

the Life to Come

And Other Stories

E. M. FORSTER

"[These stories] are often brilliant, aware both of the strictly contemporary . . . the contrast between Greek and Christian; between 'Goth' and Christian; between spontaneity and duty in matters sensual and instinctive. In short, they bring up all Forster's usual preoccupations and at the same time orchestrate the new song and play it loud and clear."

—*World*

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AND OTHER STORIES

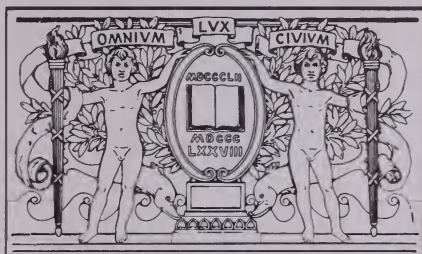
E. M. Forster

The fourteen stories in this book span six decades—from 1903 to 1957 or even later—and represent every phase of Forster's career as a writer. Only two have ever been published, and these only in magazines to which few people have easy access.

Two very different reasons caused the other twelve to remain unpublished in Forster's lifetime. One was his diffidence, which in his earlier years led him to belittle work that had failed to find immediate acceptance. There are four such stories in this volume, and it is hard, today, to understand why they were rejected by the same editors who were publishing his other early work.

The remaining stories were debarred from publication by their overtly homosexual themes; instead they were shown to an appreciative circle of friends and fellow writers, including Christopher Isherwood, Siegfried Sassoon, Lytton Strachey, and T. E. Lawrence, who considered one story "the most powerful thing I ever read." The stories differ widely. One is a cheerful political satire; another has, most unusually for Forster, a historical setting; a third is the fictional equivalent of one of those comic picture-postcards that so delighted George Orwell. Others give serious and powerful expression to some of Forster's profoundest concerns.

The significance of these stories in relation to Forster's famous abandonment of the novel is discussed by Oliver Stallybrass in his introduction.



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E. M. FORSTER

the
Life to Come

AND OTHER SHORT STORIES

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Introduction and other editorial matter

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Introduction

On his death in June 1970 E. M. Forster left behind, at King's College, Cambridge, England, a considerable corpus of unpublished literary work, complete and incomplete, and in a wide range of genres: novels (*Maurice*, published in 1971, and two substantial fragments), stories, plays, poems, essays, talks—to say nothing of letters, diaries and notebooks. Since, in addition, a significant proportion of his published work had never appeared in volume form, and since several of his books were out of print or would shortly need reprinting, the moment seemed ripe for a new and, as nearly as possible, complete edition. This is being published in London by Edward Arnold as the Abinger Edition of E. M. Forster.

The present volume, which corresponds to volume 8 of the Abinger Edition, contains, by intention at least, all Forster's surviving stories which are complete and which were not included in *The Celestial Omnibus* (1911) or *The Eternal Moment* (1928). They span six decades—from, probably, 1903 to 1958, with some revision as late as 1962—and represent every phase of Forster's career as a writer. Only two have previously been published: "Albergo Empedocle", which appeared in *Temple Bar* in December 1903,¹ and—included here for good measure—the composite "Three Courses and a Dessert", which was spread over the four issues of *Wine and Food* for 1944.

How is it that nearly half the extant stories by a writer of Forster's stature remained unpublished during his lifetime? To answer that question it is convenient to divide the unpublished stories into two groups. The stories in the first group, which consists of "Ansell", "The Purple Envelope", "The Helping Hand" and "The Rock", are of an earlier vintage than those in the second, as well as being sharply differentiated from them in subject-matter; and it is on a chronological basis that they are placed, in this volume, with "Albergo Empedocle", the first of Forster's stories to achieve publication. Of "Albergo

¹ And is reprinted in *Albergo Empedocle and Other Writings*, edited by George H. Thomson (New York, Liveright, 1971).

Empedocle" itself little need be said. In 1958 Forster told Wilfred Stone that he did not consider it "good enough" for reprinting;² but in 1910 he had included it—in preference even to "The Road from Colonus" as well as to "The Story of the Siren"—among the stories which he initially submitted to Sidgwick & Jackson alongside "The Celestial Omnibus".³ Stone considers it "a better tale than some that Forster felt were good enough to reprint",⁴ a judgement with which I concur.

Of the unpublished stories, those in the first group are all very early indeed, having been written, probably, within the limits of 1903 and early 1906—at a time, that is, when E. M. Forster was by no means a name for editors to conjure with. His first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, was not published until October 1905 (on what he regarded as poor terms), and like most young writers he received a fair number of rejection slips: a diary entry at the end of 1904, for example, records that "'Gemistus Pletho' and 'The Story of the Siren' have gone the rounds and failed". The essay and story in question both, in point of fact, found subsequent homes (the latter not till 1920, when it appeared as a Hogarth Press booklet); but at this stage Forster was easily discouraged—"Independent [Review] going smash, no one else takes my things," he laments in December 1904—and other rejected stories seem to have been consigned at an early stage to the bottom drawer, and to have stayed there. Although only one of these four stories survives in typescript rather than manuscript, both "The Purple Envelope" and "The Rock" are known to have been rejected by at least one editor, and a similar fate probably attended "The Helping Hand".

However that may be, the four stories, though comparatively lightweight, are far from negligible. The best, as it happens, is also probably the earliest. The handwriting of "Ansell" suggests a date around 1902 or 1903; and the latter year was specified by Forster in conversation with William Plomer, who read and admired the story in 1945. The eponymous hero is not the intellectual of *The Longest Journey*, but a garden boy—to ignore his carefully chronicled series of promotions—whose relationship with the narrator echoes Forster's own childhood friendship, as described in *Marianne Thornton* and fictionalized in *Maurice*, with a garden boy of that name. It is possible that Forster never intended "Ansell", as it stands, for publication. Any such aim must surely, in any case, have been abandoned by early 1904,

² Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster* (Stanford and London, Stanford University Press and Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 129, 407.

³ Frank Sidgwick, letter to Forster, 1 July 1910 (Bodleian Library, Sidgwick & Jackson papers, vol. 8, no. 149).

⁴ Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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since a diary entry of 4 March records the rejection by *Temple Bar* of "The Story of the Siren"—into whose opening paragraph "Ansell"'s central statement (that there are higher values than academic ones) and climactic incident (the disastrous loss of some notes for a thesis) have been absorbed. It is worth comparing the descent, in "Ansell", of the Greek optative book-box into a nameless river—

About halfway down it hit a projecting rock, opened like a water-lily, and rained its sweetness upon the deep. Most of the books were heavy and plunged like meteors through the trees into the river. One or two of the smaller ones roosted coyly for a minute on the branches before they too slipped through and disappeared. . . . Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon remains open on the ledge where the box split. In dry weather an invisible person rapidly turns over the leaves . . .

—with that, in "The Story of the Siren", of the Deist Controversy notebook into the Mediterranean:

It dived, like a piece of black slate, but opened soon, disclosing leaves of pale green, which quivered into blue. Now it had vanished, now it was a piece of magical india-rubber stretching out to infinity, now it was a book again, but bigger than the book of all knowledge. It grew more fantastic as it reached the bottom, where a puff of sand welcomed it and obscured it from view. But it reappeared, quite sane though a little tremulous, lying decently open on its back, while unseen fingers fidgeted among its leaves.

Each passage shows Forster's imaginative handling of tragicomic incident at its best; of the two stories as a whole, "Ansell", with its witty surface and beautifully modulated tone of underlying melancholy, is the more homogeneous and coherent, perhaps the more subtle and profound.

Falling books—this time the works of Maeterlinck—recur in "The Purple Envelope"; it will take the death of Leonard Bast in *Howards End* to exhaust their symbolic possibilities. Not quite flawless like "Ansell", though more immediately striking, "The Purple Envelope" may owe its origin to a story Forster heard and recorded in his diary on 8 December 1903, about a man who "breathed his friend's name on a mirror and couldn't rub it out". The incident of the shared pipe also has its real-life counterpart, in an encounter with a shepherd recorded on 12 September 1904 and mentioned in the 1960 Introduction to *The Longest Journey*; while yet another diary entry of this period—"Only the sportsman who is killing something leads the perfect life of the open air"—reads like a blueprint for young Howard, who "loved to take life, as all those do who are really in touch with nature". On 1 January 1905, in a letter to R. C. Trevelyan, Forster refers to

my unfinished ghost story, which I destine for Temple Bar.⁵ An old man—a very nice one too—has committed, from high motives, a crime: you mustn't mind what. Justice, so obviously immanent in our daily life, compels him to reveal it in pieces: I mean that *he* is in pieces: falls into them when he goes to sleep. His head is shot one night by mistake for a wild duck, and when they call him in the morning he is dead, and no traces are ever found of the murderer. . . . But I somehow think I am too refined to write a ghost story.

The letter is followed, three days later, by a postcard:

I want to say to you that I have just transformed "The Purple Envelope" into something comparatively respectable, which will probably be refused by Temple Bar.

It was indeed; and five years later it was among the stories weeded out by Sidgwick & Jackson. A tale of real tension, it may have irritated precisely by its "respectability", its teasing failure to deliver the expected supernatural goods (or to label the natural brand that has replaced them); or it may have puzzled by its moral ambivalence—the quality that was to fool D. H. Lawrence into thinking Forster had made "a nearly deadly mistake glorifying those *business* people in *Howards End*".⁶ The aphorisms on "sportsmen" quoted above were not, of course, Forster's last word on the subject—"we know," he writes ironically in *Anonymity*, "that if a man shoots an albatross he is not a criminal but a sportsman, and that if he stuffs the albatross afterwards he becomes a naturalist also." Nevertheless, in "The Purple Envelope" the mindless Howard is presented as "a kind comfortable youth, singularly free from envy and uncharitableness"; while a catalogue of his later shortcomings, culminating in the bland statement that "such a man is neither a comfort to the aged nor an example to the young", is at once offset by the narrator's stepping forward to add: "But I stop with him whenever I get the chance." Conversely, Howard's humanitarian uncle, however "nice" in Forster's original schema, emerges as a priggish, pompous fraud.

