may have done you do not seem to me to be either sick or injured. You've no trouble either of structure or material. You are – worried – ill in your mind, and otherwise perfectly sound. It's the current of your thoughts, fermenting. If the trouble is in the mental sphere, why go out of the mental sphere for a treatment? Talk and thought; these are your remedies. Cool deliberate thought. You're unravelled. You say it yourself. Drugs will only make this or that unravelled strand behave disproportionately. You don't want that. You want to take stock of yourself as a whole – find out where you stand.

"But the Fuel Commission?"

"Is it sitting now?"

"Adjourned till after Whitsuntide. But there's heaps of work to be done.

"Still," he added, "this is my one chance of any treatment."

The doctor made a little calculation. "Three weeks… It's scarcely time enough to begin."

"You're certain that no regimen of carefully planned and chosen tonics – "

"Dismiss the idea. Dismiss it." He decided to take a plunge. "I've just been thinking of a little holiday for myself. But I'd like to see you through this. And if I am to see you through, there ought to be some sort of beginning now. In this three weeks. Suppose…"

Sir Richmond leapt to his thought. "I'm free to go anywhere."

"Golf would drive a man of your composition mad?"

"It would."

"That's that. Still – . The country must be getting beautiful again now, – after all the rain we have had. I have a little two-seater. I don't know… The repair people promise to release it before Friday."

"But *I* have a choice of two very comfortable little cars. Why not be my guest?"

"That might be more convenient."

"I'd prefer my own car."

"Then what do you say?"

"I agree. Peripatetic treatment."

"South and west. We could talk on the road. In the evenings. By the wayside. We might make the beginnings of a treatment. … A simple tour. Nothing elaborate. You wouldn't bring a man?"

"I always drive myself."

Section 3

"There's something very pleasant," said the doctor, envisaging his own rash proposal, "in travelling along roads you don't know and seeing houses and parks and villages and towns for which you do not feel in the slightest degree responsible. They hide all their troubles from the road. Their backyards are tucked away out of sight, they show a brave face; there's none of the nasty self-betrayals of the railway approach. And everything will be fresh still. There will still be a lot of apple-blossom – and bluebells… And all the while we can be getting on with your affair."

He was back at the window now. "I want the holiday myself," he said.

He addressed Sir Richmond over his shoulder. "Have you noted how fagged and unstable EVERYBODY is getting? Everybody intelligent, I mean."

"It's an infernally worrying time."

"Exactly. Everybody suffers."

"It's no GOOD going on in the old ways – "

"It isn't. And it's a frightful strain to get into any new ways. So here we are.

"A man," the doctor expanded, "isn't a creature in vacuo. He's himself and his world. He's a surface of contact, a system of adaptations, between his essential self and his surroundings. Well, our surroundings have become – how shall I put it? – a landslide. The war which seemed such a definable

catastrophe in 1914 was, after all, only the first loud crack and smash of the collapse. The war is over and – nothing is over. This peace is a farce, reconstruction an exploded phrase. The slide goes on, – it goes, if anything, faster, without a sign of stopping. And all our poor little adaptations! Which we have been elaborating and trusting all our lives!.. One after another they fail us. We are stripped… We have to begin all over again… I'm fifty-seven and I feel at times nowadays like a chicken new hatched in a thunderstorm."

The doctor walked towards the bookcase and turned.

"Everybody is like that…it isn't – what are you going to do? It isn't – what am I going to do? It's – what are we all going to do!.. Lord! How safe and established everything was in 1910, say. We talked of this great war that was coming, but nobody thought it would come. We had been born in peace, comparatively speaking; we had been brought up in peace. There was talk of wars. There were wars – little wars – that altered nothing material… Consols used to be at 112 and you fed your household on ten shillings a head a week. You could run over all Europe, barring Turkey and Russia, without even a passport. You could get to Italy in a day. Never were life and comfort so safe – for respectable people. And we WERE respectable people… That was the world that made us what we are. That was the sheltering and friendly greenhouse in which we grew. We fitted our minds to that… And here we are with the greenhouse falling in upon us lump by lump, smash and clatter, the wild winds of heaven tearing in through the gaps."

Upstairs on Dr. Martineau's desk lay the typescript of the opening chapters of a book that was intended to make a great splash in the world, his PSYCHOLOGY OF A NEW AGE. He had his metaphors ready.

"We said: 'This system will always go on. We needn't bother about it.' We just planned our lives accordingly. It was like a bird building its nest of frozen snakes. My father left me a decent independence. I developed my position; I have lived between here and the hospital, doing good work, enormously interested, prosperous, mildly distinguished. I had been born and brought up on the good ship Civilization. I assumed that someone else was steering the ship all right. I never knew; I never enquired."

"Nor did I," said Sir Richmond, "but – "

"And nobody was steering the ship," the doctor went on. "Nobody had ever steered the ship. It was adrift."

"I realized that. I – "

"It is a new realization. Always hitherto men have lived by faith – as children do, as the animals do. At the back of the healthy mind, human or animal, has been this persuasion: 'This is all right. This will go on. If I keep the rule, if I do so and so, all will be well. I need not trouble further; things are cared for.'"

"If we could go on like that!" said Sir Richmond.

"We can't. That faith is dead. The war – and the peace – have killed it."

The doctor's round face became speculative. His resemblance to the full moon increased. He seemed to gaze at remote things. "It may very well be that man is no more capable of living out of that atmosphere of assurance than a tadpole is of living out of water. His mental existence may be conditional on that. Deprived of it he may become incapable of sustained social life. He may become frantically self-seeking – incoherent… a stampede… Human sanity may – DISPERSE.

"That's our trouble," the doctor completed. "Our fundamental trouble. All our confidences and our accustomed adaptations are destroyed. We fit together no longer. We are – loose. We don't know where we are nor what to do. The psychology of the former time fails to give safe responses, and the psychology of the New Age has still to develop."

Section 4

"That is all very well," said Sir Richmond in the resolute voice of one who will be pent no longer. "That is all very well as far as it goes. But it does not cover my case. I am not suffering from inadaptation. I HAVE adapted. I have thought things out. I think – much as you do. Much as you do. So it's not that. But – … Mind you, I am perfectly clear where I am. Where we are. What is happening to us all is the breakup of the entire system. Agreed! We have to make another system or perish amidst the wreckage. I see that clearly. Science and plan have to replace custom and tradition in human affairs. Soon. Very soon. Granted. Granted. We used to say all that. Even before the war. Now we mean it. We've muddled about in the old ways overlong. Some new sort of world, planned and scientific, has to be got going. Civilization renewed. Rebuilding civilization – while the premises are still occupied and busy. It's an immense enterprise, but it is the only thing to be done. In some ways it's an enormously attractive enterprise. Inspiring. It grips my imagination. I think of the other men who must be at work. Working as I do rather in the dark as yet. With whom I shall presently join up… The attempt may fail; all things human may fail; but on the other hand it may succeed. I never had such faith in anything as I have in the rightness of the work I am doing now. I begin at that. But here is where my difficulty comes in. The top of my brain, my innermost self says all that I have been saying, but – The rest of me won't follow. The rest of me refuses to attend, forgets, straggles, misbehaves."

"Exactly."

The word irritated Sir Richmond. "Not 'exactly' at all. 'Amazingly,' if you like… I have this unlimited faith in our present tremendous necessity – for work – for devotion; I believe my share, the work I am doing, is essential to the whole thing – and I work sluggishly. I work reluctantly. I work damnably."

"Exact – " The doctor checked himself. "All that is explicable. Indeed it is. Listen for a moment to me! Consider what you are. Consider what we are. Consider what a man is before you marvel at his ineptitudes of will. Face the accepted facts. Here is a creature not ten thousand generations from the ape, his ancestor. Not ten thousand. And that ape again, not a score of thousands from the monkey, his forebear. A man's body, his bodily powers, are just the body and powers of an ape, a little improved, a little adapted to novel needs. That brings me to my point. CAN HIS MIND AND WILL BE ANYTHING BETTER? For a few generations, a few hundreds at most, knowledge and wide thought have flared out on the darknesses of life… But the substance of man is ape still. He may carry a light in his brain, but his instincts move in the darkness. Out of that darkness he draws his motives."

