

H. Rider Haggard

Mary of Marion Isle

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Генри Райдер Хаггард Mary of Marion Isle

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Аннотация

When the ship that Andrew and Clara are on, en route to Oceania, founders after striking an iceberg in the south Indian Ocean, and Andrew fetches up, with his manservant, on the desolate Marion Island, around 1,500 miles southeast of the Cape of Good Hope. It is there that Andrew finds the true love of his life, Mary, who had been shipwrecked on the island some 15 years before and who had been living there alone.

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Chapter I

Lord Atterton

«I think, Clara, that your cousin Andrew is a damned young fool. You must excuse the language, but on the whole I consider him the damnedest young fool with whom I ever had to do.»

Thus in cold and deliberate tones did Lord Atterton express himself concerning Andrew West, the only son of his deceased brother. Clara Maunsell, his sister's child who was also an orphan, studied her uncle for a while before she answered, which there was no need for her to do at once as he was busy lighting a cigar. An observant onlooker might have thought that she was thinking things out and making up her mind what line to take about the said Andrew West.

These two, uncle and niece, presented a somewhat curious contrast there on that September day in the richly furnished but yet uncomfortable library of Lord Atterton's great house in Cavendish Square. He was a medium-sized, stout man of about sixty-eight years of age. His big, well-shaped head resembled that of a tonsured monk, inasmuch as it was completely bald save for an encircling fringe of white hair. His face was clean-cut and able, with rather a long nose and a fierce, determined mouth remarkable for the thinness of the lips and absence of any curves. There was much character in that mouth; indeed, his

whole aspect gave an impression of cold force. «Successful man» was written all over him.

The niece was a young lady of about four-and-twenty, of whom at first sight one would instinctively say, «How pretty she is, and how neat!»

In fact, she was both. Small in build but perfectly proportioned, fair in complexion with just the right amount of colour, with crisp auburn hair carefully dressed, and steady, innocent-looking blue eyes, a well-formed mouth and a straight little nose, she was the very embodiment of prettiness as distinguished from beauty, while in neatness none could surpass her. Her quiet-coloured dress suited her to perfection, no one had ever seen that auburn coiffure disordered even in a gale of wind, her boots and gloves were marvels of their sort, and even the pearl drops on the necklace she wore seemed to arrange themselves with a mathematical exactitude. «Little Tidy» they had called her in the nursery, and «Clever Clara» at school, and now that she was grown up these attributes continued to distinguish her.

In a way there was about her more than a hint of her uncle, Lord Atterton. Between a young lady and this old man, especially as the one might be said to represent decorated ice-cream and the other something very much on the boil, there could be no real resemblance. And yet the set of their mouths and the air of general ability common to both of them, did give them a certain similitude, due no doubt to affinity of blood.

Lord Atterton finished lighting his cigar, very much on one

side, and Clara finished her reflections, which apparently urged her to a course of non-committal.

«Andrew,» she said in her light, pleasant and evenly balanced voice, «is just Andrew and there is no one else quite like him.»

«Why not say that an ass is just an ass and that there is no other ass quite so much an ass?» snapped her uncle, biting heavily at the end of the cigar.

«Because, Uncle, I do not consider that Andrew is an ass. I think, on the contrary, that he has in him the makings of a very clever man.»

«Clever! Do you call it clever for an inexperienced young fellow to take up all these Radical, not to say Socialistic ideas which, if ever they are put into practice, – thank God, that will not be in my time! – would utterly destroy the class to which he belongs? Has it ever occurred to you, Clara, that your cousin Algernon is my only child and that his lungs are very delicate? If anything happened to him,» he added with a twitch of the face, «Andrew must succeed to the title?»

She nodded her head.

«Naturally that has occurred to me, Uncle, but I see no reason to suppose that anything of the sort will happen. The doctors say they are sure this new treatment will succeed. Also, Algernon might marry and leave children.»

«The doctors! I have no faith in doctors and I know our family weakness. Look at me, the last of five, all of them taken off with something to do with the lungs. As for marrying, Algernon will

never marry. Also, if he did, he would have no children. I believe that one day that mad hatter of a fellow, Andrew, will be Lord Atterton,» he said with emphasis, and, turning, threw the ruined cigar into the fire which burned upon the hearth although the day was mild.

«It's a hard thing,» he went on with a kind of choke in the throat, «to be successful in everything else – make a large fortune, come into a title and the rest – and yet not to have a healthy son to inherit it all. And if Algernon goes – oh! if he goes —!»

Again Clara considered for a moment and appeared to come to the conclusion that the moment was one when it would be right and proper to exhibit sympathy, if possible without causing alarm, as ill-judged doses of that quality often do.

«Don't fret, Uncle,» she said softly. «I know how you worry about all these things and it makes me worry too. Often I lie awake at night and think about it.»

«So do I, and listen to Algernon coughing in the room above.»

«Yes, but there is really no need for you to be anxious. He is ever so much better. Oh! my dear Uncle, I implore you – there, you know what I mean although I am not good at expressing myself,» and furtively wiping her eyes with a very clean and beautifully embroidered handkerchief, she advanced to him and laid her cool lips upon his brow.

«Thank you, my dear, thank you,» he said. «I know you have a good heart and feel for me, which is more than anyone else

does. I only wish you had been —»

«Hush!» said Clara, stepping back lightly, «here they come.»

As she spoke the door was thrown open somewhat violently and two young men entered the room. Except in age (they were both twenty-one) they differed strangely. The first, Andrew, who had outstepped his cousin, was tall and lanky and as yet comparatively unformed, with thin, delicate hands and small feet, although no one would have guessed this from the boots it pleased him to wear. He was not good-looking; for that his face was too irregular, but a singular charm pervaded him. It shone in the vivacity of his large dark eyes, which now were full of fire and now seemed to go to sleep, and was reflected from his whole countenance that was of a remarkable mobility and seemed to respond to every thought which flitted across his mind. For the rest his waving brown hair was over long and unkempt and his clothes were shocking. A dilapidated velveteen coat that might have come second-hand from the wardrobe of a deceased artist, and a red tie, frayed and faded, that had managed to slip up over one point of a limp calico collar, were peculiarities most likely to attract immediate attention, although there were others which would have paid for research, such as a rusty steel watch-chain from which hung some outlandish charms, and the absence of two waistcoat buttons. Yet with it all no one of any class could for a moment have mistaken his standing, since Andrew West was one of those men who would have looked a gentleman in a sack and nothing else.

His cousin Algernon was different indeed. To begin with, his attire was faultless, made by the best tailor in London and apparently put on new that moment. Within this perfect outer casing was a short, pale-eyed, lack-lustre young man with straight, sandy hair and no eyebrows, one whose hectic flush and moist hands betrayed the mortal ailment with which he was stricken, a poor, commonplace lad who, loving the world and thirsting for its pleasures, was yet doomed to bid it and them an early farewell.