"The Helping Hand", which at the end of 1904 Forster felt "might be worked up and published", is a much slighter affair, almost unique within Forster's fiction in hardly even hinting at

⁵ Why *Temple Bar*, which had taken nothing from Forster since "Albergo Empedocle", whereas the *Independent Review* had by now published or accepted four of his stories and three of his essays? In *The Longest Journey* Rickie is told by the editor of the *Holborn*, "Write a really good ghost story and we'd take it at once"; and it seems likely that Forster had been offered a similar incentive by *Temple Bar*.

⁶ *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Aldous Huxley (London, Heinemann, 1932), p. 552.

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any values more universal or less worldly-wise than the inadvisability, when plagiarized, of squealing too soon. A cluster of names dropped by Forster in recording a visit to the Poldo-Pezzoli Gallery on 21 October 1901 is almost identical with a cluster from the story, and strongly suggests for the one variable the equation: "Giovanni da Empoli" = Antonio Pollaiuolo. Possibly, indeed, we have here a *conte à clef*: for although the first monograph on Pollaiuolo, by one Maud Cruttwell, was not published until 1907 he features prominently—and often in the context of disputed attributions—in her 1904 volume on Verrocchio in the same series. There are other indications that Maud Cruttwell may have sat for Forster as Lady Anstey—perhaps in Florence, where she lived and where Forster, whose "Lucy" fragments suggest a quizzical familiarity with the re-attribution industry, spent some time in 1901; she may even have held forth in his presence on Pollaiuolo's date of birth, thus enabling him to predict correctly "a long note saying why not in" 1426 (1429 in the story).

For the composition of "The Rock" we have Forster's own wry account in his Introduction to *The Collected Short Stories*. After describing the process of "sitting down on the theme as if it were an anthill" which occurred with "The Story of a Panic" near Ravello in 1902, and with "The Road from Colonus" in Greece the following year, he continues:

And I did it, or rather tried it on, a third time, in Cornwall, at the Gurnard's Head. Here, just in the same way, a story met me, and, since the Panic and Colonus had both been published and admired, I embraced it as a masterpiece. . . . As the theme swarmed over me, I put my hand into my purse, drew out a golden sovereign—they existed then—and inserted it into a collecting box of the Royal Lifeboat Institution which had been erected upon the Gurnard's Head for such situations as this. I could well afford it. I was bound to make the money over and again. . . . The Rock was the title of this ill-fated effort. It was a complete flop. Not an editor would look at it. My inspiration had been genuine but worthless, like so much inspiration, and I have never sat down on a theme since.

For all that, the central idea is a good and a strong one; it is the realization that has failed. The visit to Cornwall was probably one made in February and March 1906, a date that tallies well with the hand in which the story is written.

An interval of some sixteen years separates the two groups of unpublished stories. Those in the later group are peculiarly hard to date with any precision, since most of them were evidently

the subject of extensive intermittent tinkering, while some, as we shall see, may have been completely rewritten. In substance and in their extant form, however, they were written in the following years:

The Life to Come: 1922
 Dr Woolacott: 1927
 Arthur Snatchfold: 1928
 The Classical Annex: 1930-31
 What Does It Matter?: probably the 1930s
 The Obelisk: 1939
 The Torque: 1958 at the latest
 The Other Boat: 1957-8

Seven out of eight, that is, were written after the publication of *A Passage to India*, when any editor who rejected a story by E. M. Forster would have done so only for the very reason that deterred him from offering them, and caused *Maurice* to remain unpublished for fifty-seven years: their homosexual content.

They are, however, markedly different from *Maurice*, as well as from each other. Moreover, whereas Forster never wavered in regarding the novel as a serious work of art as well as a declaration of faith, his estimate of some, at least, of the stories was subject to violent fluctuations. Thus his diary for 8 April 1922 reads:

Have this moment burnt my indecent writings or as many as the fire will take. Not a moral repentance, but the belief that they clogged me artistically. They were written not to express myself but to excite myself, and when first—15 years back?—I began them, I had a feeling that I was doing something positively dangerous to my career as a novelist. I am not ashamed of them. . . . It is just that they were a wrong channel for my pen.

Yet only three months later he records in a letter to Florence Barger the completion of

a short story ["The Life to Come"] which is . . . violent and wholly unpublishable, and I do not yet know whether it is good. I may show it to Goldie, but there is more sensuality in my composition than in his, and it might distress him.

The reference to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, the man above all others whose esteem Forster treasured, is significant. In 1913 Dickinson's "disgust" at a "Rabelaisian" story of Forster's had shaken him so severely as to retard work on *Maurice*. "How dependent on approval!" is Forster's rueful diary comment; and, although in the event the high-minded Dickinson approved of the

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high-minded *Maurice*, Forster doubtless took even greater care thereafter not to expose himself again to disapproval, from Dickinson or anyone else.

Fewer people, certainly, knew about the short stories than knew about *Maurice*, and fewer still were privileged to see them, or to hear Forster reading them aloud. William Plomer, having read one story and not cared for it, was never shown another. Siegfried Sassoon saw and appears to have liked "The Life to Come", as did Forrest Reid and—to Forster's particular gratification—that "relentless judge of the emotional",⁷ Lytton Strachey. T. E. Lawrence, on the other hand, laughed at it—a reaction that puzzles me as much as it puzzled Forster—and was perhaps lucky, three years later, to be shown "Dr Woolacott". This, by way of contrast, he considered "the most powerful thing I ever read . . . more charged with the real high explosive than anything I've ever met yet";⁸ and Forrest Reid, again, liked "Dr Woolacott". In the early 1930s a number of the stories were seen by Christopher Isherwood; but their most regular readers at the time of their composition were probably Forster's close friends Joe Ackerley and Jack ("Sebastian") Sprott. Ackerley was also selected, some time during the 1960s, to help Forster execute "a grand review" of the stories, in which, to Sprott's "rage", they "destroyed several they thought not good enough to survive".⁹ Among the victims, probably, of this second "purgation" were "a jokey thing" about "a girl who thought that two young men were always fighting when in fact they were making love",¹⁰ and another story to which Forster refers in a diary entry of 16 July 1964:

Suddenly remembered a short story I tore up a couple of years ago like a fool, called Adventure Week where 8 bored boys have to go into camp and are tricked by the only clever one into a delicious disaster. It was so gay and warm. . . . It was a craftsman[']s dissatisfaction that destroyed it.

Not a moral repentance . . . a craftsman's dissatisfaction—one cannot doubt that the words are sincere; and yet something more seems needed to account for these introverted *autos-da-fé*, or for the conflicting resolutions "The Torque to be torn up" and "to prepare The Torque for non-publication".¹¹ "The Other Boat" contains a notable distinction between "tribal" and

⁷ Letter to Sassoon, 20 December 1923.

⁸ Letter to Forster, 27 October 1927.

⁹ Letter from Sprott to the editor, 25 August 1971.

¹⁰ Letter from Isherwood to the editor, 28 November 1971.

¹¹ The first injunction (30 December 1958) appears to have been ignored, the second (9 October 1962) to have involved mainly the production of an incomplete typescript.

"personal" colour prejudices; and it would be surprising if the sexual prejudices of the tribe left the creator of *Maurice*, even in full maturity, totally unscathed. There are plenty of indications that they did not, and that considerable tensions were involved. Did the stories provide a release from the tensions, or did they exacerbate them? And were they art or, as Forster believed in April 1922, a distraction from art?

In the letter to myself which I have already quoted, Professor Sprott answered these two questions, in effect, with a guarded affirmative: the homosexual stories were "an amusement certainly; perhaps a relief in various senses, including the fact that he could still write stories". The implication is that, though the 1922 holocaust may conceivably have been a necessary price for the completion of *A Passage to India*, thereafter there was no real dilemma: as far as fiction went, it was unpublishable "sexy stories" (Forster's own phrase) or nothing. This view receives strong support from the written evidence:

Having sat for an hour in vain trying to write a play, will analyse causes of my sterility. . . . 2. Weariness of the only subject that I both can and may treat—the love of men for women & vice versa. (Diary, 16 June 1911.)

I shall never write another novel after it [*A Passage to India*—my patience with ordinary people has given out. But I shall go on writing. I don't feel any decline in my "powers". (Letter to Siegfried Sassoon, 1 August 1923.)

I want to love a strong young man of the lower classes and be loved by him and even hurt by him. That is my ticket, and then I have wanted to write respectable novels. . . . (Personal memorandum, 1935.)

I should have been a more famous writer if I had written or rather published more, but sex has prevented the latter. (Diary, 31 December 1964.)

Given Forster's deep inner honesty and artistic integrity, his gradual acceptance of himself as a homosexual made the decision to abandon the writing of fiction for publication heroic but almost inevitable. Perhaps we should even regard *A Passage to India*, gratefully, as a magnificent rearguard action, initiated before the turning-point came with *Maurice*, and completed with the aid of a theme that relegated sex to a minor role. To cavil at Forster's subsequent "silence" is to forget, *inter alia*, some of the most perceptive and scintillating essays in the English language. Those who love his memory will surely rejoice to know that from time to time "he could still write stories", whether extant or otherwise, whether good, bad or indifferent.