"Or fails to draw them," said Sir Richmond.

"Or fails… And that is where these new methods of treatment come in. We explore that failure. Together. What the psychoanalyst does-and I will confess that I owe much to the psychoanalyst – what he does is to direct thwarted, disappointed and perplexed people to the realities of their own nature. Which they have been accustomed to ignore and forget. They come to us with high ambitions or lovely illusions about themselves, torn, shredded, spoilt. They are morally denuded. Dreams they hate pursue them; abhorrent desires draw them; they are the prey of irresistible yet uncongenial impulses; they succumb to black despairs. The first thing we ask them is this: 'What else could you expect?'"

"What else could I expect?" Sir Richmond repeated, looking down on him. "H'm!"

"The wonder is not that you are sluggish, reluctantly unselfish, inattentive, spasmodic. The wonder is that you are ever anything else… Do you realize that a few million generations ago, everything that stirs in us, everything that exalts human life, self-devotions, heroisms, the utmost triumphs of art, the love – for love it is – that makes you and me care indeed for the fate and welfare of all this round world, was latent in the body of some little lurking beast that crawled and hid among the branches of vanished and forgotten Mesozoic trees? A petty egg-laying, bristle-covered beast it

was, with no more of the rudiments of a soul than bare hunger, weak lust and fear… People always seem to regard that as a curious fact of no practical importance. It isn't: it's a vital fact of the utmost practical importance. That is what you are made of. Why should you expect – because a war and a revolution have shocked you – that you should suddenly be able to reach up and touch the sky?"

"H'm!" said Sir Richmond. "Have I been touching the sky!"

"You are trying to play the part of an honest rich man."

"I don't care to see the whole system go smash."

"Exactly," said the doctor, before he could prevent himself.

"But is it any good to tell a man that the job he is attempting is above him – that he is just a hairy reptile twice removed – and all that sort of thing?"

"Well, it saves him from hoping too much and being too greatly disappointed. It recalls him to the proportions of the job. He gets something done by not attempting everything. … And it clears him up. We get him to look into himself, to see directly and in measurable terms what it is that puts him wrong and holds him back. He's no longer vaguely incapacitated. He knows."

"That's diagnosis. That's not treatment."

"Treatment by diagnosis. To analyze a mental knot is to untie it."

"You propose that I shall spend my time, until the Commission meets, in thinking about myself. I wanted to forget myself."

"Like a man who tries to forget that his petrol is running short and a cylinder missing fire… No. Come back to the question of what you are," said the doctor. "A creature of the darkness with new lights. Lit and half-blinded by science and the possibilities of controlling the world that it opens out. In that light your will is all for service; you care more for mankind than for yourself. You begin to understand something of the self beyond your self. But it is a partial and a shaded light as yet; a little area about you it makes clear, the rest is still the old darkness – of millions of intense and narrow animal generations… You are like someone who awakens out of an immemorial sleep to find himself in a vast chamber, in a great and ancient house, a great and ancient house high amidst frozen and lifeless mountains – in a sunless universe. You are not alone in it. You are not lord of all you survey. Your leadership is disputed. The darkness even of the room you are in is full of ancient and discarded but quite unsubjugated powers and purposes… They thrust ambiguous limbs and claws suddenly out of the darkness into the light of your attention. They snatch things out of your hand, they trip your feet and jog your elbow. They crowd and cluster behind you. Wherever your shadow falls, they creep right up to you, creep upon you and struggle to take possession of you. The souls of apes, monkeys, reptiles and creeping things haunt the passages and attics and cellars of this living house in which your consciousness has awakened…"

The doctor gave this quotation from his unpublished book the advantages of an abrupt break and a pause.

Sir Richmond shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "And you propose a vermin hunt in the old tenement?"

"The modern man has to be master in his own house. He has to take stock and know what is there."

"Three weeks of self vivisection."

"To begin with. Three weeks of perfect honesty with yourself. As an opening… It will take longer than that if we are to go through with the job."

"It is a considerable – process."

"It is."

"Yet you shrink from simple things like drugs!"

"Self-knowledge – without anaesthetics."

"Has this sort of thing ever done anyone any good at all?"

"It has turned hundreds back to sanity and steady work."

“How frank are we going to be? How full are we going to be? Anyhow – we can break off at any time… We’ll try it. We’ll try it… And so for this journey into the west of England… And – if we can get there – I’m not sure that we can get there – into the secret places of my heart.”

CHAPTER THE SECOND
LADY HARDY

The patient left the house with much more self possession than he had shown when entering it. Dr. Martineau had thrust him back from his intenser prepossessions to a more generalized view of himself, had made his troubles objective and detached him from them. He could even find something amusing now in his situation. He liked the immense scope of the theoretical duet in which they had indulged. He felt that most of it was entirely true – and, in some untraceable manner, absurd. There were entertaining possibilities in the prospect of the doctor drawing him out – he himself partly assisting and partly resisting.

He was a man of extensive reservations. His private life was in some respects exceptionally private.

"I don't confide… Do I even confide in myself? I imagine I do… Is there anything in myself that I haven't looked squarely in the face?.. How much are we going into? Even as regards facts?

"Does it really help a man – to see himself?.."

Such thoughts engaged him until he found himself in his study. His desk and his writing table were piled high with a heavy burthen of work. Still a little preoccupied with Dr. Martineau's exposition, he began to handle this confusion…

At half past nine he found himself with three hours of good work behind him. It had seemed like two. He had not worked like this for many weeks. "This is very cheering," he said. "And unexpected. Can old Moon-face have hypnotized me? Anyhow – … Perhaps I've only imagined I was ill… Dinner?" He looked at his watch and was amazed at the time. "Good Lord! I've been at it three hours. What can have happened? Funny I didn't hear the gong."

He went downstairs and found Lady Hardy reading a magazine in a dining-room armchair and finely poised between devotion and martyrdom. A shadow of vexation fell athwart his mind at the sight of her.

"I'd no idea it was so late," he said. "I heard no gong."

"After you swore so at poor Bradley I ordered that there should be no gongs when we were alone. I did come up to your door about half past eight. I crept up. But I was afraid I might upset you if I came in."

"But you've not waited – "

"I've had a mouthful of soup." Lady Hardy rang the bell.

"I've done some work at last," said Sir Richmond, astride on the hearthrug.

"I'm glad," said Lady Hardy, without gladness. "I waited for three hours."

Lady Hardy was a frail little blue-eyed woman with uneven shoulders and a delicate sweet profile. Hers was that type of face that under even the most pleasant and luxurious circumstances still looks bravely and patiently enduring. Her refinement threw a tinge of coarseness over his eager consumption of his excellent clear soup.

"What's this fish, Bradley?" he asked.

"Turbot, Sir Richmond."

"Don't you have any?" he asked his wife.

"I've had a little fish," said Lady Hardy.

When Bradley was out of the room, Sir Richmond remarked: "I saw that nerves man, Dr. Martineau, to-day. He wants me to take a holiday."

The quiet patience of the lady's manner intensified. She said nothing. A flash of resentment lit Sir Richmond's eyes. When he spoke again, he seemed to answer unspoken accusations. "Dr. Martineau's idea is that he should come with me."

The lady adjusted herself to a new point of view.

“But won’t that be reminding you of your illness and worries?”

“He seems a good sort of fellow… I’m inclined to like him. He’ll be as good company as anyone… This TOURNEDOS looks excellent. Have some.”

“I had a little bird,” said Lady Hardy, “when I found you weren’t coming.”

“But I say – don’t wait here if you’ve dined. Bradley can see to me.”

She smiled and shook her head with the quiet conviction of one who knew her duty better. “Perhaps I’ll have a little ice pudding when it comes,” she said.