The two were arguing as they came up the stairs, Andrew in clear, ringing tones, and Algernon in a husky voice to which low little coughs played the part of commas and full stops. So loudly did they talk that Lord Atterton and Clara could hear what they said, for the massive mahogany doors stood ajar.

«I tell you, Algy, and mind you, I am a medical man, or shall be next week, that you drink too much of the family whisky. It has poisoned thousands and is poisoning you, although I dare say yours comes out of the best vat, not that which has made millionaires of West & Co., and a peer of your grandfather —» (here that unwilling eavesdropper, Lord Atterton, snorted and muttered something that Clara could not catch). «Claret should be your tippie, and perhaps a couple of glasses of port after dinner, no more.»

«Claret is poor stuff to lean on when one feels low, Andrew; besides, I am not fool enough to drink West's whisky; I know too much about it, for you see I'm in the business. Anyway, a

short life and a merry one for me,» replied Algernon with a husky chuckle.

Then they entered the room.

«Would you be so good as to shut that door, Andrew,» said his uncle icily.

«If you wish, Uncle, though it should be left open for the room is far too hot, – Ah! I thought so,» he added, glancing at a thermometer which hung upon the wall, «over seventy-two, and no wonder when you have a fire upon a mild September afternoon, and everything shut.»

«I hate cold,» interrupted Algernon.

«I dare say,» replied Andrew. «Most of us do hate what does us good. As a matter of fact, you should live in a low temperature with all the windows open.»

«Perhaps, Andrew,» said Lord Atterton, puffing himself out like a turkey cock, «you will be so good as to allow me and Algernon to regulate our house in our own way?»

«Certainly, Uncle. It isn't my business, is it? Only I wouldn't if I were your medical adviser. Where there is a tendency to a pulmonary weakness,» he added rather sententiously, «as in our family,» and he glanced at Algernon, «fresh air is essential.»

«Thank you for that information,» replied his uncle with sarcasm, «but I have already sought advice upon the point from the heads of the profession to which I understand you intend to belong.»

«Then why do you not follow it?» said Andrew coolly,

whereon the discreet Clara, foreseeing trouble, intervened hurriedly with a question.

«Are you really going to be a doctor soon, Andrew?» she asked.

«Yes, I hope so, Clara. I have just gone through my final examination, which is why I'm able to come and look you up, for the first time in six months, I think.»

«And for the last in six years, I hope,» muttered Lord Atterton to himself.

If Andrew overheard him he took no notice, but went on gaily.

«I don't suppose that any of you know what it is to work for twelve or sometimes fourteen hours a day, but if you did, you would understand that it does not leave much time for paying visits. Such amusements are for the idle rich.»

«Indeed,» growled Lord Atterton. «Well, I think I have done as much as that in my time.»

«I think you misunderstand me, Uncle,» went on the imperturbable Andrew. «By work, I mean intellectual research in any branch of knowledge; I do not mean the mere pursuit of wealth in a business.»

Algernon in the background chuckled hoarsely, a faint and swiftly repressed smile flittered over Clara's placid features like a shadow over a still lake, and Lord Atterton turned purple.

«What do you mean, young man?» he gasped.

«Oh! nothing personal,» replied the gay Andrew in the intervals of lighting a cigarette, «but I think you will admit,

Uncle, that there is a difference between, let us say, the skilful advertisement of patent medicines or alcoholic drinks with the assistance of a large office staff, and the mastering of a science by individual application.»

«All that I am inclined to admit at present,» ejaculated Lord Atterton, «is that you are a most offensive young prig.»

«Do you think so?» answered Andrew with an airy smile. «Well, I dare say from your point of view you are right. Everything depends upon how one looks at things, doesn't it, Uncle? Now I hate trade and look upon the drink traffic as a crime against the community, at any rate where the manufacture of spirits is concerned, having seen too much of their effects, and I dare say that these convictions make me intolerant, as all young people are apt to be —»

«And I hate impertinent Pill-boxes, like yourself, Sir,» shouted Lord Atterton.

«Which shows,» replied Andrew calmly, «that intolerance is not peculiar to the young. By 'Pill-boxes' I suppose you symbolize the Medical Profession in general, of which I am informed you are a great supporter where your own ailments and those of your family are concerned. Now if hate, as it is fair to assume, implies disbelief, why do you employ them?»

Lord Atterton tried to answer, but only succeeded in gurgling.

«Such disparagement,» went on Andrew, «seems peculiarly unjust in your case, Uncle, seeing that one of your grandfathers was an eminent 'Pill-box' of the old school whose monographs

upon certain subjects are still studied, and, so far as I am able to judge, infinitely the most respectable and useful man that our family has produced.»

Here Algernon, on a sofa in the background, burst into convulsive screams of laughter which he tried vainly to stifle with a cushion, while the infuriated Lord Atterton rushed from the room uttering language which need not be recorded.

«You've done it this time,» said Algernon, removing the sofa cushion and sitting up. «If there's one thing his Lordship hates» (he always called his father his Lordship behind his back), «it is any allusion to his medical ancestor whose mother was a mill-hand and who dropped his h's.»

«I expect that's where his vigour came from, and if he dropped h's, he picked up lives, hundreds of them; indeed, he was a most admirable person.»

«Oh! Andrew,» broke in Clara, «can't you stop fooling? Don't you see that you are ruining yourself?»

«Well, if you ask me, Clara, I don't. Besides, how am I ruining myself? I expect nothing from my uncle who has never given me anything, except an occasional luncheon and many lectures. I know that everybody goes about blacking his boots just because he is so rich, so it can't hurt him to hear a little of the truth by way of a change.»

«But it may hurt you, Andrew. What are you going to do when you become a doctor?»

«Oh, that's all arranged. An excellent fellow called Watson,

a really clever man though a bit of a Socialist, who might be anything but because of his opinions prefers a practice in Whitechapel, is going to take me as an assistant. He was one of the examiners and suggested it himself only this morning, from which I gather that I have passed all right. It is a splendid opening.»

«Indeed,» remarked Clara doubtfully, «and what is Doctor Watson going to pay you?»

«I don't know. Something pretty small, I expect, but that doesn't matter to me, for I've a couple of hundred a year of my own, you know, which is riches to most young doctors.»

Clara looked him up and down with an air of genuine if tempered amazement on her face that was not entirely unmingled with admiration. Then she asked:

«Do you really mean to say, Andrew, that it is your intention to become the assistant of an unknown Socialistic practitioner in the East End who will pay you little or nothing?»

«That is my intention and desire, Clara,» he answered in the intervals of lighting another cigarette. «What do you see against it?»