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How good *are* these stories? Where sexual themes are concerned, critical responses are notoriously subject to distortion by personal—or tribal—prejudices;¹² and not every reader will find it easy to assess coolly a group of stories in which buggery is an almost unvarying feature, accompanied in most cases by a greater or lesser degree of violence. For better or worse, however, the actual physical encounters are described briefly and, by the standards of today, with circumspection, not to say circumlocution: “a muscle thickened up out of gold” is perhaps the most explicit sexual statement in the book. In this and in little else they resemble *Maurice*; they are free alike from the latter’s didacticism and from the sentimentality that so many reviewers recognized, while noticing, apparently, few of the many incidental felicities.

If Forster wrote these stories “not to express myself but to excite myself”—the distinction is perhaps a little too neat and simple—they have all, in varying degrees, transcended their origin. Though no two have quite the same flavour, they fall roughly into two categories: those where Forster seems to be cocking a more or less cheerful snook at the heterosexual world in general and certain selected targets—women, the Church, pedantic schoolmasters, town councillors—in particular; and those in which some of his profoundest concerns—love, death, truth, social and racial differences—find powerful and sombre expression. P. N. Furbank believes that Forster himself “made a clear distinction in his mind between the facetious and the serious homosexual stories”,¹³ and that only the former caused him misgivings. If Furbank is right, his “facetious” (my “cheerful snook”) category must have included all the stories that Forster destroyed; of those that survive (or rose phoenix-like from the flames), “The Obelisk”, “What Does It Matter?” and “The Classical Annex” fall into this first category, “The Life to Come”, “Dr Woolacott”, “Arthur Snatchfold” and “The Other Boat” into the second. Somewhere between the two sub-groups lies “The Torque”, an interesting but uneven piece which, though complete, had probably not reached its final form. It is characterized by a strong sense of history and, intermittently, a grave stylized beauty all its own; but the ending is perfunctory, and the preceding rape-fantasy is perhaps the worst bit of writing in the book. (It is interesting to note from the manuscript variants that in these stories as elsewhere—the Marabar Caves episode, for example—it was always the scenes of violent action that gave Forster most trouble.)

¹² From Forster’s diary, 25 October 1910: “To work out:—The sexual bias in literary criticism. . . . What sort of person would the critic prefer to sleep with, in fact.”

¹³ Letter to the editor, 27 November 1971.

The first sub-group need not detain us long. They are lively and amusing, the gaiety only occasionally degenerates into perkiness or "facetiousness", and they will be enjoyed by those for whom good clean fun is not irretrievably compromised by an infusion of dirt. Nor are they entirely frivolous: in its somewhat music-hall or comic-postcard way, "The Obelisk" is an unbowlerized version of that famous "call to the blood and to the relaxed will", the nude bathing scene in *A Room with a View*. There is a sharp edge, too, to the Ruritanian extravaganza "What Does It Matter?"—to which the subtitle "A Morality" has not been added for nothing.

The second sub-group, however, constitutes an altogether weightier body of work. I have already quoted T. E. Lawrence's remarkable encomium of "Dr Woolacott"; and, although the story's fascination for T.E. tells us more, perhaps, about his powerfully developed death-wish than about its own intrinsic quality, it is certainly a strange and haunting tale, reminiscent of "The Point of It" both in its evocation of the twilight boundary between life and death and in its exaltation of ecstasy-in-death over mediocre and joyless life. More completely satisfactory, perhaps, is "Arthur Snatchfold": the horrors of a vapid, pointless, sham-rural weekend in uncongenial company are deftly evoked—enough to drive anyone to a roll in the bracken with the milkman; there is a memorable vignette, etched in acid, of a less successful, more unlikable Henry Wilcox; and the final clubroom scene, tense and genuinely poignant, is a minor triumph of craftsmanship *à la* Maupassant.

The remaining two pieces in this sub-group show Forster at the height of his powers, with a tragic grandeur unequalled in his stories, and unsurpassed even in *A Passage to India*. (It is perhaps significant that each is concerned with an East-West encounter.) The title-story—the one admired by Sassoon, Strachey and Forrest Reid but mocked by T. E. Lawrence—began, as Forster told Sassoon, "with a purely obscene fancy of a missionary in difficulties".¹⁴ Thence it developed, via one of Forster's best malicious jokes (the conversion of Vithobai to a "love of Christ" that he has totally misunderstood), into a powerful, bitter and beautifully proportioned four-act drama of passion and hypocrisy, played out by the native chieftain and the missionary to a bleakly ritualized offstage chorus of spiritual and commercial oppressors. This story embodied what Forster described as "a great deal of sorrow and passion that I have myself experienced"¹⁵ and came, with "Dr Woolacott", "more from my heart than anything else I have been able to turn [out]".¹⁶ When we recall that the

¹⁴ Letter to Sassoon, 1 August 1923. ¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Letter to Forrest Reid, 8 September 1927; the last word is actually "it".

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novels which meant most to Forster were *The Longest Journey* and *Maurice*, the sternness with which deep emotional experience has here been transmuted into high, austere art is indeed striking.

Equal in achievement is "The Other Boat", which in the course of composition underwent an even more radical change than did "The Life to Come". The first section, written probably around 1913, was intended as the opening of a novel which at an early stage got bogged down and abandoned. In 1948, indeed, this chapter was published in *The Listener*¹⁷ as "Entrance to an Unwritten Novel"; and when, nearly a decade later, Forster decided to use it as the opening of a story with a homosexual twist he headed the continuation "Exit from an Unwritten Novel". In marked contrast with "The Life to Come", with its succession of taut, dramatic little scenes separated by long intervals of time, almost the entire action of "The Other Boat" takes place within a single night, in a cramped cabin on a P. and O. liner. The sexual play is here exceptionally well realized: no fantasy coupling but a totally convincing relationship between two characters drawn as sharply, and with as sure an ear for the particular tone of voice, as any in Forster's work. (The letter beginning "Hullo the Mater!" is a tiny masterpiece in itself.) Very remarkable, too, and most original in conception, is the long post-coital conversation, with its mixture of tenderness, scheming and mutual incomprehension, its subtle shifts of mood that lead to disaster. And the grim irony of the concluding paragraph forms a worthy finale to Forster's fiction.

The last item in this volume—"Three Courses and a Dessert: Being a New and Gastronomic Version of the Old Game of Consequences"—may well have been the latest, if not in execution, at least in origin. In any case, departure from a chronological order that is at best partly conjectural seems justified both by its multiple authorship and by its particular character: though comfortably the longest story in the volume, it is essentially a post-prandial frolic *à quatre*. The idea seems to have sprung, towards the end of 1943, from the brain of André Simon, founder and for many years editor of *Wine and Food*. Christopher Dilke, who at that time diversified his military duties by writing regularly for the magazine, was invited to set the scene and provide the First Course. This was read by Simon

with such pleasure that I find it difficult to believe that it runs to as much as 5,000 words. It is just what I had hoped for and it leaves the

¹⁷ 23 December 1948, pp. 975-6; reprinted in *New York Times Book Review*, 6 February 1949, pp. 3, 31 as "Cocoanut & Co.: Entrance to an Abandoned Novel".

reader in the right state of expectancy, to say nothing of the headache to the next three.

The identity of "the next three" was as yet undetermined. Geoffrey McNeill-Moss is known to have been approached, as may have been Horace Annesley Vachell, Louis Golding, G. B. Stern and (for the Dessert) Charles Morgan, all of whose names were mooted by Simon in the letter just quoted; while Forster, some two months later, was in turn recommending J. H. Simpson, alias John Hampson. Forster himself, though in 1941 he had contributed to *Wine and Food* a morsel entitled "You Sausage!", seems to have been an afterthought on Simon's part, and Dilke's contribution to have been in proof before Forster was approached. His letter of acceptance—presented by Simon to Dilke with the suggestion that after reading it he may "require an outsize in hats"—is one of the few extant letters from Forster to an editor, and is worth quoting at length:

I should like to have a shot at the fish. I felt at first I couldn't attempt it, but found the first instalment so fresh and stimulating. I have never read anything by Christopher Dilke before. How good he is! I certainly shan't reach his level of action and ingeniousness, and I doubt whether your other contributors will reach it either. My criticism of him—as an installer—is that he has made too much happen. With the bombers over the soup, one can only save the other courses by constantly prevaricating.

I don't expect to be able to turn out a contribution of that length. How short may it permissibly be? And I may have to consult you over culinary details. . . . But I must read the proof again. I am keeping it, by the way, as I shall [want?] to refer to it constantly. (Letter to Simon, 28 January 1944.)

Forster's contribution certainly involves less "action and ingeniousness" than Dilke's, or that of A. E. Coppard which follows. Still, if we bear in mind Elizabeth Bowen's dictum that "speech is what the characters *do to each other*",¹⁸ there is action enough, including a characteristic sudden death employed to uncharacteristic ends. At the same time, and without impairing unity of tone, Forster has contrived to give free rein to his own unrivalled irony and grasp of social nuance. If he admired Dilke's opening he must also, as an insouciant self-mocker, have relished the joke at his expense with which, on the last page, James Laver cuts through a knot of Gordian proportions. The entire team, indeed, clearly enjoyed its romp in pre-Bond land, and has played the game with zest and skill, if not always in strict accordance with the rules.

¹⁸ *Collected Impressions* (London, Longman, 1950), p. 255.

INTRODUCTION

Of the twelve unpublished stories, only one ("The Purple Envelope") exists in a form with which Forster was satisfied to the point of submission to an editor. (The opening pages of "The Other Boat" constitute, as we have seen, another partial exception.) Of the remainder, many are in a physical state—untidy manuscript, heavily corrected typescript, a mixture of the two—in which no editor or publisher would normally accept copy from a living author. The handwriting is often—and over the years increasingly—difficult to decipher; many of the corrections are imperfectly or ambiguously made; some of the typescripts are full of obvious uncorrected errors, and suspicions that other, less obvious ones exist are reinforced by Forster's evident and inveterate carelessness as a reader of typescripts and proofs.