Sir Richmond detested eating alone in an atmosphere of observant criticism. And he did not like talking with his mouth full to an unembarrassed interlocutor who made no conversational leads of her own. After a few mouthfuls he pushed his plate away from him. “Then let’s have up the ice pudding,” he said with a faint note of bitterness.

“But have you finished – ?”

“The ice pudding!” he exploded wrathfully. “The ice pudding!”

Lady Hardy sat for a moment, a picture of meek distress. Then, her delicate eyebrows raised, and the corners of her mouth drooping, she touched the button of the silver table-bell.

CHAPTER THE THIRD
THE DEPARTURE

Section 1

No wise man goes out upon a novel expedition without misgivings. And between their first meeting and the appointed morning both Sir Richmond Hardy and Dr. Martineau were the prey of quite disagreeable doubts about each other, themselves, and the excursion before them. At the time of their meeting each had been convinced that he gauged the other sufficiently for the purposes of the proposed tour. Afterwards each found himself trying to recall the other with greater distinctness and able to recall nothing but queer, ominous and minatory traits. The doctor's impression of the great fuel specialist grew ever darker, leaner, taller and more impatient. Sir Richmond took on the likeness of a monster obdurate and hostile, he spread upwards until like the Djinn out of the bottle, he darkened the heavens. And he talked too much. He talked ever so much too much. Sir Richmond also thought that the doctor talked too much. In addition, he read into his imperfect memory of the doctor's face, an expression of protruded curiosity. What was all this problem of motives and inclinations that they were "going into" so gaily? He had merely consulted the doctor on a simple, straightforward need for a nervous tonic – that was what he had needed – a tonic. Instead he had engaged himself for – he scarcely knew what – an indiscreet, indelicate, and altogether undesirable experiment in confidences.

Both men were considerably reassured when at last they set eyes on each other again. Indeed each was surprised to find something almost agreeable in the appearance of the other. Dr. Martineau at once perceived that the fierceness of Sir Richmond was nothing more than the fierceness of an overwrought man, and Sir Richmond realized at a glance that the curiosity of Dr. Martineau's bearing had in it nothing personal or base; it was just the fine alertness of the scientific mind.

Sir Richmond had arrived nearly forty minutes late, and it would have been evident to a much less highly trained observer than Dr. Martineau that some dissension had arisen between the little, ladylike, cream and black Charmeuse car and its owner. There was a faint air of resentment and protest between them. As if Sir Richmond had been in some way rude to it.

The cap of the radiator was adorned with a little brass figure of a flying Mercury. Frozen in a sprightly attitude, its stiff bound and its fixed heavenward stare was highly suggestive of a forced and tactful disregard of current unpleasantness.

Nothing was said, however, to confirm or dispel this suspicion of a disagreement between the man and the car. Sir Richmond directed and assisted Dr. Martineau's man to adjust the luggage at the back, and Dr. Martineau watched the proceedings from his dignified front door. He was wearing a suit of fawn tweeds, a fawn Homburg hat and a light Burberry, with just that effect of special preparation for a holiday which betrays the habitually busy man. Sir Richmond's brown gauntness was, he noted, greatly set off by his suit of grey. There had certainly been some sort of quarrel. Sir Richmond was explaining the straps to Dr. Martineau's butler with the coldness a man betrays when he explains the uncongenial habits of some unloved intimate. And when the moment came to start and the little engine did not immediately respond to the electric starter, he said: "Oh! COME up, you – !"

His voice sank at the last word as though it was an entirely confidential communication to the little car. And it was an extremely low and disagreeable word. So Dr. Martineau decided that it was not his business to hear it…

It was speedily apparent that Sir Richmond was an experienced and excellent driver. He took the Charmeuse out into the traffic of Baker Street and westward through brisk and busy streets and roads to Brentford and Hounslow smoothly and swiftly, making a score of unhesitating and accurate

decisions without apparent thought. There was very little conversation until they were through Brentford. Near Shepherd's Bush, Sir Richmond had explained, "This is not my own particular car. That was butted into at the garage this morning and its radiator cracked. So I had to fall back on this. It's quite a good little car. In its way. My wife drives it at times. It has one or two constitutional weaknesses – incidental to the make – gear-box over the back axle for example – gets all the vibration. Whole machine rather on the flimsy side. Still – "

He left the topic at that.

Dr. Martineau said something of no consequence about its being a very comfortable little car.

Somewhere between Brentford and Hounslow, Sir Richmond plunged into the matter between them. "I don't know how deep we are going into these psychological probings of yours," he said. "But I doubt very much if we shall get anything out of them."

"Probably not," said Dr. Martineau.

"After all, what I want is a tonic. I don't see that there is anything positively wrong with me. A certain lack of energy – "

"Lack of balance," corrected the doctor. "You are wasting energy upon internal friction."

"But isn't that inevitable? No machine is perfectly efficient. No man either. There is always a waste. Waste of the type; waste of the individual idiosyncrasy. This little car, for instance, isn't pulling as she ought to pull – she never does. She's low in her class. So with myself; there is a natural and necessary high rate of energy waste. Moods of apathy and indolence are natural to me. (Damn that omnibus! All over the road!)"

"We don't deny the imperfection – " began the doctor.

"One has to fit oneself to one's circumstances," said Sir Richmond, opening up another line of thought.

"We don't deny the imperfection" the doctor stuck to it. "These new methods of treatment are based on the idea of imperfection. We begin with that. I began with that last Tuesday…"

Sir Richmond, too, was sticking to his argument. "A man, and for that matter the world he lives in, is a tangle of accumulations. Your psychoanalyst starts, it seems to me, with a notion of stripping down to something fundamental. The ape before was a tangle of accumulations, just as we are. So it was with his forebears. So it has always been. All life is an endless tangle of accumulations."

"Recognize it," said the doctor.

"And then?" said Sir Richmond, controversially.

"Recognize in particular your own tangle."

"Is my particular tangle very different from the general tangle? (Oh! Damn this feeble little engine!) I am a creature of undecided will, urged on by my tangled heredity to do a score of entirely incompatible things. Mankind, all life, is that."

"But our concern is the particular score of incompatible things you are urged to do. We examine and weigh – we weigh – "

The doctor was still saying these words when a violent and ultimately disastrous struggle began between Sir Richmond and the little Charmeuse car. The doctor stopped in mid-sentence.

It was near Taplow station that the mutual exasperation of man and machine was brought to a crisis by the clumsy emergence of a laundry cart from a side road. Sir Richmond was obliged to pull up smartly and stopped his engine. It refused an immediate obedience to the electric starter. Then it picked up, raced noisily, disengaged great volumes of bluish smoke, and displayed an unaccountable indisposition to run on any gear but the lowest. Sir Richmond thought aloud, unpleasing thoughts. He addressed the little car as a person; he referred to ancient disputes and temperamental incompatibilities. His anger betrayed him a coarse, ill-bred man. The little car quickened under his reproaches. There were some moments of hope, dashed by the necessity of going dead slow behind an interloping van. Sir Richmond did not notice the outstretched arm of the driver of the van, and stalled his engine for a second time. The electric starter refused its office altogether.

For some moments Sir Richmond sat like a man of stone.

"I must wind it up," he said at last in a profound and awful voice. "I must wind it up."

"I get out, don't I?" asked the doctor, unanswered, and did so. Sir Richmond, after a grim search and the displacement and replacement of the luggage, produced a handle from the locker at the back of the car and prepared to wind.

There was a little difficulty. "Come UP!" he said, and the small engine roared out like a stage lion.