«Oh! nothing,» she answered, shrugging her shoulders, «except the results which commonly follow from madness of any sort. To begin with, you will infuriate our uncle —»

«Strike that out,» interrupted Andrew, «for I have done it already. Nothing can make him hate me more than he does.»

«— who,» went on Clara, taking no notice, «with all his

enormous interest would otherwise have been able to help you to a career in almost any walk of life that offers rewards at the end of it – or earlier —»

«To those with relatives whose money gives them direct or indirect means of corruption and thereby of lifting the undeserving over the heads of the deserving,» suggested Andrew.

Again she shrugged her shoulders, and went on:

«Next, you will starve. Your Socialist medical man won't pay you anything, and such an appointment will lead you nowhere.»

«Don't alarm yourself, Clara. I haven't the slightest fear of suffering from the want of proper nutriment. Food is cheap in the East End, and a couple of pints of stout will furnish as much stimulant as is desirable in twenty-four hours. Also, if I pass in Surgery, as I think I shall, I have every hope that my hospital will not entirely cast me off. Perhaps you didn't know, Clara, that surgery is my only love, that I have a natural instinct that way and, if I may say so, a flair for diagnosis. For instance, there is a gland in your neck that I long to remove, although you may not be aware of the thing. It spoils the proportions and under certain circumstances may be dangerous some day.»

«Please leave my glands alone,» said Clara. «I don't know what glands are.»

«Then why did you lift your hand and touch that to which I alluded, Clara, not knowing that I cultivate the art of observation? Any competent physician will tell you that it might become the seat of tubercle, to which all our family are prone.»

«You won't frighten me with your talk of glands,» replied Clara quite calmly, «or because one side of my neck swells when I have a cold. Well, if you give no weight to my arguments, what are yours? What you have to urge in favour of the course of life which you propose to follow?»

Andrew drew himself up and threw his cigarette into the fire. In a moment his whole aspect changed. From that of a somewhat annoying, assertive and egotistical youth, it became one of an earnest young man animated by a great purpose.

«I'll tell you if you will open your mind and are sufficiently interested to listen,» he said. «I have this to urge: that our time here is short, and that whatever we understand by God Almighty lays upon us the duty of making of it the best use possible, not only for our own sakes, but for that of the world in which we live, according to the opportunities that may be given to us. Now mine, I know, are very humble. I am nobody and nothing, a person without prospects.» (Here Clara opened her innocent-looking eyes and stared at him.) «But I believe that I have some ability in a certain line and I intend to use it to the best of my power in serving my fellow-men. An opportunity of doing so has come to me in a locality where my fellow-men, and women and children, are more numerous and probably more miserable than they are anywhere else upon the earth. In these circumstances I do not intend to allow my person advantage, or what seems to be my advantage as you see it, to weigh with me. That is my answer.»

«And a jolly good one, too,» exclaimed Algernon, suddenly

sitting up amidst his sofa-cushions among which he had seemed to be somnolent, and breaking into the conversation.

«You're a real sport, Andrew, more power to your elbow! I'm no use, I know, and never shall be,» here by accident or design he coughed, «but,» he added with an outburst of genuine felling, «I respect you, old fellow, whatever Clara may think.»

«Please leave my thoughts out of the question, Algernon,» said Clara with severity. «Perhaps I also respect Andrew. But I try to look all round things and not to be carried away by sudden enthusiasms, and I think that in his own interests he is making a mistake. He would do better to fall in with his uncle's wishes, or prejudices if you choose to call them so.»

«And I think that I shall do better to fall in with what I consider to be my duty, and to leave my interests to look after themselves, Clara. That, however, is no particular virtue on my part, since they do not excite me.»

«Which means that you are going to be a slum doctor, Andrew.»

«Yes, my dear, that's what it means, also that if you happen to meet me when you are driving in the Atterton carriage and pair, I shall not expect you to recognize your humble relative.»

«Don't be silly, Andrew. You wouldn't if you only knew how ridiculous you become when you are on your high horse.»

«High horse! A neat repartee for the carriage and pair, on which I congratulate you, Clara. But don't let's wrangle. Our lines are laid in different places, that is all, and I dare say we shan't

see much of each other in the future, so we had best part friends. Good-bye, old girl,» and stretching out his long arm, he took her round the waist, drew her to him and gave her a kiss.

Then he shook Algernon by the hand, bidding him come to a certain address if he wanted any gratis medical advice, and to look after himself in various ways, and departed at a run, nearly knocking over a stately menial who was bringing coffee and liqueurs.

«I think that Andrew is mad,» remarked Clara, smoothing her hair which had been disarranged by the energy of his embrace.

«I dare say,» said Algernon, as he tossed off a glass of cognac, «but I only wish I were half as mad. I tell you, Clara, that he is the best of the family, as you will come to see one day. Though when you do, I shan't be here.»

«Perhaps,» said Clara, «for no one knows what may happen in the future, and if he should succeed, it may alter my views.»

«Succeed,» ejaculated Algernon with a hoarse chuckle. «Do you mean to the title?»

«You know very well that I meant nothing of the sort, Algernon,» she answered with a look of calm contempt, and left the room.

«All the same she did, although she may not have known it,» reflected Algernon, as, after another half-glass of cognac, he settled himself down to snooze among the sofa cushions. «Clara thinks that no one sees through her, but I do. She's a deep one, is Clara, and, what's more, she'll always get her way. But when

she has, what is the good of it?» Then he went off to sleep till tea-time.

Chapter II

Mrs. Josky

Lord Atterton, who had been taking a little walk round the square to soothe his nerves, returned when he thought that Andrew had departed. In fact, he chose an unlucky moment, for just as he opened the front door of West House and stepped across the threshold, he came into violent and personal collision with that young gentleman who was rushing out at a great pace, thinking of something else and not looking where he was going.

«Confound you for an awkward fellow!» exclaimed his Lordship. «You've smashed my hat.»

Andrew picked up the article which had served as a buffer between their two colliding bodies and now resembled a half-closed concertina.

«Very sorry,» he said, surveying the topper critically. «It does seem rather the worse, doesn't it? But cheer up, Uncle, you can afford a new one, which will give employment. The hatting trade is rather depressed just now they tell me in Whitechapel.»

«Cheer up!» gasped Lord Atterton. «I may as well tell you outright, Andrew, that your visits to this house are the last things to cheer me up. First you outrage my feelings and then you crush my hat which was new. Oh! hang it all,» he added, hurling the wreck into the corner of the hall, «the less I see of you in the

future the better I shall be pleased, and there you have it straight.»

«I rather think your sentiment is reciprocated,» remarked Andrew in a reflective voice. «Somehow we seem to get on each other's nerves, don't we?»