Much more problematic, about half the stories are extant, in part or in whole, in two or more versions. To establish a text of "The Other Boat", for example, it is necessary to adjudicate between the rival claims of (a) a complete typescript of 45 pages, with corrections effected by various means; (b) a carbon copy of (a), with a slightly different set of corrections; (c) a set of autograph directives for corrections to be made either to (a/b) or to an earlier typescript; (d) the version of the opening pages published in 1948 as "Entrance to an Unwritten Novel"; (e, f and g) a total of five autograph sheets differing considerably from the three corresponding passages in (a); and (h) two typewritten sheets differing considerably from the corresponding passage in both (a) and, in so far as they overlap, (g). Even this account errs on the side of over-simplification.

My aim—that of most textual editors—is to present a text corresponding, substantively, to Forster's *latest intentions*, in so far as they can be determined. Both the italicized words are crucial. *Intentions*, not the way they have been carried out: obvious typing errors, for example, have been corrected, and where, in a much-rewritten sentence, words have been added in the wrong place, or too many or too few deleted, I have tried to reconstruct the successive processes involved and to restore sense out of nonsense. *Latest intentions*: although *one* of the criteria for identifying these has been the assumption that changes are more likely to be for the better (in my own fallible judgement) than for the worse, where the consensus of evidence points to a particular reading as being the later I have adopted it even if the earlier reading strikes me as unquestionably superior. In one such case (page 193) the discrepancy is so startling that I have recorded the earlier version in a footnote.

With this single exception, I have kept textual matters within the confines of these paragraphs and a few notes at the end of the volume. The notes—one or two of which are expository rather than textual—record all substantive editorial emendations and

interpolations, other than manifest errors which admit of only one possible correct reading; where a lacuna seems to have occurred—see, for example, page 106 and the note on page 237—I have endeavoured to fill it as simply and functionally as possible. Unless otherwise specified, then, every word in this book is Forster's, even if some were in his mind rather than on the paper that survived him, and even if one cannot be certain that he would finally have preferred all of them to their rivals.

One last point about spelling, punctuation, capitalization and word-division. Although, like most good writers, Forster achieved some subtle effects with these resources, and although he was greatly upset by some punctuation changes which "beast Jenks" of the *Independent Review* made to "The Story of a Panic",¹⁹ it is clear that in general he was exceedingly slapdash over such matters; again and again, to give only one example, he forgets to close his quotations. I have therefore felt at liberty, provided no nuance was involved, to make such alterations as seemed desirable for reasons of consistency or ease in reading.

It remains for me to thank a number of people for their help and encouragement. I am profoundly grateful, in the first instance, to Forster's literary executors—the late Professor W. J. H. Sprott and the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge—for setting me, as general editor of this edition, the most congenial (and challenging) task that I could ever have wished for. The kindness, as well as trust, which they showed me from the outset has been exemplified by many people at King's, that friendly and hospitable college to which Forster extended for more than seventy years his gratitude, affection and loyalty. I am particularly indebted to the Vice-Provost, Dr Donald Parry; to the Librarian, Dr A. N. L. Munby, and all members of his staff; to Mr George Rylands, who since Professor Sprott's untimely death in September 1971 has kept an alert and benevolent eye on the project; to Mr P. N. Furbank, Forster's biographer, for endless patience and generosity in answering questions and giving me access to his files; and to Miss Elizabeth Ellem, now Archivist of Churchill College, Cambridge, whose splendid earlier work in sorting and listing the Forster archive at King's lightened my task immeasurably. The expert knowledge of both Mr Furbank and Miss Ellem has more than once kept me from going astray; for any editorial aberrations that remain I alone am responsible.

¹⁹ On the assumption that the points at issue are indicated by the differences in punctuation between the periodical and volume versions, Jenks appears to have been a fussy over-punctuator, with a particular addiction to the semi-colon. Forster's outburst occurs in a diary entry of 7 August 1904.

INTRODUCTION

My debt to all these people, as also to the indispensable London Library, will extend far beyond the confines of the present volume, and I hope that they will regard the thanks expressed here as coextensive with my work on the Abinger Edition; if in subsequent volumes my statement of gratitude takes a more summary form it will not be because the gratitude itself is wearing thin. On the present occasion I owe especial thanks to Mr Christopher Dilke, Mr James Laver, C.B.E., A. D. Peters & Co. (representing the A. E. Coppard estate) and the Wine and Food Society for permission to reprint the relevant sections of "Three Courses and a Dessert"; to Messrs Dilke and Laver also for allowing me to ransack their memories over a luncheon happily unmarred by air-raids or assassinations; and to Mr Dilke, further, for lending me a number of pertinent letters and allowing me to quote from them. I am grateful also to Mr George Sassoon for permission to quote from Forster's letters to Siegfried Sassoon. For their courtesy and helpfulness in answering inquiries, and in several cases reading and commenting on this Introduction, I would like to thank Mr Robert Buckingham, Mr Christopher Isherwood, Mr William Plomer, Mr William Roerick and Mr Patrick Wilkinson; valuable suggestions for improving the editorial matter were made also by Mr J. G. Bell, Mr Andrew Best, Mrs William Blake, Mr T. S. Matthews, Miss Patricia Parkin, Professor Wilfred Stone and Professor George H. Thomson. The acknowledgement of my deepest and most lasting debt of all—that to my wife—may perhaps be allowed to conclude this Introduction to a volume by a writer for whom, after all, personal relationships were the supreme and ultimate value.

OLIVER STALLYBRASS

the Life to Come

Albergo Empedocle

The last letter I had from Harold was from Naples.

We've just come back from Pompeii (he wrote). On the whole it's decidedly no go and very tiring. What with the smells and the beggars and the mosquitoes we're rather off Naples altogether, and we've changed our plans and are going to Sicily. The guide-books say you can run through it in no time; only four places you have to go to, and very little in them. That suits us to a T. Pompeii and the awful Museum here have fairly killed us—except of course Mildred, and perhaps Sir Edwin.

Now why don't you come too? I know you're keen on Sicily, and we all would like it. You would be able to spread yourself no end with your archaeology. For once in my life I should have to listen while you jaw. You'd enjoy discussing temples, gods, etc., with Mildred. She's taught me a lot, but of course it's no fun for her, talking to us. Send a wire; I'll stand the cost. Start at once and we'll wait for you. The Peaslakes say the same, especially Mildred.

My not sleeping at night, and my headaches are all right now, thanks very much. As for the blues, I haven't had any since I've been engaged, and don't intend to. So don't worry any more.

Yours,
Harold

Dear Tommy, if you aren't an utter fool you'll let me pay your ticket out.

I did not go. I could just have managed it, but Sicily was then a very sacred name to me, and the thought of running through it in no time, even with Harold, deterred me. I went afterwards, and as I am well acquainted with all who went then, and have had circumstantial information of all that happened, I think that my account of the affair will be as intelligible as anyone's.

I am conceited enough to think that, if I had gone, the man I love most in the world would not now be in an asylum.

I

The Peaslake party was most harmonious in its composition. Four out of the five were Peaslakes, which partly accounted for the success, but the fifth, Harold, seemed to have been created to go with them. They had started from England soon after his engagement to Mildred Peaslake, and had been flying over Europe for two months. At first they were a little ashamed of their rapidity, but the delight of continual custom-house examinations soon seized them, and they had hardly learned what "Come in" and "Hot water, please" were in one language, before they crossed the frontier and had to learn them in another.

But, as Harold truly said, "People say we don't see things properly, and are globe-trotters, and all that, but after all one travels to enjoy oneself, and no one can say that we aren't having a ripping time."

Every party, to be really harmonious, must have a physical and an intellectual centre. Harold provided one, Mildred the other. He settled whether a mountain had to be climbed or a walk taken, and it was his fists that were clenched when a porter was insolent, or a cabman tried to overcharge. Mildred, on the other hand, was the fount of information. It was she who generally held the Baedeker and explained it. She had been expecting her continental scramble for several years, and had read a fair amount of books for it, which a good memory often enabled her to reproduce.

But they all agreed that she was no dry encyclopaedia. Her appetite for facts was balanced by her reverence for imagination.

"It is imagination," she would say, "that makes the past live again. It sets the centuries at naught."

"Rather!" was the invariable reply of Harold, who was notoriously deficient in it. Recreating the past was apt to give him a headache, and his thoughts obstinately returned to the unromantic present, which he found quite satisfactory. He was fairly rich, fairly healthy, very much in love, very fond of life, and he was content to worship in

Mildred those higher qualities which he did not possess himself.

These two between them practically ran the party, and both Sir Edwin and Lady Peaslake were glad that the weight of settling or explaining anything should be lifted off their shoulders. Sir Edwin sometimes held the Baedeker, but his real function was the keeping of a diary in which he put down the places they went to, the people they met, and the times of the trains. Lady Peaslake's department was packing, hotels, and the purchasing of presents for a large circle of acquaintance. As for Lilian, Mildred's sister, whatever pleased other people pleased her. Altogether it was a most delightful party.

They were, however, just a little subdued and quiet during that journey from Palermo to Girgenti. They had done Palermo in even less time than Baedeker had allowed for it, and such audacity must tell on the most robust of tourists. Furthermore they had made an early start, as they had to get to Girgenti for lunch, do the temples in the afternoon, and go on the next morning to Syracuse.

It was no wonder that Lady Peaslake was too weary to look out of the window, and that Harold yawned when Mildred explained at some length how it was that a Greek temple came to be built out of Greece.

"Poor boy! You're tired," she said, without bitterness, and without surprise.

Harold blushed at his impoliteness.

"We really do too much," said Lady Peaslake. "I never bought that Sicilian cart for Mrs Popham. It would have been the very thing. She will have something out of the way. If a thing's at all ordinary she will hardly say thank you. Harold, would you try at Girgenti? Mind you beat them down. Four francs is the outside."