The two gentlemen resumed their seats. The car started and then by an unfortunate inadvertency Sir Richmond pulled the gear lever over from the first speed to the reverse. There was a metallic clangour beneath the two gentlemen, and the car slowed down and stopped although the engine was still throbbing wildly, and the dainty veil of blue smoke still streamed forward from the back of the car before a gentle breeze. The doctor got out almost precipitately, followed by a gaunt madman, mouthing vileness, who had only a minute or so before been a decent British citizen. He made some blind lunges at the tremulous but obdurate car, but rather as if he looked for offences and accusations than for displacements to adjust. Quivering and refusing, the little car was extraordinarily like some recalcitrant little old aristocratic lady in the hands of revolutionaries, and this made the behaviour of Sir Richmond seem even more outrageous than it would otherwise have done. He stopped the engine, he went down on his hands and knees in the road to peer up at the gear-box, then without restoring the spark, he tried to wind up the engine again. He spun the little handle with an insane violence, faster and faster for – as it seemed to the doctor – the better part of a minute. Beads of perspiration appeared upon his brow and ran together; he bared his teeth in a snarl; his hat slipped over one eye. He groaned with rage. Then, using the starting handle as a club, he assailed the car. He smote the brazen Mercury from its foothold and sent it and a part of the radiator cap with it flying across the road. He beat at the wings of the bonnet, until they bent in under his blows. Finally, he hurled the starting-handle at the wind-screen and smashed it. The starting-handle rattled over the bonnet and fell to the ground…

The paroxysm was over. Ten seconds later this cataclysmal lunatic had reverted to sanity – a rather sheepish sanity.

He thrust his hands into his trouser pockets and turned his back on the car. He remarked in a voice of melancholy detachment: "It was a mistake to bring that coupe."

Dr. Martineau had assumed an attitude of trained observation on the side path. His hands rested on his hips and his hat was a little on one side. He was inclined to agree with Sir Richmond. "I don't know," he considered. "You wanted some such blow-off as this."

"Did I?"

"The energy you have! That car must be somebody's whipping boy."

"The devil it is!" said Sir Richmond, turning round sharply and staring at it as if he expected it to display some surprising and yet familiar features. Then he looked questioningly and suspiciously at his companion.

"These outbreaks do nothing to amend the originating grievance," said the doctor. "No. And at times they are even costly. But they certainly lift a burthen from the nervous system… And now I suppose we have to get that little ruin to Maidenhead."

"Little ruin!" repeated Sir Richmond. "No. There's lots of life in the little beast yet."

He reflected. "She'll have to be towed." He felt in his breast pocket. "Somewhere I have the R.A.C. order paper, the Badge that will Get You Home. We shall have to hail some passing car to take it into Maidenhead."

Dr. Martineau offered and Sir Richmond took and lit a cigarette.

For a little while conversation hung fire. Then for the first time Dr. Martineau heard his patient laugh.

"Amazing savage," said Sir Richmond. "Amazing savage!"

He pointed to his handiwork. “The little car looks ruffled. Well it may.”

He became grave again. “I suppose I ought to apologize.”

Dr. Martineau weighed the situation. “As between doctor and patient,” he said. “No.”

“Oh!” said Sir Richmond, turned to a new point of view. “But where the patient ends and the host begins… I’m really very sorry.” He reverted to his original train of thought which had not concerned Dr. Martineau at all. “After all, the little car was only doing what she was made to do.”

Section 2

The affair of the car effectively unsealed Sir Richmond’s mind. Hitherto Dr. Martineau had perceived the possibility and danger of a defensive silence or of a still more defensive irony; but now that Sir Richmond had once given himself away, he seemed prepared to give himself away to an unlimited extent. He embarked upon an apologetic discussion of the choleric temperament.

He began as they stood waiting for the relief car from the Maidenhead garage. “You were talking of the ghosts of apes and monkeys that suddenly come out from the darkness of the subconscious…”

“You mean – when we first met at Harley Street?”

“That last apparition of mine seems to have been a gorilla at least.”

The doctor became precise. “Gorillaesque. We are not descended from gorillas.”

“Queer thing a fit of rage is!”

“It’s one of nature’s cruder expedients. Crude, but I doubt if it is fundamental. There doesn’t seem to be rage in the vegetable world, and even among the animals – ? No, it is not universal.” He ran his mind over classes and orders. “Wasps and bees certainly seem to rage, but if one comes to think, most of the invertebrata show very few signs of it.”

“I’m not so sure,” said Sir Richmond. “I’ve never seen a snail in a towering passion or an oyster slamming its shell behind it. But these are sluggish things. Oysters sulk, which is after all a smouldering sort of rage. And take any more active invertebrate. Take a spider. Not a smashing and swearing sort of rage perhaps, but a disciplined, cold-blooded malignity. Crabs fight. A conger eel in a boat will rage dangerously.”

“A vertebrate. Yes. But even among the vertebrata; who has ever seen a furious rabbit?”

“Don’t the bucks fight?” questioned Sir Richmond.

Dr. Martineau admitted the point.

“I’ve always had these fits of passion. As far back as I can remember. I was a kicking, screaming child. I threw things. I once threw a fork at my elder brother and it stuck in his forehead, doing no serious damage – happily. There were whole days of wrath – days, as I remember them. Perhaps they were only hours… I’ve never thought before what a peculiar thing all this raging is in the world. WHY do we rage? They used to say it was the devil. If it isn’t the devil, then what the devil is it? After all,” he went on as the doctor was about to answer his question; “as you pointed out, it isn’t the lowlier things that rage. It’s the HIGHER things and US.”

“The devil nowadays,” the doctor reflected after a pause, “so far as man is concerned, is understood to be the ancestral ape. And more particularly the old male ape.”

But Sir Richmond was away on another line of thought. “Life itself, flaring out. Brooking no contradiction.” He came round suddenly to the doctor’s qualification. “Why male? Don’t little girls smash things just as much?”

“They don’t,” said Dr. Martineau. “Not nearly as much.”

Sir Richmond went off at a tangent again. “I suppose you have watched any number of babies?”’

“Not nearly as many as a general practitioner would do. There’s a lot of rage about most of them at first, male or female.”

“Queer little eddies of fury… Recently – it happens – I’ve been seeing one. A spit of red wrath, clenching its fists and squalling threats at a damned disobedient universe.”

The doctor was struck by an idea and glanced quickly and questioningly at his companion's profile.

"Blind driving force," said Sir Richmond, musing.

"Isn't that after all what we really are?" he asked the doctor. "Essentially – Rage. A rage in dead matter, making it alive."

"Schopenhauer," footnoted the doctor. "Boehme."

"Plain fact," said Sir Richmond. "No Rage – no Go."

"But rage without discipline?"

"Discipline afterwards. The rage first."

"But rage against what? And FOR what?"

"Against the Universe. And for – ? That's more difficult. What IS the little beast squalling itself crimson for? Ultimately? … What is it clutching after? In the long run, what will it get?"

("Yours the car in distress what sent this?" asked an unheeded voice.)

"Of course, if you were to say 'desire'," said Dr. Martineau, "then you would be in line with the psychoanalysts. They talk of LIBIDO, meaning a sort of fundamental desire. Jung speaks of it at times almost as if it were the universal driving force."

"No," said Sir Richmond, in love with his new idea. "Not desire. Desire would have a definite direction, and that is just what this driving force hasn't. It's rage."

"Yours the car in distress what sent this?" the voice repeated. It was the voice of a mechanic in an Overland car. He was holding up the blue request for assistance that Sir Richmond had recently filled in.

The two philosophers returned to practical matters.

Section 3

For half an hour after the departure of the little Charmeuse car with Sir Richmond and Dr. Martineau, the brass Mercury lay unheeded in the dusty roadside grass. Then it caught the eye of a passing child.

He was a bright little boy of five. From the moment when he caught the gleam of brass he knew that he had made the find of his life. But his nurse was a timorous, foolish thing. "You did ought to of left it there, Masterrarry," she said.

"Findings ain't keepings nowadays, not by no manner of means, Masterrarry.

"Yew'd look silly if a policeman came along arsting people if they seen a goldennimage.

"Arst yer 'ow you come by it and look pretty straight at you."