«Yes, nerves and toes,» replied his Uncle wrathfully, lifting the foot upon which Andrew had trodden.

«If you wore a sensible soft hat as I do, instead of a tall one, it wouldn't have happened, Uncle, but it's no use crying over squashed chimney-pots, and for the rest, you need not fear that I shall put any strain upon your hospitality. I'm sorry about Algernon, though, as I'm fond of him and should like to see him sometimes. Uncle, I may as well take this opportunity to tell you that whatever your smart Harley Street men may say, you are treating him wrongly.»

«Indeed, and how out of your great experience would you advise that the case should be dealt with, Andrew?» he asked with heavy sarcasm.

«Well, to begin with, Uncle, you should cut off his liquor. He drinks too much, as does everyone in this house except Clara. Then – open-air and perhaps a winter in Switzerland. I'll ask my man Watson what he thinks about that. Unless you change your methods and can persuade him to change his, it is my duty to say that the results may be very serious indeed.»

«Oh!» ejaculated Lord Atterton, «confound you for a presuming young puppy, and confound Watson, whoever he may be, and confound everything!»

Then, without waiting for any possible answer, he rushed into the nearest room and slammed the door.

Andrew strolled into the street, crossing it to the square railings, lit a third cigarette, and while he did so contemplated the façade of his uncle's palatial mansion.

Looks like whisky, he mused; metaphorically stinks of whisky and ought to have a gigantic bottle of West's Best (Lord! Shall I ever live down that name?) with the famous advertisement of red-shirted Canadians refreshing themselves amidst golden sheaves with the same in the intervals of their noble toil, set upon the parapet among the chimney-pots.

In short, look at the whole infernal place, and then think of its presiding genius, my noble and opulent relative who sits within like a great bald-headed spider fat with the blood of a thousand victims, and therefore pre- eminent in the spider world.

He paused and laughed at his own metaphor, for when not depressed Andrew was a merry soul; then, continuing his reflections, he walked towards Oxford Street to take a bus for Whitechapel.

Anyway, I'm not wanted there. The old gentleman told me that pretty straight, as I meant that he should, for I can't bear the sight of him, purse-proud, vulgar man who calls himself noble. I like Algernon, though, if he is dissipating himself to death with his weak lungs, for he has good instincts, which will never develop in this world, poor old chap. And Clara isn't at all bad. She thinks herself deep as an ocean, and is as easy to see through as a plate-

glass window. Her transparency is quite delightful; one sees her making her hand for every trick, and yet feels quite sure she will win the game, and at any rate she never makes rows; she fights with the rapier, not with the broadsword. Also at bottom she isn't unkind.

At this point he found a bus, and having clambered on to the top of it, still followed his train of thought.

Let's look at the other side of the picture. I criticize my uncle and Clara, and they criticize me. They look on me as a spoiled darling, ruined by an adoring mother, now happily departed, and they consider me vain because people think me clever; also opinionated because so far – well, I have done well in my small way. Further, they dislike my views of life and duty, which are opposed to the interests and instincts of their gilded, pinchbeck rank, and do not appreciate the connection with the common medical student who probably will never be heard of in the world. Nor can they understand that such an earth-worm may have ideas of his own and wish to make his private tunnel out of sight of the golden creatures who walk about in Cavendish Square. Well, Andrew, they are quite right as *they* see things; also, I dare say that you *are* offensive, though the patients in the hospital don't think so. And you are quite right as *you* see the things. So the upshot of it is, that you had better go your own way and leave them to go theirs towards the oblivion which will swallow you all. But all the same, you are sorry for Algernon, the noble inheritor of West's Whisky.

In due course Andrew reached his rooms in a little street that opened off the Whitechapel Road. It was, and probably still is, a rather squalid-looking street where dwelt small tradesmen, with a proportion of the humbler class of Jews. The houses were of stucco with basements but not tall, and the one in which Andrew lived was inhabited by the widow of a working tailor and her little daughter. Fortunately the tailor had insured his life for £1200 so that his relict was not left penniless, and being an inveterate Londoner, preferred to live on among the people whom she knew.

To occupy herself she had taken to dealing in second-hand clothes and furs in a small way and, more for company than for anything else, she took a lodger in her two upper rooms. Her name was Mrs. Josky, though from what country Josky the departed originally hailed Andrew never discovered. Probably he, or his father, was a Polish Jew. She herself was a plain, good-tempered, bustling and talkative little Cockney, full of a lively sympathy with everybody and everything. Like most of her class she was, however, somewhat superficial, except in one particular, her love for her daughter, a little girl of nine whose big dark eyes, premature development and Eastern style of budding beauty, revealed her Semitic blood. This child Mrs. Josky adored. She was her one passion in life (Josky, apparently, had produced no deep impression upon her during their brief association).

Therefore it came about that she also adored Andrew, for what reason will be seen.

After his mother's death Andrew gave up the little house in Campden Hill where they had lived so happily, and having stored the best of the furniture together with a few heirlooms, looked for lodgings near the hospital where he was studying, with the double object of being close to his work and of observing the people of the East End.

Casually walking down Justice Street, for so it was oddly called, as he presumed because some forgotten Daniel had once come to judgment there, he reached No. 13, and observed that over the little shop of which the window was filled with old coats and rather moth-eaten fur garments, was exhibited a placard inscribed, «Good rooms to let with meals.» There were very similar placards in many other windows, but the unconventional Andrew was attracted to No. 13 by a desire to defy superstition.

So in due course he became Mrs. Josky's tenant, and very comfortable she made him from the first. A little later on, however, had he been living in a good house with a devoted mother and a staff of well-trained servants, he could not have been better looked after. It happened thus. Shortly after he took up his abode in Justice Street, the little girl, who was named Laurretta, or Laurie for short, contracted pneumonia very badly indeed. Although he was not yet a qualified practitioner, Andrew diagnosed the disease at once, with the result that implore as he would, Mrs. Josky absolutely refused to call in any doctor, declaring that young Mr. West was cleverer than all of them put together, and that he and no one else should attend Laurie.

Nor would she have a nurse, not from motives of economy, but because of a kind of fierce maternal jealousy which prevented her from allowing any other woman to come near her child. The end of it was that Andrew had to double the part of physician and night-nurse, rather an exhausting business for a young man who worked all day, especially as, this being his first case, he was filled with doubts and anxieties.

Well, by good luck or good management, with the accompaniment of the most devoted care, he pulled the child through. When he was able to assure Mrs. Josky that she was quite out of danger, that good woman threw her arms round his neck, kissed him and said that she would die for him if need be, as no doubt she would have been quite willing to do.