"Certainly, Lady Peaslake." His method of purchasing for her was to pay whatever was asked, and to make good the difference out of his own pocket.

"Girgenti will produce more than Sicilian carts," said Mildred, smoothing down the pages of the guidebook. "In Greek times it was the second city of the island, wasn't it? It was famous for the ability, wealth and luxury of its

inhabitants. You remember, Harold, it was called Acragas."

"Acragas, Acragas," chanted Harold, striving to rescue one word from the chaos. The effort was too much for him, and he gave another yawn.

"Really, Harold!" said Mildred, laughing. "You're very much exhausted."

"I've scarcely slept for three nights," he replied in rather an aggrieved voice.

"Oh, my dear boy! I'm very sorry. I had no idea."

"Why did not you tell me?" said Sir Edwin. "We would have started later. Yes, I see you do look tired."

"It's so queer. It's ever since I've been in Sicily. Perhaps Girgenti will be better."

"Have you never slept since Naples?"

"Oh, I did sleep for an hour or so last night. But that was because I used my dodge."

"Dodge!" said Sir Edwin. "What ever do you mean?"

"You know it, don't you? You pretend you're someone else, and then you go asleep in no time."

"Indeed I do not know it," said Sir Edwin emphatically.

Mildred's curiosity was aroused. She had never heard Harold say anything unexpected before, and she was determined to question him.

"How extremely interesting! How very interesting! I don't know it either. Who do you imagine yourself to be?"

"Oh, no one—anyone. I just say to myself, 'That's someone lying awake. Why doesn't he go to sleep if he's tired?' Then he—I mean I—do, and it's all right."

"But that is a very wonderful thing. Why didn't you do it all three nights?"

"Well, to tell the truth," said Harold, rather confused, "I promised Tommy I'd never do it again. You see, I used to do it, not only when I couldn't sleep, but also when I was in the blues about something—or nothing—as one is, I don't know why. It doesn't get rid of them, but it kind of makes me so strong that I don't care for them—I can't explain. One morning Tommy came to see me, and I never knew him till he shook me. Naturally he was horribly sick, and made me promise never to do it again."

"And why have you done it again?" said Sir Edwin.

"Well, I did hold out two nights. But last night I was so dead tired, I couldn't think what I wanted to—of course you understand that; it's rather beastly. All the night I had to keep saying, '*I'm lying awake, I'm lying awake, I'm lying awake,*' and it got more and more difficult. And when it was almost time to get up I made a slip and said, '*He's lying awake*'—and then off I went."

"How very, very interesting," said Mildred, and Lilian cried that it was a simply splendid idea, and that she should try it next time she had the toothache.

"Indeed, Lilian," said her mother, "I beg you'll do no such thing."

"No, indeed," said Sir Edwin, who was looking grave. "Harold, your friend was quite right. It is never safe to play tricks with the brain. I must say I'm astonished: you of all people!"

"Yes," said Harold, looking at a very substantial hand. "I'm such a stodgy person. It is odd. It isn't brain or imagination or anything like that. I simply pretend."

"It is imagination," said Mildred in a low determined voice.

"Whatever it is, it must stop," said Sir Edwin. "It's a dangerous habit. You must break yourself of it before it is fully formed."

"Yes. I promised Tommy. I shall try again tonight," said Harold, with a pitiful little sigh of fatigue.

"I'll arrange to have a room communicating with yours. If you can't sleep tonight, call me."

"Thanks very much, I'm sure not to do it if you're near. It only works when one's alone. Tommy stopped it by taking rooms in the same house, which was decent of him."

The conversation had woken them up. The girls were quiet, Lilian being awed, and Mildred being rather annoyed with her parents for their want of sympathy with imagination. She felt that Harold had so little, that unless it was nourished it would disappear. She crossed over to him, and managed to say in a low voice:

"You please me very much. I had no idea you were like this before. We live in a world of mystery."

Harold smiled complacently at the praise, and being sure that he could not say anything sensible held his tongue. Mildred at once began to turn his newly found powers to the appreciation of Girgenti.

"Think," she said, "of the famous men who visited her in her prime. Pindar, Aeschylus, Plato—and as for Empedocles, of course he was born there."

"Oh!"

"The disciple, you know, of Pythagoras, who believed in the transmigration of souls."

"Oh!"

"It's a beautiful idea, isn't it, that the soul should have several lives."

"But, Mildred darling," said the gentle voice of Lady Peaslake, "we know that it is not so."

"Oh, I didn't mean that, mamma. I only said it was a beautiful idea."

"But not a true one, darling."

"No."

Their voices had sunk into that respectful monotone which is always considered suitable when the soul is under discussion. They all looked awkward and ill at ease. Sir Edwin played tunes on his waistcoat buttons, and Harold blew into the bowl of his pipe. Mildred, a little confused at her temerity, passed on to the terrible sack of Acragas by the Romans. Whereat their faces relaxed, and they regained their accustomed spirits.

"But what are dates?" said Mildred. "What are facts, or even names of persons? They carry one a very little way. In a place like this one must simply feel."

"Rather," said Harold, trying to fix his attention.

"You must throw yourself into a past age if you want to appreciate it thoroughly. Today you must imagine you are a Greek."

"Really, Mildred," said Sir Edwin, "you're almost too fanciful."

"No, father, I'm not. Harold understands. He must forget all these modern horrors of railways and Cook's tours, and think that he's living over two thousand years

ago, among palaces and temples. He must think and feel and act like a Greek. It's the only way. He must—well, he must *be* a Greek."

"The sea! The sea!" interrupted Harold. "How absolutely ripping! I swear I'll put in a bathe!"

"Oh, you incorrigible boy!" said Mildred, joining in the laugh at the failure of her own scheme. "Show me the sea, then."

They were still far away from it, for they had hardly crossed the watershed of the island. It was the country of the mines, barren and immense, absolutely destitute of grass or trees, producing nothing but cakes of sallow sulphur, which were stacked on the platform of every wayside station. Human beings were scanty, and they were stunted and dry, mere withered vestiges of men. And far below at the bottom of the yellow waste was the moving living sea, which embraced Sicily when she was green and delicate and young, and embraces her now, when she is brown and withered and dying.

"I see something more interesting than the sea," said Mildred. "I see Girgenti."

She pointed to a little ridge of brown hill far beneath them, on the summit of which a few gray buildings were huddled together.

"Oh, what a dreadful place!" cried poor Lady Peaslake. "How uncomfortable we are going to be!"

"Oh dearest mother, it's only for one night. What are a few drawbacks, when we are going to see temples! Temples, Greek temples! Doesn't the word make you thrill?"

"Well, no, dear, it doesn't. I should have thought the Pesto ones would have been enough. These can't be very different."

"I consider you are a recreant party," said Mildred in a sprightly voice. "First it's Harold, now it's you. I'm the only worthy one among you. Today I mean to be a Greek. What hotel do we go to?"

Lady Peaslake produced her notebook and said: "Grand Hôtel des Temples. Recommended by Mr Dimbleby. Ask for a back room, as those have the view."

But at the Girgenti railway station, the man from the Temples told them that his hotel was full, and Mildred, catching sight of the modest omnibus of the Albergo Empedocle, suggested that they should go there, because it sounded so typical.

"You remember what the doctrine of Empedocles was, Harold?"

The wretched Harold had forgotten.

Sir Edwin was meanwhile being gently urged into the omnibus by the man from the Empedocle.

"We know nothing about it, absolutely nothing. Are you—have you clean beds?"

The man from the Empedocle raised his eyes and hands to heaven, so ecstatic was his remembrance of the purity of the blankets, the spotlessness of the sheets. At last words came, and he said, "The beds of the Empedocle! They are celestial. One spends one night there, and one remembers it for ever!"

2

Sir Edwin and Lady Peaslake were sitting in the Temple of Juno Lacinia and leaning back on a Doric column—which is a form of architecture neither comfortable as a cushion nor adequate as a parasol. They were as cross as it was possible for good-tempered people to be. Their lunch at the dirty hotel had disagreed with them, and the wine that was included with it had made them heavy. The drive to the temples had joggled them up and one of the horses had fallen down. They had been worried to buy flowers, figs, shells, sulphur crystals, and new-laid antiquities, they had been pestered by the beggars and bitten by the fleas. Had they been Sicilian-born they would have known what was the matter, and lying down on the grass, on the flowers, on the road, on the temple steps—on anything, would have sunk at once into that marvellous midday sleep which is fed by light and warmth and air. But being northern-born they did not know—nor could they have slept if they had.

"Where on earth are Harold and Mildred?" asked Lady

Peaslake. She did not want to know, but she was restless with fatigue.

"I can't think why we couldn't all keep together," said Sir Edwin.

"You see, papa," said Lilian, "Mildred wants to see the temples that have tumbled down as well as these, and Harold is taking her."

"He's a poor guide," said Sir Edwin. "Really, Lilian, I begin to think that Harold is rather stupid. Of course I'm very fond of him, he's a thoroughly nice fellow, honest as the day, and he's good-looking and well-made—I value all that extremely—but after all brains are something. He is so slow—so lamentably slow—at catching one's meaning."

"But, father dear," replied Lilian, who was devoted to Harold, "he's tired."

"I am tired, too, but I can keep my wits about me. He seems in a dream; when the horse fell he never attempted to get down and sit on its head. It might have kicked us to pieces. He's as helpless as a baby with beggars. He's too idle to walk properly; three times he trod on my toes, and he fell up the temple steps and broke your camera. He's blind, he's deaf—I may say he's dumb, too. Now this is pure stupidity, and I believe that stupidity can be cured just like anything else, if you make the effort."