All of which grumblings Master Harry treated with an experienced disregard. He knew definitely that he would never relinquish this bright and lovely possession again. It was the first beautiful thing he had ever possessed. He was the darling of fond and indulgent parents and his nursery was crowded with hideous rag and sawdust dolls, golliwogs, comic penguins, comic lions, comic elephants and comic policemen and every variety of suchlike humorous idiocy and visual beastliness. This figure, solid, delicate and gracious, was a thing of a different order.

There was to be much conflict and distress, tears and wrath, before the affinity of that clean-limbed, shining figure and his small soul was recognized. But he carried his point at last. The Mercury became his inseparable darling, his symbol, his private god, the one dignified and serious thing in a little life much congested by the quaint, the burlesque, and all the smiling, dull condescensions of adult love.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH
AT MAIDENHEAD

Section 1

The little Charmeuse was towed to hospital and the two psychiatrists took up their quarters at the Radiant Hotel with its pleasant lawns and graceful landing stage at the bend towards the bridge. Sir Richmond, after some trying work at the telephone, got into touch with his own proper car. A man would bring the car down in two days' time at latest, and afterwards the detested coupe could go back to London. The day was still young, and after lunch and coffee upon a sunny lawn a boat seemed indicated. Sir Richmond astonished the doctor by going to his room, reappearing dressed in tennis flannels and looking very well in them. It occurred to the doctor as a thing hitherto unnoted that Sir Richmond was not indifferent to his personal appearance. The doctor had no flannels, but he had brought a brown holland umbrella lined with green that he had acquired long ago in Algiers, and this served to give him something of the riverside quality.

The day was full of sunshine and the river had a Maytime animation. Pink geraniums, vivid green lawns, gay awnings, bright glass, white paint and shining metal set the tone of Maidenhead life. At lunch there had been five or six small tables with quietly affectionate couples who talked in undertones, a tableful of bright-coloured Jews who talked in overtones, and a family party from the Midlands, badly smitten with shyness, who did not talk at all. "A resort, of honeymoon couples," said the doctor, and then rather knowingly: "Temporary honeymoons, I fancy, in one or two of the cases."

"Decidedly temporary," said Sir Richmond, considering the company – "in most of the cases anyhow. The two in the corner might be married. You never know nowadays."

He became reflective…

After lunch and coffee he rowed the doctor up the river towards Cliveden.

"The last time I was here," he said, returning to the subject, "I was here on a temporary honeymoon."

The doctor tried to look as though he had not thought that could be possible.

"I know my Maidenhead fairly well," said Sir Richmond. "Aquatic activities, such as rowing, punting, messing about with a boat-hook, tying up, buzzing about in motor launches, fouling other people's boats, are merely the stage business of the drama. The ruling interests of this place are love – largely illicit – and persistent drinking… Don't you think the bridge charming from here?"

"I shouldn't have thought – drinking," said Dr. Martineau, after he had done justice to the bridge over his shoulder.

"Yes, the place has a floating population of quiet industrious soakers. The incurable river man and the river girl end at that."

Dr. Martineau encouraged Sir Richmond by an appreciative silence.

"If we are to explore the secret places of the heart," Sir Richmond went on, "we shall have to give some attention to this Maidenhead side of life. It is very material to my case. I have, – as I have said – BEEN HERE. This place has beauty and charm; these piled-up woods behind which my Lords Astor and Desborough keep their state, this shining mirror of the water, brown and green and sky blue, this fringe of reeds and scented rushes and forget-me-not and lilies, and these perpetually posing white swans: they make a picture. A little artificial it is true; one feels the presence of a Conservancy Board, planting the rushes and industriously nicking the swans; but none the less delightful. And this setting has appealed to a number of people as an invitation, as, in a way, a promise. They come here, responsive to that promise of beauty and happiness. They conceive of themselves here,

rowing swiftly and gracefully, punting beautifully, brandishing boat-hooks with ease and charm. They look to meet, under pleasant or romantic circumstances, other possessors and worshippers of grace and beauty here. There will be glowing evenings, warm moonlight, distant voices singing…There is your desire, doctor, the desire you say is the driving force of life. But reality mocks it. Boats bump and lead to coarse ungracious quarrels; rowing can be curiously fatiguing; punting involves dreadful indignities. The romance here tarnishes very quickly. Romantic encounters fail to occur; in our impatience we resort to – accosting. Chilly mists arise from the water and the magic of distant singing is provided, even excessively, by boatloads of cads – with collecting dishes. When the weather keeps warm there presently arises an extraordinary multitude of gnats, and when it does not there is a need for stimulants. That is why the dreamers who come here first for a light delicious brush with love, come down at last to the Thamesside barmaid with her array of spirits and cordials as the quintessence of all desire."

"I say," said the doctor. "You tear the place to pieces."

"The desires of the place," said Sir Richmond.

"I'm using the place as a symbol."

He held his sculls awash, rippling in the water.

"The real force of life, the rage of life, isn't here," he said. "It's down underneath, sulking and smouldering. Every now and then it strains and cracks the surface. This stretch of the Thames, this pleasure stretch, has in fact a curiously quarrelsome atmosphere. People scold and insult one another for the most trivial things, for passing too close, for taking the wrong side, for tying up or floating loose. Most of these notice boards on the bank show a thoroughly nasty spirit. People on the banks jeer at anyone in the boats. You hear people quarrelling in boats, in the hotels, as they walk along the towing path. There is remarkably little happy laughter here. The RAGE, you see, is hostile to this place, the RAGE breaks through… The people who drift from one pub to another, drinking, the people who fuddle in the riverside hotels, are the last fugitives of pleasure, trying to forget the rage…"

"Isn't it that there is some greater desire at the back of the human mind?" the doctor suggested. "Which refuses to be content with pleasure as an end?"

"What greater desire?" asked Sir Richmond, disconcertingly.

"Oh!.." The doctor cast about.

"There is no such greater desire," said Sir Richmond. "You cannot name it. It is just blind drive. I admit its discontent with pleasure as an end – but has it any end of its own? At the most you can say that the rage in life is seeking its desire and hasn't found it."

"Let us help in the search," said the doctor, with an afternoon smile under his green umbrella. "Go on."

Section 2

"Since our first talk in Harley Street," said Sir Richmond, "I have been trying myself over in my mind. (We can drift down this backwater.)"

"Big these trees are," said the doctor with infinite approval.

"I am astonished to discover what a bundle of discordant motives I am. I do not seem to deserve to be called a personality. I cannot discover even a general direction. Much more am I like a taxi-cab in which all sorts of aims and desires have travelled to their destination and got out. Are we all like that?"

"A bundle held together by a name and address and a certain thread of memory?" said the doctor and considered. "More than that. More than that. We have leading ideas, associations, possessions, liabilities."

"We build ourselves a prison of circumstances that keeps us from complete dispersal."

"Exactly," said the doctor. "And there is also something, a consistency, that we call character."

"It changes."

"Consistently with itself."

"I have been trying to recall my sexual history," said Sir Richmond, going off at a tangent. "My sentimental education. I wonder if it differs very widely from yours or most men's."

"Some men are more eventful in these matters than others," said the doctor, – it sounded – wistfully.

"They have the same jumble of motives and traditions, I suspect, whether they are eventful or not. The brakes may be strong or weak but the drive is the same. I can't remember much of the beginnings of curiosity and knowledge in these matters. Can you?"

"Not much," said the doctor. "No."

"Your psychoanalysts tell a story of fears, suppressions, monstrous imaginations, symbolic replacements. I don't remember much of that sort of thing in my own case. It may have faded out of my mind. There were probably some uneasy curiosities, a grotesque dream or so perhaps; I can't recall anything of that sort distinctly now. I had a very lively interest in women, even when I was still quite a little boy, and a certain – what shall I call it? – imaginative slavishness – not towards actual women but towards something magnificently feminine. My first love – "

Sir Richmond smiled at some secret memory. "My first love was Britannia as depicted by Tenniel in the cartoons in PUNCH. I must have been a very little chap at the time of the Britannia affair. I just clung to her in my imagination and did devoted things for her. Then I recall, a little later, a secret abject adoration for the white goddesses of the Crystal Palace. Not for any particular one of them that I can remember, – for all of them. But I don't remember anything very monstrous or incestuous in my childish imaginations, – such things as Freud, I understand, lays stress upon. If there was an Oedipus complex or anything of that sort in my case it has been very completely washed out again. Perhaps a child which is brought up in a proper nursery of its own and sees a lot of pictures of the nude human body, and so on, gets its mind shifted off any possible concentration upon the domestic aspect of sex. I got to definite knowledge pretty early. By the time I was eleven or twelve."