After this Andrew was more comfortable than ever in those lodgings and lived like a fighting-cock. In time he slowly awoke to the fact that his bills were singularly small for the amount of food that he consumed, and on investigation, discovered that Mrs. Josky was practically supporting him. Then there was a row, also there were tears and he threatened to go away. He insisted that she should produce books to show the cost of what she bought for him. Mrs. Josky, whose leading characteristic was obstinacy, refused to do anything of the sort and even accused herself of theft in the sense of feeding herself and her child out of his provisions. At last they compromised. He paid more for his board; Mrs. Josky concealed the books and he lived even better than he had done before. Moreover, all his clothes were

pressed and mended and, although he knew it not, some of his undergarments, such as shirts, were made for nothing. No wonder he had declared to Clara that £200 a year was wealth to an East End doctor!

Andrew arrived at Justice Street at about half-past four, the time at which he was accustomed to return from the hospital and have tea. The pretty little Laurie, who loved him almost as much as her mother did, was, as usual, looking out for him from the doorstep, and seeing him while yet a long way off, called out to her mother in the back regions, informing her of his advent. Mrs. Josky called back that all was ready, and proceeded to kill the fatted calf by breaking two fresh eggs, which were expensive just then, into the frying-pan. To be accurate, she broke three, for having conceived suspicions of Number Two, she put it aside for her own consumption, rather liking the taste of straw, as she explained to Laurie.

Andrew arrived, kissed Laurie according to the rule, searched for and found in his velveteen coat a little packet of chocolate creams of which she was extremely fond, and went up to his room to tidy himself for, as it happened, he had an engagement that afternoon. When he came into the sitting-room, after washing his hands and brushing his hair, he was met by Mrs. Josky bearing a spotless tray with a real china teapot that she had obtained from some one in temporary difficulties in exchange for a pair of second-hand boots, with a cup and muffin dish full of hot buttered toast to match, and followed by Laurie, who

supported in her thin little hands the dish with the fried eggs.

«Good gracious! Mrs. Josky,» he said, «I don't want all that. Besides, I am going out to tea.»

«Then you should have said so earlier,» she replied with firmness, adding, «not but what I guessed it when I saw that letter in a lady's writing this morning; also that you had bought a new toothbrush which you didn't want.»

«Your intuition is wonderful, Mrs. Josky, but please take away those eggs. Laurie can eat them.»

«I should like to see her do it,» replied Mrs. Josky darkly, «teaching the child to steal my lodger's food, indeed. Look here, Mr. West, either you eat those eggs or they go straight into the dustbin, which you know would be a wicked waste. Come now,» she added in soothing tones as though she were addressing an invalid off his feed, «you know you want them with all your hard work, passing examinations and such, and you, as I believe, still growing.»

«I can't and I won't,» said Andrew. «I've had a gigantic lunch.»

«You can and you will,» replied Mrs. Josky with decision as she drew a chair to the table.

Then Andrew sat down and ate the eggs under her stern eye, also the buttered toast, for his appetite was excellent, while she poured out the tea which cost more per pound than she would have cared to tell him. No wonder he always declared there was no tea like Mrs. Josky's.

«Where are you going to your next tea, Mr. West?» she

inquired as she gathered up the plates.

«To Doctor Watson's,» he answered, «whose assistant I shall be if I get through.»

«Oh! to Miss Watson's, are you. I thought it was her writing on the letter. Well, there's no denying that she's a beautiful young woman, for I've seen her several times at church and treats and such like, of the sort that young gentlemen like to have tea with, not minding how it's made, though a bit of a fool I should think, if they do call her the Whitechapel Rose.»

«Great Scot! what a name,» said Andrew, «though as a matter of fact she is named Rose. But why do you say she is a bit of a fool, Mrs. Josky?»

«Just because one woman knows another,» she replied with a mysterious shake of the head. «Also because God Almighty don't give everything all at once. If a girl is as lovely as all that outside, you mark my words she ain't got nothing inside. Look at me,» she added, thrusting forward her angular and kindly little face with the brown eyes in which humour twinkled, «I ain't no beauty, am I? Whatever Josky, being after all a man, could see in me I never could guess – but I'm pretty good at cooking, and not so bad at a deal, either.»

«There's something in the argument,» reflected Andrew. «I've seen it exemplified in very handsome men. But, as regards Miss Watson, I had formed rather a different opinion. Well, well, we shall see.»

«Yes, Mr. West, I dare say you will,» remarked Mrs. Josky

with emphasis, and departed carrying the tray.

When she had gone Andrew retired to his bedroom and tidied up again. Looking at his hair he recognized that it was long and regretted that recently he had found no time to have it cut. Now it was too late. Suddenly he remembered an ancient pot of pomade, at least he thought it was pomade, which, amongst other débris removed from his mother's house, stood in a cupboard in a corner. He found it. Inspection was not very satisfactory and it smelt. After all, was it pomade? At this stage in its career nothing short of analysis could tell. Still, in his anxiety to curb his rebellious locks he risked it, only to discover that it was decayed ointment which as a lad he had used upon his hands after they had been chafed by over-rowing on the Thames. That was when it was already on, and nothing short of prolonged shampooing would have removed it. Next, after reflection, he changed the red tie for a brown one that was somewhat less seedy, slipping over it a beautiful antique gem in an eighteenth-century setting that represented Venus rising from the sea, which had come to him from his father. About the velveteen coat he hesitated, but finally decided to leave it alone because he could not be bothered to hunt for another.

From all of which things it will be gathered that Andrew desired to look his best at the tea-party to which he was going, an impulse that had not overtaken him when departing to lunch with his grand relatives at Cavendish Square. Near the front door he met Mrs. Josky who eyed him with suspicion, remarked that

he had on his Sunday tie, and sniffed.

«What's the matter?» asked Andrew.

«Well, Sir,» she said, «I did think something might have gone wrong with those drains again, there was such a smell down that back yard, and now it seems to have come here too.»

«Oh! I know,» remarked Andrew guiltily. «I found some stuff that had gone bad and threw it away.»

«Indeed, then it's a pity, Sir, that you threw it on to your hair first.»

After this Andrew fled, leaving Mrs. Josky still sniffing on the door- step.

Holding his hat in his hand, for he knew the cause of Mrs. Josky's suspicions and wished to air his head, Andrew pursued his way through the devious streets of Whitechapel, till he came to a remote region in the neighbourhood of the river. Here in some bygone generation there had been houses of importance, occupied no doubt by prosperous tradesmen or merchants of the day. One of these, a red brick Georgian mansion of some pretensions, stood among a mass of mean dwellings that, as the value of land increased, had been built on what were once its extensive gardens, whereof nothing remained except a desolate little patch of ground in front of the house, upon which stood the foundation walls of a long-departed greenhouse. This dwelling, which was still known as Red Hall probably from its colour, was now the abode, private and professional, of Dr. Watson, a very eminent man in his way, but one whose career had been injured

by his peculiarities and his open, often ill-timed, advocacy of extreme Socialistic views.