Lilian continued the defence, and repeated that he had hardly slept for three nights.

"Ridiculous. Why can't he sleep? It's stupidity again. An effort is needed—that is all. He can cure it if he chooses."

"He does know how to cure it," said Lilian, "but you thought—and so did he—that—"

She produced an explosion of ill-temper in her father, which was quite unprecedented.

"I'm very much annoyed with him. He has no right to play tricks with his brain. And what's more I am annoyed with Mildred, too."

"Oh, father!"

"She encourages him in his silliness—makes him think he's clever. I'm extremely annoyed, and I shall speak to them both, as soon as I get the opportunity."

Lilian was surprised and pained. Her father had never blamed anyone so strongly before. She did not know—indeed, he did not know himself—that neither the indigestion nor the heat, nor the beggars, nor the fleas, were the real cause of his irritation. He was annoyed because he failed to understand.

Mildred he could pardon; she had merely been indiscreet, and as she had gone in for being clever when quite a child such things were to be expected from her. Besides, he shrewdly guessed that, although she might sometimes indulge in fancies, yet when it came to action she could be trusted to behave in a thoroughly conventional manner. Thank heaven! she was seldom guilty of confusing books with life.

But Harold did not escape so easily, for Sir Edwin absolutely failed to understand him, for the first time. Hitherto he had believed that he understood him perfectly. Harold's character was so simple; it consisted of little more than two things, the power to love and the desire for truth, and Sir Edwin, like many a wiser thinker, concluded that what was not complicated could not be mysterious. Similarly, because Harold's intellect did not devote itself to the acquisition of facts or to the elaboration of emotions, he had concluded that he was stupid. But now, just because he could send himself to sleep by an unexplained device, he spied a mystery in him, and was aggrieved.

He was right. There was a mystery, and a great one. Yet it was trivial and unimportant in comparison with the power to love and the desire for truth—things which he saw daily, and, because he had seen daily, ignored.

His meditations took shape, and he flung this challenge at the unknown: "I'll have no queerness in a son-in-law!" He was sitting in a Doric temple with a sea of gold and purple flowers tossing over its ruins, and his eyes looked out to the moving, living sea of blue. But his ears caught neither the echo of the past nor the cry of the present, for he was suddenly paralysed with the fear that after all he had not done so well for his daughter as he hoped.

Meanwhile, Mildred, at the other end of the line of

temples, was concentrated on the echoes of the past. Harold was even more inattentive to them than usual. He was very sleepy, and would only say that the flowers were rather jolly and that the sea looked in prime condition if only one could try it. To the magnificence and pathos of the ruined Temple of Zeus he was quite dead. He only valued it as a chair.

"Suppose you go back and rest in the carriage?" said Mildred, with a shade of irritation in her voice.

He shook his head and sat yawning at the sea, thinking how wonderfully the water would fizz up over his body and how marvellously cold would be the pale blue pools among the rocks. Mildred endeavoured to recall him to higher pleasures by reading out of her Baedeker.

She turned round to explain something and he was gone.

At first she thought it was a mild practical joke, such as they did not disdain to play on each other; then that he had changed his mind and gone back to the carriage. But the custodian at the gate said that no one had gone out, and she returned to search the ruins.

The Temple of Zeus—the third greatest temple of the Greek world—has been overthrown by an earthquake, and now resembles a ruined mountain rather than a ruined building. There is a well-made path, which makes a circuit over the mass, and is amply sufficient for all rational tourists. Those who wish to see more have to go mountaineering over gigantic columns and pilasters, and squeeze their way through passes of cut stone.

Harold was not on the path, and Mildred was naturally annoyed. Few things are more vexatious for a young lady than to go out with an escort and return without. It argues remissness on her own part quite as much as on that of her swain.

Having told the custodian to stop Harold if he tried to come out, she began a systematic hunt. She saw an enormous block of stone from which she would get a good view of the chaos, and, wading through the gold and purple flowers that separated her from it, scrambled up.

On its further side were two fallen columns, lying close together, and the space that separated them had been silted

up and was covered with flowers. On it, as on a bed, lay Harold, fast asleep, his cheek pressed against the hot stone of one of the columns, and his breath swaying a little blue iris that had rooted in one of its cracks.

The indignant Mildred was about to wake him but, seeing the dark line that still showed beneath his eyes, stayed her voice. Besides, he looked so picturesque, and she herself, sitting on the stone watching him, must look picturesque, too. She knew that there was no one to look at her, but from her mind the idea of a spectator was never absent for a moment. It was the price she had paid for becoming cultivated.

Sleep has little in common with death, to which men have compared it. Harold's limbs lay in utter relaxation, but he was tingling with life, glorying in the bounty of the earth and the warmth of the sun, and the little blue flower bent and fluttered like a tree in a gale. The light beat upon his eyelids and the grass leaves tickled his hair, but he slept on, and the lines faded out of his face as he grasped the greatest gift that the animal life can offer. And Mildred watched him, thinking what a picture might be made of the scene.

Then her meditation changed. "What a wonderful thing is sleep! How I would like to know what is passing through his brain as he lies there. He looks so peaceful and happy. Poor boy! When he is awake he often looks worried. I think it is because he can't follow the conversation, though I try to make it simple, don't I? Yet some things he sees quite quickly. And I'm sure he has lots of imagination, if only he would let it come out. At all events I love him very much, and I believe I shall love him more, for it seems to me that there will be more in him than I expected."

She suddenly remembered his "dodge" for going to sleep, and her interest and her agitation increased.

"Perhaps, even now, he imagines himself to be someone else. What a marvellous idea! What will he say if he wakes? How mysterious everything is if only one could realize it. Harold, of all people, who seemed so ordinary—though, of course, I love him. But I am going to love him more."

She longed to reach him in his sleep, to guide the course

of his dreams, to tell him that she approved of him and loved him. She had read of such a thing. In accordance with the advice of the modern spiritualistic novel she pressed her hands on her temples and made a mental effort. At the end of five minutes she had a slight headache and had effected nothing. He had not moved, he had not even sighed in his sleep, and the little blue flower still bent and fluttered, bent and fluttered in the regular onslaught of his breath.

The awakening, when it did come, found her thoughts unprepared. They had wandered to earthly things, as thoughts will do at times. At the supreme moment, she was wondering whether her stockings would last till she got back to England. And Harold, all unobserved, had woken up, and the little blue flower had quivered and was still. He had woken up because he was no longer tired, woken up to find himself in the midst of beautiful flowers, beautiful columns, beautiful sunshine, with Mildred, whom he loved, sitting by him. Life at that moment was too delicious for him to speak.

Mildred saw all the romance melting away; he looked so natural and so happy; there was nothing mysterious about him after all. She waited for him to speak.

Ten minutes passed, and still he had not spoken. His eyes were fixed steadily upon her, and she became nervous and uncomfortable. Why would he not speak? She determined to break the silence herself, and at last, in a tremulous voice, called him by his name.

The result was overwhelming, for his answer surpassed all that her wildest flights of fancy had imagined, and fulfilled beyond all dreaming her cravings for the unimagined and the unseen.

He said, "I've lived here before."

Mildred was choking. She could not reply.

He was quite calm. "I always knew it," he said, "but it was too far down in me. Now that I've slept here it is at the top. I've lived here before."

"Oh, Harold!" she gasped.

"Mildred!" he cried, in sudden agitation, "are you going to believe it—that I have lived before—lived such a

wonderful life—I can't remember it yet—lived it here? It's no good answering to please me."

Mildred did not hesitate a moment. She was carried away by the magnificence of the idea, the glory of the scene and the earnest beauty of his eyes, and in an ecstasy of rapture she cried, "I do believe."

"Yes," said Harold, "you do. If you hadn't believed now you never would have. I wonder what would have happened to me."

"More, more!" cried Mildred, who was beginning to find her words. "How could you smile? How could you be so calm? O marvellous idea! That your soul has lived before! I should run about, shriek, sing. Marvellous! Overwhelming! How can you be so calm? The mystery! And the poetry, oh, the poetry! How can you support it? Oh, speak again!"

"I don't see any poetry," said Harold. "It just has happened, that's all. I lived here before."

"You are a Greek! You have been a Greek! Oh, why do you not die when you remember it?"

"Why should I? I might have died if you hadn't believed me. It's nothing to remember."

"Aren't you shattered, exhausted?"

"No: I'm awfully fit. I know that you must have believed me now or never. Remembering has made me so strong. I see myself to the bottom now."

"Marvellous! Marvellous!" she repeated.

He leapt up onto the stone beside her. "You've believed me. That's the only thing that's marvellous. The rest's nothing." He flung his arms round her, and embraced her—an embrace very different from the decorous peck by which he had marked the commencement of their engagement. Mildred, clinging to him, murmured "I do believe you," and they gazed without flinching into each other's eyes.

Harold broke the silence, saying, "How very happy life is going to be."

But Mildred was still wrapped in the glamour of the past.

"More! More!" she cried. "Tell me more! What was the city like—and the people in it? Who were you?"

"I don't remember yet—and it doesn't matter."

"Harold, keep nothing from me! I will not breathe a word. I will be silent as the grave."

"I shall keep nothing. As soon as I remember things, I will tell them. And why should you tell no one? There's nothing wrong."

"They would not believe."

"I shouldn't mind. I only minded about you."

"Still—I think it is best a secret. Will you agree?"

"Yes—for you may be right. It's nothing to do with the others. And it wouldn't interest them."

"And think—think hard who you were."

"I do just remember this—that I was a lot greater then than I am now. I'm greater now than I was this morning, I think—but then!"

"I knew it! I knew it from the first! I have known it always. You have been a king—a king! You ruled here when Greece was free!"

"Oh! I don't mean that—at least I don't remember it. And was I a Greek?"