"Normally?"

"What is normally? Decently, anyhow. Here again I may be forgetting much secret and shameful curiosity. I got my ideas into definite form out of a little straightforward physiological teaching and some dissecting of rats and mice. My schoolmaster was a capable sane man in advance of his times and my people believed in him. I think much of this distorted perverse stuff that grows up in people's minds about sex and develops into evil vices and still more evil habits, is due to the mystery we make about these things."

"Not entirely," said the doctor.

"Largely. What child under a modern upbringing ever goes through the stuffy horrors described in James Joyce's PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN."

"I've not read it."

"A picture of the Catholic atmosphere; a young soul shut up in darkness and ignorance to accumulate filth. In the name of purity and decency and under threats of hell fire."

"Horrible!"

"Quite. A study of intolerable tensions, the tensions that make young people write unclean words in secret places."

"Yes, we certainly ventilate and sanitate in those matters nowadays. Where nothing is concealed, nothing can explode."

"On the whole I came up to adolescence pretty straight and clean," said Sir Richmond. "What stands out in my memory now is this idea, of a sort of woman goddess who was very lovely and kind and powerful and wonderful. That ruled my secret imaginations as a boy, but it was very much in my mind as I grew up."

"The mother complex," said Dr. Martineau as a passing botanist might recognize and name a flower.

Sir Richmond stared at him for a moment.

"It had not the slightest connexion with my mother or any mother or any particular woman at all. Far better to call it the goddess complex."

"The connexion is not perhaps immediately visible," said the doctor.

"There was no connexion," said Sir Richmond. "The women of my adolescent dreams were stripped and strong and lovely. They were great creatures. They came, it was clearly traceable, from pictures sculpture – and from a definite response in myself to their beauty. My mother had nothing whatever to do with that. The women and girls about me were fussy bunches of clothes that I am sure I never even linked with that dream world of love and worship."

"Were you co-educated?"

"No. But I had a couple of sisters, one older, one younger than myself, and there were plenty of girls in my circle. I thought some of them pretty – but that was a different affair. I know that I didn't connect them with the idea of the loved and worshipped goddesses at all, because I remember when I first saw the goddess in a real human being and how amazed I was at the discovery… I was a boy of twelve or thirteen. My people took me one summer to Dymchurch in Romney Marsh; in those days before the automobile had made the Marsh accessible to the Hythe and Folkestone crowds, it was a little old forgotten silent wind-bitten village crouching under the lee of the great sea wall. At low water there were miles of sand as smooth and shining as the skin of a savage brown woman. Shining and with a texture – the very same. And one day as I was mucking about by myself on the beach, boy fashion, – there were some ribs of a wrecked boat buried in the sand near a groin and I was busy with them – a girl ran out from a tent high up on the beach and across the sands to the water. She was dressed in a tight bathing dress and not in the clumsy skirts and frills that it was the custom to inflict on women in those days. Her hair was tied up in a blue handkerchief. She ran swiftly and gracefully, intent upon the white line of foam ahead. I can still remember how the sunlight touched her round neck and cheek as she went past me. She was the loveliest, most shapely thing I have ever seen – to this day. She lifted up her arms and thrust through the dazzling white and green breakers and plunged into the water and swam; she swam straight out for a long way as it seemed to me, and presently came in and passed me again on her way back to her tent, light and swift and sure. The very prints of her feet on the sand were beautiful. Suddenly I realized that there could be living people in the world as lovely as any goddess… She wasn't in the least out of breath.

"That was my first human love. And I love that girl still. I doubt sometimes whether I have ever loved anyone else. I kept the thing very secret. I wonder now why I have kept the thing so secret. Until now I have never told a soul about it. I resorted to all sorts of tortuous devices and excuses to get a chance of seeing her again without betraying what it was I was after."

Dr. Martineau retained a simple fondness for a story.

"And did you meet her again?"

"Never. Of course I may have seen her as a dressed-up person and not recognized her. A day or so later I was stabbed to the heart by the discovery that the tent she came out of had been taken away."

"She had gone?"

"For ever."

Sir Richmond smiled brightly at the doctor's disappointment.

Section 3

"I was never wholehearted and simple about sexual things," Sir Richmond resumed presently. "Never. I do not think any man is. We are too much plastered-up things, too much the creatures of a tortuous and complicated evolution."

Dr. Martineau, under his green umbrella, nodded his conceded agreement.

"This – what shall I call it? – this Dream of Women, grew up in my mind as I grew up – as something independent of and much more important than the reality of Women. It came only very slowly into relation with that. That girl on the Dymchurch beach was one of the first links, but she ceased very speedily to be real – she joined the women of dreamland at last altogether. She became a sort of legendary incarnation. I thought of these dream women not only as something beautiful but as something exceedingly kind and helpful. The girls and women I met belonged to a different creation…"

Sir Richmond stopped abruptly and rowed a few long strokes.

Dr. Martineau sought information.

"I suppose," he said, "there was a sensuous element in these dreamings?"

"Certainly. A very strong one. It didn't dominate but it was a very powerful undertow."

"Was there any tendency in all this imaginative stuff to concentrate? To group itself about a single figure, the sort of thing that Victorians would have called an ideal?"

"Not a bit of it," said Sir Richmond with conviction. "There was always a tremendous lot of variety in my mind. In fact the thing I liked least in the real world was the way it was obsessed by the idea of pairing off with one particular set and final person. I liked to dream of a blonde goddess in her own Venusberg one day, and the next I would be off over the mountains with an armed Brunhild."

"You had little thought of children?"

"As a young man?"

"Yes."

"None at all. I cannot recall a single philoprogenitive moment. These dream women were all conceived of, and I was conceived of, as being concerned in some tremendous enterprise – something quite beyond domesticity. It kept us related – gave us dignity… Certainly it wasn't babies."

"All this is very interesting, very interesting, from the scientific point of view. A PRIORI it is not what one might have expected. Reasoning from the idea that all instincts and natural imaginations are adapted to a biological end and seeing that sex is essentially a method of procreation, one might reasonably expect a convergence, if not a complete concentration, upon the idea of offspring. It is almost as if there were other ends to be served. It is clear that Nature has not worked this impulse out to any sight of its end. Has not perhaps troubled to do so. The instinct of the male for the female isn't primarily for offspring – not even in the most intelligent and farseeing types. The desire just points to glowing satisfactions and illusions. Quite equally I think the desire of the female for the male ignores its end. Nature has set about this business in a CHEAP sort of way. She is like some pushful advertising tradesman. She isn't frank with us; she just humbugs us into what she wants with us. All very well in the early Stone Age – when the poor dear things never realized that their mutual endearments meant all the troubles and responsibilities of parentage. But NOW – !"

He shook his head sideways and twirled the green umbrella like an animated halo around his large broad-minded face.

Sir Richmond considered. "Desire has never been the chief incentive of my relations with women. Never. So far as I can analyze the thing, it has been a craving for a particular sort of life giving companionship."

"That I take it is Nature's device to keep the lovers together in the interest of the more or less unpremeditated offspring."

"A poor device, if that is its end. It doesn't keep parents together; more often it tears them apart. The wife or the mistress, so soon as she is encumbered with children, becomes all too manifestly not the companion goddess…"

Sir Richmond brooded over his sculls and thought.

"Throughout my life I have been an exceedingly busy man. I have done a lot of scientific work and some of it has been very good work. And very laborious work. I've travelled much. I've organized

great business developments. You might think that my time has been fairly well filled without much philandering. And all the time, all the time, I've been – about women – like a thirsty beast looking for water… Always. Always. All through my life."