Mounting the dirty steps Andrew came to the front door, the massive dignity of which many successive layers of different coloured paints and graining could not conceal. Indeed, a splinter chipped off by the vagrant stone of some mischievous boy, showed that it was made of no humbler wood than old Honduras mahogany, while the tarnished brass knocker of twisted snakes also testified to the former standing of the house within.

As the bell was out of action he applied himself to this knocker for some time without result. At length the door was opened by a dilapidated, snuff-coloured little woman with watery eyes and hair that looked like faded tow, who appeared to be irritated at being summoned from the lower regions.

«Why couldn't you go round by the surgery, Brother West» (everybody at Red Hall called each other Brother or Sister), she asked in a high and squeaky voice which suggested an effort to smother tears. «Here I am with the tea to get ready, to say nothing of the supper to cook, and the kettle boiling over at this very moment into the gas stove, making enough smell to poison one, and you come hammering, hammering at the front door which Sister Rose is too proud to open, till I don't know the teapot from the saucers.»

«I'm sorry, Sister Angelica, but I thought the Doctor might be busy in the surgery.»

«Busy! Of course he's busy. He's always busy doing work for

a pack of ragamuffins who never give him so much as a thank-you. What's more, he's got that Harley Street swell, the famous Somerville Black who looks after the Royalties and has three carriages and pairs, in there with him.»

«Somerville Black!» said Andrew with respect. «What's he doing here? It's scarcely his beat.»

«Oh! I don't know. Some case the Doctor's got hold of which interests him. A girl who's the daughter of a fish-hawker and thinks that she's three girls and acts as such.»

«Three girls!»

«Yes, Brother, or rather two girls, one herself and the other a farmer's daughter, and a dead woman, I think it is Mary Queen of Scots, or Lady Jane Grey, or some one. When she's herself she talks fish and swears as might be expected with her bringing up. When she's the farmer's daughter she talks cows and pigs and lectures on agriculture, although she's never been out of Whitechapel or seen one of them alive; and when she's the party that was going to be beheaded she takes on wonderfully, just like Shakespeare, the Doctor says.»

At this moment a dull explosion sounded from below.

«Heavens above! there's that gas stove blowing up,» exclaimed Sister Angelica, and vanished away like a grey ghost, leaving Andrew to his own devices.

Chapter III

Rose

Andrew, who knew the house, went down the long centre passage to a certain door and opening it, entered a very pleasing Early Georgian room whereof the walls were covered by large pine panels, once painted white no doubt, but now of a faded grey, and remarkable for a beautiful Adam mantelpiece, carved pine cornices, and a moulded ceiling of the period. It was well furnished, too, in its way, for furniture, when he could pick it up cheap, was Dr. Watson's one extravagance. Thus there were some good Queen Anne pieces; also a really fine Elizabethan refectory table, untouched and with the true bulbous legs (Sister Angelica hated that table because it took so much polishing). Lastly, there were a few excellent pictures also picked up by Dr. Watson, and over the whole place brooded a kind of peaceful charm as is sometimes observable in Queen Anne or Georgian rooms.

Noting to his disappointment that the place was empty, Andrew walked up and down casually examining the pictures and wondering whether Miss Rose had told him to come at five, or half-past. For ten minutes or more he continued to wonder, till at length that young lady appeared. Certainly she was a charming sight as she glided into the room wearing a white dress which, though simple, fitted her tall and rather stately figure

well enough. Anywhere Rose Watson would have been reckoned a beautiful woman, one among ten thousand. She had all the points of beauty; an exquisitely tinted face, large blue eyes, a shapely head on which her plentiful golden hair was coiled like a crown, a sweet mouth, a well-cut nose not too sharp, and long, delicate hands and feet. Also her voice was low and gentle and her movements were full of native grace. In short, she was lovely, a perfect type of the Eternal Feminine.

«How do you do, Mr. West?» she said, colouring slightly, perhaps because of the evident admiration that was written in his eyes, or perhaps because it was her weakness, or her gift, so to do when she addressed a man. «Forgive me if I do not call you Brother after our silly fashion here, but really I can't.»

«The last thing in the world I wish is that you should call me Brother,» he answered in a rather shy way, adding, «About whatever others I may be indefinite, upon that point I am quite clear.»

«I am sorry to have kept you waiting,» she went on hurriedly, dropping the blue eyes, «but that silly old Angelica has made some frightful mess with the gas stove and nearly blew us all up. I found her covered with blacks and with a lock of her hair on fire.»

«I dare say,» replied Andrew. «Tow burns easily, doesn't it?» She laughed a little and remarked good-naturedly:
«Well, it is rather like tow now you mention it. Then I hear that Dr. Somerville Black is coming into tea and I had to find

the best things. I wish he wouldn't.»

«So do I,» murmured Andrew.

«Oh!» she continued with an outburst of genuine feeling, «how horrible it is to be poor and have only one servant, or rather none at all, for Angelica is a kind of cousin, you know, not a servant.»

«I'm not sure,» said Andrew. «Poverty has its advantages. You, I understand, would like to be rich.»

«Of course I should. I will be quite honest about it. I should like to have carriages and jewels and proper dresses and a fine house with lots of people to wait on me. Then I should be quite happy,» and she laughed again in her charming, rather childish fashion.

«Perhaps you wouldn't be happy after all, Miss Watson. I have just come from seeing some people who have all these things in abundance and they are not happy – except perhaps Clara,» he mused aloud.

She looked up quickly as though she would like to ask who Clara was, but if so, she refrained and only said:

«Wouldn't you like to be rich, Mr. West? But perhaps you will one day.»

«I don't think so,» he answered, shrugging his shoulders, «unless I should become a successful man like Somerville Black, which is most improbable, and I don't know that I want to.»

She considered him for a little while in an innocent way, playing with the red rose she wore in the bosom of her white

dress, but said nothing.

«What's the use of riches?» he went on, suddenly taking fire. «At best they are only an addition. I'd rather have health, or happiness, or ability, or the power to do good to others, than any amount of riches. At the present moment,» he added slowly, «to take a concrete example, I'd rather have that rose than a cheque for a thousand pounds.»

Again she laughed gently, looking at him doubtfully, but not without a certain amount of admiration, as she answered:

«When it has faded, say by to-morrow morning, you may think that you would rather have had the thousand pounds. However, if you believe it worth so much, you can have it for nothing, because, because – I have a prettier one upstairs.»

«I am content with that because you have worn it,» he answered, stretching out his hand.