"A Greek!" she stammered indignantly. "Of course you were a Greek, a Greek of Acragas."

"Oh, I daresay I was. Anyhow it doesn't matter. To be believed! Just fancy! You've believed me. You needn't have, but you did. How happy life is!"

He was in an ecstasy of happiness in which all time except the present had passed away. But Mildred had a tiny thrill of disappointment. She revered the past as well.

"What do you mean then, Harold, when you say you were greater?"

"I mean I was better, I saw better, heard better, thought better."

"Oh, I see," said Mildred, fingering her watch. Harold, in his most prosaic manner, said they must not keep the carriage waiting, and they regained the path.

The tide of rapture had begun to ebb away from Mildred. His generalities bored her. She longed for detail, vivid detail, that should make the dead past live. It was of no interest to her that he had once been greater.

"Don't you remember the temples?"

"No."

"Nor the people?"

"Not yet."

"Don't you at all recollect what century you lived in?"

"How on earth am I to know?" he laughed.

Mildred was silent. She had hoped he would have said the fifth B.C.—the period in which she was given to understand that the Greek race was at its prime. He could tell her nothing; he did not even seem interested, but began talking about Mrs Popham's present.

At last she thought of a question he might be able to answer. "Did you also love better?" she asked in a low voice.

"I loved very differently." He was holding back the brambles to prevent them from tearing her dress as he spoke. One of the thorns scratched him on the hand. "Yes, I loved better too," he continued, watching the little drops of blood swell out.

"What do you mean? Tell me more."

"I keep saying I don't know any more. It is fine to remember that you've been better than you are. You know, Mildred, I'm much more worth you than I've ever been before. I do believe I am fairly great."

"Oh!" said Mildred, who was getting bored.

They had reached the Temple of Concord, and he retrieved his tactlessness by saying, "After all I'm too happy to go back yet. I love you too much. Let's rest again."

They sat down on the temple steps, and at the end of ten minutes Mildred had forgotten all her little disappointments, and only remembered this mysterious sleep, and his marvellous awakening. Then, at the very height of her content, she felt, deep down within her, the growth of a new wonder.

"Harold, how is it you can remember?"

"The lid can't have been put on tight last time I was sent out."

"And that," she murmured, "might happen to anyone."

"I should think it has—to lots. They only want reminding."

"It might happen to me."

"Yes."

"I too," she said slowly, "have often not been able to sleep. Oh, Harold, is it possible?"

"What?"

"That I have lived before."

"Of course it is."

"Oh, Harold, I too may remember."

"I hope you will. It's wonderful to remember a life better than this one. I can't explain how happy it makes you: there's no need to try or to worry. It'll come if it is coming."

"Oh, Harold! I am remembering!"

He grasped her hands crying, "Remember only what is good. Remember that you were greater than you are now! I would give my life to help you."

"You have helped me," she cried, quivering with excitement. "All fits together. I remember all. It is not the first time I have known you. We have met before. Oh, how often have I dimly felt it! I felt it when I watched you sleeping—but then I didn't understand. Our love is not new. Here in this very place when there was a great city full of gorgeous palaces and snow-white marble temples, full of poets and music, full of marvellous pictures, full of sculptures of which we can hardly dream, full of noble men and noble thoughts, bounded by the sapphire sea, covered by the azure sky, here in the wonderful youth of Greece did I speak to you and know you and love you. We walked through the marble streets, we led solemn sacrifices, I armed you for the battle, I welcomed you from the victory. The centuries have parted us, but not for ever. Harold, I too have lived at Acragas!"

Round the corner swept the Peaslakes' carriage, full of excited occupants. He had only time to whisper in her ear, "No, Mildred darling, you have not."

3

There was a dirty little sitting-room in the Albergo Empedocle, and Mildred was sitting there after dinner waiting

for her father. He had met some friends at the temples, and he and she had agreed to pay them a visit. It was a cold night, and the room smelt of mustiness and lamp-oil. The only other occupant was a stiff-backed lady who had found a three-year-old number of *Home Chat*. Lady Peaslake, Lilian and Harold were all with Sir Edwin, hunting for the key of his Gladstone bag. Till it was found he could not go out with her, for all his clean collars were inside.

Mildred was thoroughly miserable. After long torture she had confessed to herself that she was self-deceived. She had never lived in Acragas. She remembered nothing. All her glowing description was pure imagination, the result of sentimental excitement. For instance, she had spoken of "snow-white marble temples". That was nonsense, sheer nonsense. She had seen the remains of those temples, and they were built of porous stone, not marble. And she remembered now that the Sicilian Greeks always covered their temples with coloured stucco. At first she had tried to thrust such objections away and to believe that she had found a truth to which archaeology must yield. But what pictures or music did she remember? When had she buckled on Harold's armour, and what was it like? Was it probable that they had led a sacrifice together? The visions, always misty, faded away. She had never lived in Acragas.

But that was only the beginning of her mortification. Harold had proved her wrong. He had seen that she was a shifty, shallow hypocrite. She had not dared to be alone with him since her exposure. She had never looked at him and had hardly spoken. He seemed cheerful, but what was he thinking? He would never forgive her.

Had she only realized that it is only hypocrites who cannot forgive hypocrisy, whereas those who search for truth are too conscious of the maze to be hard on others—then the bitter flow of her thoughts might have been stopped and the catastrophe averted. But it was not conceivable to her that he should forgive—or that she should accept forgiveness, for to her forgiveness meant a triumph of one person over another.

So she went still further towards sorrow. She felt that

Harold had scored off her, and she determined to make the score as little as she could. Was he really as sincere as he had seemed? Sincere he might be, but he might be self-deceived even as she was. That would explain all. He too had been moved by the beauty of the scene, by its wonderful associations. Worn out, he had fallen asleep, and, conscious perhaps that she was in a foolish sympathetic state, had indulged in a fit of imagination on awaking. She had fallen in with it, and they had encouraged each other to fresh deeds of folly. All was clear. And how was she to hide it from her father?

Each time she restated the question it took a more odious form. Even though she believed Harold had been as foolish as herself, she was still humiliated before him, for her folly had been revealed, and his had not. The last and worst thought pressed itself upon her. Was he really as simple as he seemed? Had he not been trying to deceive her? He had been so careful in speaking of his old life: would only say that he had been "greater", "better"—never gave one single detail by which archaeology might prove him wrong. It was very clever of him. He had never lost his head once. Jealous of her superior acquirements, he had determined to put her to ridicule. He had laid a cunning bait and she had swallowed it. How cleverly he had lured her on to make the effort of recollection! How patiently he had heard her rapturous speech, in order that he might prove her silly to the core! How diabolically worded was his retort—"No, Mildred darling, you have not lived at Acragas." It implied: "I will be kind to you and treat you well when you are my wife, but recollect that you are silly, emotional, hypocritical; that your pretensions to superiority are gone for ever; that I have proved you inferior to me, even as all women are inferior to all men. Dear Mildred, you are a fool!"

"Intolerable! Intolerable!" she gasped to herself. "If only I could expose him! I never dreamt it of him! I was never on my guard!"

Harold came quickly into the room, and she was at once upon the defensive. He told her that her father was ready and she got up to go, her ears aching in expectation of some taunt. It came—a very subtle one. She heard him say,

"Kiss me before you go," and felt his hands grasp her elbows.

"No!" she said, shrinking from his touch, and frowning towards the stiff-backed lady, who sat a little stiffer.

"You'll have to," was his reply, and catching hold of her—he was very strong—he lifted her right above his head, and broke the feathers in her hat against the ceiling. He never completed his embrace, for she shrieked aloud, inarticulate with passion, and the voice of Sir Edwin was heard saying, "Come, come, Harold, my boy—come, come!"

He set her down, and white with rage she hissed at him, "I never thought I should live to find you both charlatan and cad," and left the room.

Had she stayed, she would have been gratified at the prompt effect of her rebuke. Harold stood where she left him, dumb with misery, and then, without further warning, began to cry. He cried without shame or restraint, not even turning his head or covering his face with his hands, but letting the tears run down his cheeks till they caught in his moustache, or dropped onto the floor. Sir Edwin, not unmoved, stood before him for a moment, stammering as he tried to think of something that should both rebuke and console.

But the world has forgotten what to say to men of twenty-four who cry. Sir Edwin followed his daughter, giving a despairing look at Lady Peaslake and Lilian as he departed.

Lady Peaslake took up the line of behaving as if nothing had happened, and began talking in a high voice about the events of the day. Harold did not attempt to leave the room, but still stood near the table, sobbing and gulping for breath.

Lilian, moved by a more human impulse, tremulously asked him why he cried, and at this point the stiff-backed lady, who had sat through everything, gathered up her skirts as if she had seen a beetle, and slipped from the room.

"I cry because I'm unhappy: because Mildred's angry with me."

"Er—er," said Lady Peaslake, "I'm sure that it would be Mildred's wish that you should stop."

"I thought at dinner," he gasped, "that she was not pleased. Why? Why? Nothing had happened. Nothing but happiness, I mean. The best way, I thought, of showing

I love her is to kiss her, and that will make her understand again. You know, she understood everything."

"Oh yes," said Lady Peaslake. "Look," she added to divert him, "how do you like my new embroidery?"

"It's hideous—perfectly hideous!" was his vigorous reply.

"Well, here is a particular gentleman!" said good-natured Lady Peaslake. "Why, it's Liberty!"

"Frightful," said Harold. He had stopped crying. His face was all twisted with pain, but such a form of expressing emotion is fairly suitable for men, and Lady Peaslake felt easier.

But he returned to Mildred. "She called me a cad and a charlatan."

"Oh, never mind!" said Lilian.

"I may be a cad. I never did quite see what a cad is, and no one ever quite explained to me. But a charlatan! Why did she call me a charlatan? I can't quite see what I've done."