Dr. Martineau waited through another silence.

"I was very grave about it at first. I married young. I married very simply and purely. I was not one of those young men who sow a large crop of wild oats. I was a fairly decent youth. It suddenly appeared to me that a certain smiling and dainty girl could make herself into all the goddesses of my dreams. I had but to win her and this miracle would occur. Of course I forget now the exact things I thought and felt then, but surely I had some such persuasion. Or why should I have married her? My wife was seven years younger than myself, – a girl of twenty. She was charming. She is charming. She is a wonderfully intelligent and understanding woman. She has made a home for me – a delightful home. I am one of those men who have no instinct for home making. I owe my home and all the comfort and dignity of my life to her ability. I have no excuse for any misbehaviour – so far as she is concerned. None at all. By all the rules I should have been completely happy. But instead of my marriage satisfying me, it presently released a storm of long-controlled desires and imprisoned cravings. A voice within me became more and more urgent. 'This will not do. This is not love. Where are your goddesses? This is not love.'… And I was unfaithful to my wife within four years of my marriage. It was a sudden overpowering impulse. But I suppose the ground had been preparing for a long time. I forget now all the emotions of that adventure. I suppose at the time it seemed beautiful and wonderful… I do not excuse myself. Still less do I condemn myself. I put the facts before you. So it was."

"There were no children by your marriage?"

"Your line of thought, doctor, is too philoprogenitive. We have had three. My daughter was married two years ago. She is in America. One little boy died when he was three. The other is in India, taking up the Mardipore power scheme again now that he is out of the army… No, it is simply that I was hopelessly disappointed with everything that a good woman and a decent marriage had to give me. Pure disappointment and vexation. The anti-climax to an immense expectation built up throughout an imaginative boyhood and youth and early manhood. I was shocked and ashamed at my own disappointment. I thought it mean and base. Nevertheless this orderly household into which I had placed my life, these almost methodical connubialities…"

He broke off in mid-sentence.

Dr. Martineau shook his head disapprovingly.

"No," he said, "it wasn't fair to your wife."

"It was shockingly unfair. I have always realized that. I've done what I could to make things up to her… Heaven knows what counter disappointments she has concealed… But it is no good arguing about rights and wrongs now. This is not an apology for my life. I am telling you what happened.

"Not for me to judge," said Dr. Martineau. "Go on."

"By marrying I had got nothing that my soul craved for, I had satisfied none but the most transitory desires and I had incurred a tremendous obligation. That obligation didn't restrain me from making desperate lunges at something vaguely beautiful that I felt was necessary to me; but it did cramp and limit these lunges. So my story flops down into the comedy of the lying, cramped intrigues of a respectable, married man…I was still driven by my dream of some extravagantly beautiful inspiration called love and I sought it like an area sneak. Gods! What a story it is when one brings it all together! I couldn't believe that the glow and sweetness I dreamt of were not in the world – somewhere. Hidden away from me. I seemed to catch glimpses of the dear lost thing, now in the corners of a smiling mouth, now in dark eyes beneath a black smoke of hair, now in a slim form seen against the sky. Often I cared nothing for the woman I made love to. I cared for the thing she seemed to be hiding from me…"

Sir Richmond's voice altered.

"I don't see what possible good it can do to talk over these things." He began to row and rowed perhaps a score of strokes. Then he stopped and the boat drove on with a whisper of water at the bow and over the outstretched oar blades.

"What a muddle and mockery the whole thing is!" he cried. "What a fumbling old fool old Mother Nature has been! She drives us into indignity and dishonour: and she doesn't even get the children which are her only excuse for her mischief. See what a fantastic thing I am when you take the machine to pieces! I have been a busy and responsible man throughout my life. I have handled complicated public and industrial affairs not unsuccessfully and discharged quite big obligations fully and faithfully. And all the time, hidden away from the public eye, my life has been laced by the thread of these – what can one call them? – love adventures. How many? you ask. I don't know. Never have I been a whole-hearted lover; never have I been able to leave love alone… Never has love left me alone.

"And as I am made," said Sir Richmond with sudden insistence, "AS I AM MADE – I do not believe that I could go on without these affairs. I know that you will be disposed to dispute that."

Dr. Martineau made a reassuring noise.

"These affairs are at once unsatisfying and vitally necessary. It is only latterly that I have begun to perceive this. Women MAKE life for me. Whatever they touch or see or desire becomes worth while and otherwise it is not worth while. Whatever is lovely in my world, whatever is delightful, has been so conveyed to me by some woman. Without the vision they give me, I should be a hard dry industry in the world, a worker ant, a soulless rage, making much, valuing nothing."

He paused.

"You are, I think, abnormal," considered the doctor.

"Not abnormal. Excessive, if you like. Without women I am a wasting fever of distressful toil. Without them there is no kindness in existence, no rest, no sort of satisfaction. The world is a battlefield, trenches, barbed wire, rain, mud, logical necessity and utter desolation – with nothing whatever worth fighting for. Whatever justifies effort, whatever restores energy is hidden in women…"

"An access of sex," said Dr. Martineau. "This is a phase…"

"It is how I am made," said Sir Richmond.

A brief silence fell upon that. Dr. Martineau persisted. "It isn't how you are made. We are getting to something in all this. It is, I insist, a mood of how you are made. A distinctive and indicative mood."

Sir Richmond went on, almost as if he soliloquized.

"I would go through it all again… There are times when the love of women seems the only real thing in the world to me. And always it remains the most real thing. I do not know how far I may be a normal man or how far I may not be, so to speak, abnormally male, but to me life has very little personal significance and no value or power until it has a woman as intermediary. Before life can talk to me and say anything that matters a woman must be present as a medium. I don't mean that it has no significance mentally and logically; I mean that irrationally and emotionally it has no significance. Works of art, for example, bore me, literature bores me, scenery bores me, even the beauty of a woman bores me, unless I find in it some association with a woman's feeling. It isn't that I can't tell for myself that a picture is fine or a mountain valley lovely, but that it doesn't matter a rap to me whether it is or whether it isn't until there is a feminine response, a sexual motif, if you like to call it that, coming in. Whatever there is of loveliness or pride in life doesn't LIVE for me until somehow a woman comes in and breathes upon it the breath of life. I cannot even rest until a woman makes holiday for me. Only one thing can I do without women and that is work, joylessly but effectively, and latterly for some reason that it is up to you to discover, doctor, even the power of work has gone from me."

Section 4

"This afternoon brings back to me very vividly my previous visit here. It was perhaps a dozen or fifteen years ago. We rowed down this same backwater. I can see my companion's hand – she had very pretty hands with rosy palms – trailing in the water, and her shadowed face smiling quietly under her sunshade, with little faint streaks of sunlight, reflected from the ripples, dancing and quivering across it. She was one of those people who seem always to be happy and to radiate happiness.

"By ordinary standards," said Sir Richmond, "she was a thoroughly bad lot. She had about as much morality, in the narrower sense of the word, as a monkey. And yet she stands out in my mind as one of the most honest women I have ever met. She was certainly one of the kindest. Part of that effect of honesty may have been due to her open brow, her candid blue eyes, the smiling frankness of her manner… But – no! She was really honest.

"We drifted here as we are doing now. She pulled at the sweet rushes and crushed them in her hand. She adds a remembered brightness to this afternoon.

"Honest. Friendly. Of all the women I have known, this woman who was here with me came nearest to being my friend. You know, what we call virtue in a woman is a tremendous handicap to any real friendliness with a man. Until she gets to an age when virtue and fidelity are no longer urgent practical concerns, a good woman, by the very definition of feminine goodness, isn't truly herself. Over a vast extent of her being she is RESERVED. She suppresses a vast amount of her being, holds back, denies, hides. On the other hand, there is a frankness and honesty in openly bad women arising out of the admitted fact that they are bad, that they hide no treasure from you, they have no peculiarly precious and delicious secrets to keep, and no poverty to conceal. Intellectually they seem to be more manly and vigorous because they are, as people say, unsexed. Many old women, thoroughly respectable old women, have the same quality. Because they have gone out of the personal sex business. Haven't you found that?"