She began to unfasten the rose, which seemed to be an intricate and lengthy operation, and Andrew apparently thought it an act of common kindness to try to help her, with the result that he pricked his finger rather badly. However, it was out at last and in his hand. Then something happened to him. His heart began to beat violently, a mist swam before his eyes, he lost his reason, his judgment, everything that distinguished him in ordinary moments, as, in short, Nature for her own purposes decrees that most men and some women must occasionally do. The issue was that quite undesignedly and without the smallest premeditation he kissed that lovely girl full upon the lips.

«Oh!» she said, turning the exact colour of the red rose in his hand and looking first as though she were going to cry and then to laugh; for to tell the truth at that instant laughter was nearer to her than were tears. «Oh! you know you oughtn't to do that.»

«I don't care,» said Andrew defiantly. «I love you.»

What else he would have said or done remains dark, for at that moment footsteps were heard in the passage and a big genial voice saying:

«In all my professional experience, which is fairly extended, I do not think I ever met such a case. Of course, we are aware that a woman is never what she seems to be, except when she is in a rage, but you don't often find one who announces herself to be three people and without any histrionic training plays all the parts so well.»

«No,» answered another rather dreamy voice, that of Dr. Watson. «It suggests all sorts of queer things, doesn't it? For example, reincarnation and the imprisonment of sundry entities in one corporeal shape.»

«Ah! Doctor,» said the big voice of Somerville Black, «there you are getting into mysticism, which personally I find it safer always to put out of court. To me, therefore, at present it suggests an unusual and most complicated case of nerves, resulting probably from suppressed instincts.»

Then came a crash, followed by:

«Hullo! Ma'am, I didn't see you coming.»

«Oh!» exclaimed Rose, «that idiot Angelica has run into him

with the tea-tray in the dark passage,» and promptly she sped like a swallow towards the door.

As she reached it, it opened, and behold! there was a second collision, this time between Rose and the large advancing shape of Dr. Somerville Black.

With another «Oh!» she recoiled, as a bird might that had unexpectedly come into contact with a bull, and would have fallen had not the advancing Andrew caught her.

«I begin to think,» went on the big voice, «that *I* have been reincarnated as a shunting railway truck. However, young lady,» he added, suddenly realizing the kind of person with whom he had to do, «if you like to come out of that friendly shelter and charge again, I am sure I don't mind.»

Then followed explanations, in the midst of which Dr. Watson, who had stayed behind in the passage to assist with the overset crockery, arrived upon the scene. He was a tall, thin, nervous-looking man, with dark eyes and a clean-shaved, ascetic face that would have become a mediæval saint, on which from time to time appeared a smile of singular sweetness. Idealist was written all over him, especially in his eyes which had the dreaming look of the typical visionary. Curiously enough, there was a considerable resemblance between him and Andrew; indeed, they might easily have passed for father and son. Nor did this cease with their physical characteristics, since their mental fibre and attitude were very similar. Both of them were dreamers, both were somewhat impracticable, neither of them

had in him the making of a successful man, as the world understands success. Of course, it was the lack of these qualities, as also the presence of others, that drew the two together. From the time that Andrew had appeared at the hospital, a shy, awkward, unusual kind of youth, Dr. Watson had taken a fancy to him which, as years went on, ripened into as much friendship as is possible between men of such different ages. He became his favourite pupil, and somehow it was always understood, without anything very definite being said on the matter, that when he was qualified he would join Dr. Watson in his Whitechapel practice.

Catching sight of him the Doctor's face brightened with one of his sweet smiles.

«How do you do, Brother Andrew?» he said. «Very glad to see you and to congratulate you.»

Dr. Somerville Black, a man of quick perceptions, glanced quickly at all three of them and then said, addressing Rose:

«Ha-ha, young lady, now I see why you refuged where you did, in this young gentleman's arms, though to tell the truth, unless I had your father's word for it, and I suppose he ought to know, I should never have believed that you were brother and sister, even when he is so obviously your father's son.»

Now Rose coloured in her usual fashion. Dr. Watson looked puzzled, and Andrew, with some irritation, for this term of Brother where Rose was concerned annoyed him, explained that there was a slight mistake as he was unconnected with anyone in the room.

«It is our habit,» added Dr. Watson, «to give the fraternal salutation to friends in this house, as is customary among the community of Christian Socialists to which I and my family belong.»

«Oh! is it?» said Black, with one of his loud, jolly laughs. «Personally I was never so fond of my relations as to wish to extend their number, especially in Whitechapel. However, Sister, to adopt the sororal style, as I think the other Sister in the passage has upset the tea all down my back, I shall be grateful if you can lend me a cloth. I have to go on to see a royal lady, and those infernal flunkeys might notice the stain.»

The article was produced from somewhere and snatching it from Rose's hand, Andrew began to rub his back.

«I think, young gentleman,» exclaimed Somerville Black, «that our joint Sister there could conduct this operation just as effectively with an expenditure of exactly one-fourth of the muscular force. Unless you are careful, you will wear a hole through my new frock-coat. But why is Brother, or Uncle, or Father Watson offering you his congratulations? Have you perhaps just entered upon some contract of a prenuptial character with our Sister? I seem to diagnose symptoms indicative of the complaint called Love.»

If Rose had coloured before, now she turned positively scarlet. Faintly she murmured some denial and fled from the room, while Andrew commenced an involved contradiction.

«Don't waste words, young man. I think it highly probable

that my diagnosis is correct, but that the disease is still in the suppressed form. The rash will appear later, say after fourteen days' incubation. If it is wrong, however, so much the better for some other fellow.»

At this point Dr. Watson, who had been listening unconcernedly to his eminent colleague's jovial if unusual jesting, explained that he was congratulating Andrew on having done extremely well in his final examination, as from private sources of information he had just learned was the case. As a matter of fact being, as has been said, very fond of him, it would not have troubled him at all to learn that he and Rose were affianced. Indeed, in an indefinite way he had once or twice hoped that this might happen.

«Oh! that's it,» said the jolly doctor. «So you are going to become a saw-bones like the rest of us. Well, I wish you luck and a fat practice among the Jews, and if ever you want a helping hand, don't you forget old Somerville Black, F.R.C.S., M.D., Honorary Physician to exactly twenty-three Royalties, whom he fondly hopes will pay his bill with a baronetcy shortly, since he thinks it probable that they will not do so in any other way. And now here comes our Sister to whom you are not engaged which, as an antique eligible myself who has only buried one wife, I am naturally glad to learn. Young lady, whenever you feel inclined to share a peculiarly hideous house in Harley Street with an old buffer of established income, just drop me a postcard, will you? Good gracious! What's the matter with the other Sister's head?»

and he pointed to the tow-like *chevelure* of Angelica of which a considerable portion had been given to the flames.