He began to walk up and down the little room. Lady Peaslake gently suggested a stroll, but he took no notice and kept murmuring, "Charlatan."

"Why are pictures like this allowed?" he suddenly cried. He had stopped in front of a coloured print in which the martyrdom of St Agatha was depicted with all the fervour that incompetence could command.

"It's only a saint," said Lady Peaslake, placidly raising her head.

"How disgusting—and how ugly!"

"Yes, very. It's Roman Catholic."

He turned away, shuddering, and began his everlasting question—"Why did she call me a charlatan?"

Lady Peaslake felt compelled to say, "You see, Harold, you annoyed her, and when people are annoyed they will say anything. I know it by myself."

"But a charlatan! I know for certain that she understands me. Only this afternoon I told her—"

"Oh, yes," said Lady Peaslake.

"Told her that I had lived before—lived here over two thousand years ago, she thinks."

"Harold! My dear Harold! What nonsense are you talking?" Lady Peaslake had risen from her chair.

"Over two thousand years ago, when the place had another name."

"Good heavens; he is mad!"

"Mildred didn't think so. It's she who matters. Lilian, do you believe me?"

"No," faltered Lilian, edging towards the door.

He smiled, rather contemptuously.

"Now, Harold," said Lady Peaslake, "go and lie down, there's a good boy. You want rest. Mildred will call you charlatan with reason if you say such silly, such wicked things—good gracious me! He's fainting! Lilian! Water from the dining-room! Oh, what has happened? We were all so happy this morning."

The stiff-backed lady re-entered the room, accompanied by a thin little man with a black beard.

"Are you a doctor?" cried Lady Peaslake.

He was not, but he helped them to lay Harold on the sofa. He had not really fainted, for he was talking continually.

"You might have killed me," he said to Lady Peaslake, "you have said such an awful thing. You mean she thinks I never lived before. I know you're wrong, but it nearly kills me if you even say it. I have lived before—such a wonderful life. You will hear—Mildred will say it again. She won't like talking about it, but she'll say it if I want her to. That will save me from—from—from being a charlatan. Where is Mildred?"

"Hush!" said the little man.

"I have lived before—I have lived before, haven't I? Do you believe me?"

"Yes," said the little man.

"You lie," said Harold. "Now I've only to see people and I can tell. Where is Mildred?"

"You must come to bed."

"I don't speak or move till she comes."

So he lay silent and motionless on the sofa, while they stood around him whispering.

Mildred returned in a very different mood. A few ques-

tions from her father, followed by a few grave words of rebuke, had brought her to a sober mind. She was terribly in fault; she had nourished Harold's insanity, first by encouraging it, then by rebuffing it. Sir Edwin severely blamed her disordered imagination, and bade her curb it; its effects might be disastrous, and he told her plainly that unless Harold entirely regained his normal condition he would not permit the marriage to take place. She acknowledged her fault, and returned determined to repair it; she was full of pity and contrition, but at the same time she was very matter-of-fact.

He heard them return and rushed to meet her, and she rushed to meet him. They met in the long passage, where it was too dark to see each other's faces.

"Harold," she said hurriedly, "I said two dreadful words to you. Will you forgive me?"

She tried to touch him, but he pushed her off with his arm, and said, "Come to the light."

The landlord appeared with a lamp. Harold took it and held it up to Mildred's face.

"Don't!" she said feebly.

"Harold!" called Lady Peaslake. "Come back!"

"Look at me!" said Harold.

"Don't!" said Mildred and shut her eyes.

"Open your eyes!"

She opened them, and saw his. Then she screamed and called out to her father: "Take him away! I'm frightened. He's mad! He's mad!"

Harold said quite calmly, "This is the end."

"Yes," said Sir Edwin, nervously taking the lamp, "now it's bed-time."

"If you think I'm mad," said Harold, "I am mad. That's all it means."

"Go to bed, Harold, to please me."

"Six people say I'm mad. Is there no one, no one, no one who understands?" He stumbled up the passage as if he were blind, and they heard him calling, "Tommy."

In the sitting-room he caught his foot in the carpet and fell. When they picked him up, he was murmuring:

"Harold can't stand up against six. What is Harold? Harold. Harold. Harold. Who is Harold?"

"Stop him!" cried the little man. "That's bad! He mustn't do that."

They shook him and tried to overtalk him, but he still went on. "What is Harold? Six letters. H.A.R.O.L.D. Harold. Harold. Harold."

"He's fainted again!" cried Lady Peaslake. "Oh, what has happened?"

"It's a sunstroke," said Sir Edwin. "He caught it through sleeping in the sun this afternoon. Mildred has told me all about it."

They took him up and carried him to his room.

As they were undressing him, he revived, and began to talk in a curious, thick voice.

"I was the last to go off the sofa, wasn't I? I counted five go—the wisest first—and I counted ten kinds of wine for certain before I slipped. Your conjurers are poor—but I liked the looks of the flute-girl."

"Go away, dears," said Lady Peaslake. "It's no good our stopping."

"Yes, I liked the flute-girl; is the porter I gave you last week a success?"

"Yes," said the little man, whose cue it was always to agree.

"Well, he'd better help carry me home, I don't want to walk. Nothing elaborate, you know. Just four porters for the litter, and half a dozen to carry the lights. That won't put you out."

"I'm afraid you must stop here for the night."

"Very well, if you can't send me back. Oh, the wine! The wine! I have got a head."

"What is he saying?" asked Mildred through the door.

"Is that the flute-girl?" said Harold, raising an interested eye.

Sir Edwin laid hold of him, but he was quite passive, and did not attempt to move. He allowed himself to be undressed, but did not assist them, and when his pyjamas were handed to him he laughed feebly and asked what they were for.

"I want to look out of the window." They took him to it, hoping that the fresh air would recall his wits, and held him tight in case he tried to leap out. There was no moon, and the expanse of trees and fields was dark and indistinguishable.

"There are no lights moving in the streets," said Harold. "It must be very late. I forgot the windows were so high. How odd that there are no lights in the streets!"

"Yes, you're too late," said the little man. "You won't mind sleeping here. It's too far to go back."

"Too far—too far to go back," he murmured. "I am so sleepy, in this room I could sleep for ever. Too far—too far—oh, the wine!"

They put him into the bed, and he went off at once, and his breathing was calm and very regular.

"A sunstroke," whispered Sir Edwin. "Perhaps a good night's rest—I shall sit up."

But next morning Harold had forgotten how to put on his clothes, and when he tried to speak he could not pronounce his words.

4

They had a terrible scene with him at the Girgenti railway station next morning when the train came in. However, they got him onto it at last, and by the evening he was back at Palermo and had seen the English doctor. He was sent back to England with a keeper, by sea, while the Peaslakes returned by Naples, as soon as Mildred's health permitted.

Long before Harold reached the asylum his speech had become absolutely unintelligible; indeed, by the time he arrived at it, he hardly ever uttered a sound of any kind. His case attracted some attention, and some experiments were made, which proved that he was not unfamiliar with Greek dress, and had some knowledge of the alphabet.

But he was quite blank when spoken to, either in ancient or modern Greek, and when he was given a Greek book he did not know what to do with it, and began tearing out the pages.

On these grounds the doctors have concluded that Harold merely thinks he is a Greek, and that it is his mania to behave as he supposes that a Greek behaved, relying on such elementary knowledge as he acquired at school.

But I firmly believe that he has been a Greek—nay, that he is a Greek, drawn by recollection back into his previous life. He cannot understand our speech because we have lost his pronunciation. And if I could look at the matter dispassionately—which I cannot—I should only rejoice at what has happened. For the greater has replaced the less, and he is living the life he knew to be greater than the life he lived with us. And I also believe that if things had happened otherwise he might be living that greater life among us, instead of among friends of two thousand years ago, whose names we have never heard. That is why I shall never forgive Mildred Peaslake as long as I live.

Most certainly he is not unhappy. His own thoughts are sweet to him, and he looks out of the window hour after hour and sees things in the sky and sea that we have forgotten. But of his fellow men he seems utterly unconscious. He never speaks to us, nor hears us when we speak. He does not know that we exist.

So at least I thought till my last visit. I am the only one who still goes to see him; the others have given it up. Last time, when I entered the room, he got up and kissed me on the cheek. I think he knows that I understand him and love him: at all events it comforts me to think so.

The Purple Envelope

On the morning of his twenty-first birthday Howard shaved himself with particular care. He scraped his fat cheeks till they shone and smarted, he pursued an imaginary beard far down his neck, and then, taking hold of his small yellow moustache, he combed it and waxed it and pulled it till it was as straight as a ruler and as sharp as a needle.

"After all, I don't look such an ass," he thought. For he had a very proper wish to be handsome and terrible and manlike, now that he was a man. It was a cold morning, and the little shaving-glass became coated with his breath.

The inexorable, he read. Someone had traced those words upon the glass, and now they started out in clearness against the misty background. "Prosy beast!" thought Howard, recognizing the finger of some under-housemaid. He rubbed the glass clean, admired himself again, and then went to the open window to look at the view, which had always seemed to him the most beautiful in the world.

There was no garden on this side. The house looked straight into meadows, and beyond the meadows woods began, running uninterruptedly towards the sea. Somewhere in those woods was the river, and Howard fancied he could just make out the great pool, shining through a gray tangle of leafless trees. But what he liked best were the rabbits, who were hopping in the meadows by dozens, and even strolling along the gravel path. "Oh, it is a shame, it is!" he murmured wrathfully. For his uncle would allow no wild thing to be killed—not a rabbit, no, nor a hare, nor a pheasant, partridge, rook, sparrow or butterfly. And Howard loved to take life, as all those do who are really in touch with nature.

He was a kind comfortable youth, singularly free from envy and uncharitableness. But he did wish that he was