"I have never," said the doctor, "known what you call an openly bad woman, – at least, at all intimately…"

Sir Richmond looked with quick curiosity at his companion. "You have avoided them!"

"They don't attract me."

"They repel you?"

"For me," said the doctor, "for any friendliness, a woman must be modest… My habits of thought are old-fashioned, I suppose, but the mere suggestion about a woman that there were no barriers, no reservation, that in any fashion she might more than meet me half way…"

His facial expression completed his sentence.

"Now I wonder," whispered Sir Richmond, and hesitated for a moment before he carried the great research into the explorer's country. "You are afraid of women?" he said, with a smile to mitigate the impertinence.

"I respect them."

"An element of fear."

"Well, I am afraid of them then. Put it that way if you like. Anyhow I do not let myself go with them. I have never let myself go."

"You lose something. You lose a reality of insight."

There was a thoughtful interval.

"Having found so excellent a friend," said the doctor, "why did you ever part from her?"

Sir Richmond seemed indisposed to answer, but Dr. Martineau's face remained slantingly interrogative. He had found the effective counterattack and he meant to press it. "I was jealous of her," Sir Richmond admitted. "I couldn't stand that side of it."

Section 5

After a meditative silence the doctor became briskly professional again

"You care for your wife," he said. "You care very much for your wife. She is, as you say, your great obligation and you are a man to respect obligations. I grasp that. Then you tell me of these women who have come and gone… About them too you are perfectly frank… There remains someone else." Sir Richmond stared at his physician.

"Well," he said and laughed. "I didn't pretend to have made my autobiography anything more than a sketch."

"No, but there is a special person, the current person."

"I haven't dilated on my present situation, I admit."

"From some little things that have dropped from you, I should say there is a child."

"That," said Sir Richmond after a brief pause, "is a good guess."

"Not older than three."

"Two years and a half."

"You and this lady who is, I guess, young, are separated. At any rate, you can't go to her. That leaves you at loose ends, because for some time, for two or three years at least, you have ceased to be – how shall I put it? – an emotional wanderer."

"I begin to respect your psychoanalysis."

"Hence your overwhelming sense of the necessity of feminine companionship for weary men. I guess she is a very jolly companion to be with, amusing, restful – interesting."

"H'm," said Sir Richmond. "I think that is a fair description. When she cares, that is. When she is in good form."

"Which she isn't at present," hazarded the doctor. He exploded a mine of long-pent exasperation.

"She is the clumsiest hand at keeping well that I have ever known. Health is a woman's primary duty. But she is incapable of the most elementary precautions. She is maddeningly receptive to every infection. At the present moment, when I am ill, when I am in urgent need of help and happiness, she has let that wretched child get measles and she herself won't let me go near her because she has got something disfiguring, something nobody else could ever have or think of having, called CARBUNCLE. Carbuncle!"

"It is very painful," said Dr. Martineau. "No doubt it is," said Sir Richmond.

"No doubt it is." His voice grew bitter. He spoke with deliberation. "A perfectly aimless, useless illness, – and as painful as it CAN be."

He spoke as if he slammed a door viciously. And indeed he had slammed a door. The doctor realized that for the present there was no more self-dissection to be got from Sir Richmond.

For some time Sir Richmond had been keeping the boat close up to the foaming weir to the left of the lock by an occasional stroke. Now with a general air of departure he swung the boat round and began to row down stream towards the bridge and the Radiant Hotel.

"Time we had tea," he said.

Section 6

After tea Dr. Martineau left Sir Richmond in a chair upon the lawn, brooding darkly – apparently over the crime of the carbuncle. The doctor went to his room, ostensibly to write a couple

of letters and put on a dinner jacket, but really to make a few notes of the afternoon's conversation and meditate over his impressions while they were fresh.

His room proffered a comfortable armchair and into this he sank… A number of very discrepant things were busy in his mind. He had experienced a disconcerting personal attack. There was a whirl of active resentment in the confusion.

"Apologetics of a rake," he tried presently.

"A common type, stripped of his intellectual dressing. Every third manufacturer from the midlands or the north has some such undertow of 'affairs.' A physiological uneasiness, an imaginative laxity, the temptations of the trip to London – weakness masquerading as a psychological necessity. The Lady of the Carbuncle seems to have got rather a hold upon him. She has kept him in order for three or four years."

The doctor scrutinized his own remarks with a judicious expression.

"I am not being fair. He ruffled me. Even if it is true, as I said, that every third manufacturer from the midlands is in much the same case as he is, that does not dismiss the case. It makes it a more important one, much more important: it makes it a type case with the exceptional quality of being self-expressive. Almost too selfexpressive.

"Sir Richmond does, after all, make out a sort of case for himself…

"A valid case?"

The doctor sat deep in his chair, frowning judicially with the fingers of one hand apposed to the fingers of the other. "He makes me bristle because all his life and ideas challenge my way of living. But if I eliminate the personal element?"

He pulled a sheet of note-paper towards him and began to jot down notes with a silver-cased pencil. Soon he discontinued writing and sat tapping his pencil-case on the table. "The amazing selfishness of his attitude! I do not think that once – not once – has he judged any woman except as a contributor to his energy and peace of mind… Except in the case of his wife…

"For her his habit of respect was formed before his ideas developed…

"That I think explains HER…

"What was his phrase about the unfortunate young woman with the carbuncle?.. 'Totally Useless and unnecessary illness,' was it?..

"Now has a man any right by any standards to use women as this man has used them?

"By any standards?"

The doctor frowned and nodded his head slowly with the corners of his mouth drawn in.

For some years now an intellectual reverie had been playing an increasing part in the good doctor's life. He was writing this book of his, writing it very deliberately and laboriously, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A NEW AGE, but much more was he dreaming and thinking about this book. Its publication was to mark an epoch in human thought and human affairs generally, and create a considerable flutter of astonishment in the doctor's own little world. It was to bring home to people some various aspects of one very startling proposition: that human society had arrived at a phase when the complete restatement of its fundamental ideas had become urgently necessary, a phase when the slow, inadequate, partial adjustments to two centuries of changing conditions had to give place to a rapid reconstruction of new fundamental ideas. And it was a fact of great value in the drama of these secret dreams that the directive force towards this fundamentally reconstructed world should be the pen of an unassuming Harley Street physician, hitherto not suspected of any great excesses of enterprise.

The written portions of this book were already in a highly polished state. They combined a limitless freedom of proposal with a smooth urbanity of manner, a tacit denial that the thoughts of one intelligent being could possibly be shocking to another. Upon this the doctor was very insistent. Conduct, he held, could never be sufficiently discreet, thought could never be sufficiently free. As a citizen, one had to treat a law or an institution as a thing as rigidly right as a natural law. That the social

well-being demands. But as a scientific man, in one's stated thoughts and in public discussion, the case was altogether different. There was no offence in any possible hypothesis or in the contemplation of any possibility. Just as when one played a game one was bound to play in unquestioning obedience to the laws and spirit of the game, but if one was not playing that game then there was no reason why one should not contemplate the completest reversal of all its methods and the alteration and abandonment of every rule. Correctness of conduct, the doctor held, was an imperative concomitant of all really free thinking. Revolutionary speculation is one of those things that must be divorced absolutely from revolutionary conduct. It was to the neglect of these obvious principles, as the doctor considered them, that the general muddle in contemporary marital affairs was very largely due. We left divorce-law revision to exposed adulterers and marriage reform to hot adolescents and craving spinsters driven by the furies within them to assertions that established nothing and to practical demonstrations that only left everybody thoroughly uncomfortable. Far better to leave all these matters to calm, patient men in easy chairs, weighing typical cases impartially, ready to condone, indisposed to envy.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.