«It was an accident to the gas stove,» explained Rose, glad to have an opportunity of changing the subject, for Angelica seemed too overcome to speak.

«Ah! then if the scalp is burned I prescribe the application of some fatty ointment to keep away the air. Fee for consultation, two guineas. It would be three in Harley Street. And now for that tea.»

All this while the bewildered Angelica was engaged in setting on the Elizabethan table at more or less irregular intervals, four stout pieces of crockery which looked like porridge-bowls or small slop basins. Then at the end of it she placed a large brown teapot, and in the middle a plate of thick bread and butter, with a handful of knives and another of teaspoons. Rose seized the teapot and began to pour into the porridge-bowls.

«Hullo!» said Somerville Black, «did we smash all the saucers?»

«No,» explained Rose, tears of vexation springing to her eyes. «We have no saucers. Father does not consider them necessary, and I am sorry to say that the best set of bowls was smashed.»

«Oh! I see. The simple life! Well, don't look vexed, young lady. These things are capital, or would be if only they had a handle. Just show me how you get hold of them, will you? With both hands, I suppose. By George, what a beautiful table this is!»

«Yes,» said Dr. Watson, waking up, for as usual he had been

paying no attention. «It is rather fine, isn't it? Real Elizabethan and, except for those initials cut on it, without blemish.»

«Jolly,» said Somerville Black. «I like oak; there's something solid about it. When you see another like it, just let me know will you, and Sister, this is the best tea I have tasted for many a day. No, take away that bread and butter, or I shall eat the lot. There, now I must be going. Haven't enjoyed myself so much for months, so don't you be surprised if I come back. Good-bye, Sister, what's your name?»

«Rose,» she murmured.

«Then it is one that suits you very well. Good-bye, Sister Rose, and Brother, what's your name – oh! West, Brother West, and Father Watson, and Aunt, what do you say? Angelica? Aunt Angelica. I'll remember you all to the royal ladies.»

So, still shouting chaff over his shoulder, he ran from the house and disappeared into the magnificent carriage and pair that was waiting at the gate.

«Thank heaven he is gone!» said Andrew, who for some time had been sunk in a gloomy silence.

«Why?» asked Rose.

«Because he is vulgar and overpowering and makes bad jokes, and goes on as if the whole place and everybody in it belonged to him.»

«Well, at any rate, he is cheerful and I am sure he meant to be very kind, and there isn't too much cheerfulness and kindness about here.»

«Good thing too,» muttered Andrew, «if they are of his variety.»

«It is a curious thing about Somerville Black,» broke in Dr. Watson, evidently following the line of his own thoughts, «that being a man quite without real distinction in our profession he is yet in his own way one of the best and most successful doctors whom I ever knew. I suppose it is to be accounted for by his intense humanity, I mean his insight into the hearts of his fellow-creatures which springs from his wide sympathies. Now he had never met any of you before, but if you were taken with an obscure disease I am sure that he would diagnose it correctly before you had been three minutes in his consulting-room, because already he has added you up and weighed your respective strengths and weaknesses. Then, unless the case was very simple, he would leave the doctoring of you to some one else who is an expert in that particular line, for his power is almost purely one of diagnosis and his gift of healing lies in his magnetic personality.»

«Sounds rather like faith-cure,» said Andrew disparagingly. Then, prompted by the sense of justice that was so strong in him, he added, «At any rate, he must know something as well, as he is an F.R.C.S.»

«Oh! when he became that they were not so particular as they are nowadays; also, I dare say he hypnotized the examiners and made them take a great deal for granted. Anyhow, he hasn't touched a knife for twenty years. Not but that he does know a

great deal in his own way.»

«I suppose that he is really very rich, Father?» said Rose.

«I believe about the richest man in the profession, though he did not make it all out of doctoring. They say that the Jews who come to consult him, give him information and opportunities of investing in all their best things on what is called the 'ground floor.' He cannot have inherited his wealth, as I believe his origin was quite humble, and he has no one to leave it to except one peevish daughter who suffers from hypochondria and is as unlike him as possible. She bores him so much that he told me some time ago he really thought of marrying again if only to get the comfort of a home.»

Rose looked as though she would like to ask whether the lady had been selected, but if so, thought better of it and asked nothing. Then, glancing at his watch, the doctor rose and went away, leaving the two alone.

Rose murmured something about clearing away the tea things, but Andrew came and stood beside her and said:

«No, don't go away, I want to speak to you.»

In his voice there was some note of command such as a man uses towards a woman whom he believes to be his, and Rose was of the class that is susceptible to such exercise of authority, whether justified or not. Also, she was curious, for her instinct told her what was coming and she wished to know whether this attractive young man was in love with her, and if so, how much. A proposal, if he meant to propose, had not come her way before,

and it was only natural that she should not wish to nip it in the bud. Lastly, life at Whitechapel was dull and here was a new excitement. So she remained seated and looked up at him through the shadows of the gloaming, like an angel out of mist.

For a moment or two Andrew played with the rose in his buttonhole, and looked down at her with a strange fire in his dark eyes. At last he spoke in a broken, uncertain voice:

«Rose, just before that troublesome man came in I told you that I loved you. Then there was the crash, a rather ill-omened crash,» he added with a little laugh as though uttering a thought aloud, and paused.

She made no answer, unless a sigh could be so described.

«Now I repeat it,» he went on, «in case you should have forgotten in the interval.»

Still she made no answer, being one of those women who feel that their greatest strength lies in silence and forget that it is generally taken to mean consent. Her tender beauty, the grace of her form, the scent that rose from her rippling hair, the loveliness of her eyes into which the twilight seemed to have crept, in their sum intoxicated him who for the first time had passed beneath the yoke of passion. He fell to his knees before her; he cast his arms about her slender waist; he kissed her dress, her hands and then, growing reckless or unknowing, drew her down towards him and pressed his lips upon her face, her eyes, her hair; yes, and on her lips also.

She did not resist him, she let him have his way, only she

never kissed him back. While she refrained from that, according to her peculiar code, the rest did not matter. Gently she pushed him away from her and rose. He also rose and stood trembling, ashamed of what he had done.

«I love you! I love you!» he repeated. «You are my angel and my star.»

She smiled a little. Somehow it had never occurred to her to think of herself as either an angel or as a star. Nor did she particularly wish to fill those parts however figuratively, who was quite content to remain just a beautiful young woman in the flesh.

«I know,» she murmured indefinitely, then paused.

«Oh! say more than that,» he went on with passion. «Say that you love me also.»

«I don't know,» she replied still more indefinitely.

«But you must; you must. It is impossible that I can love so much and not be loved back again. You must love me. You must marry me, Rose.»

At these words she looked up quickly. So he was going all the way – he meant marriage.

«I have never thought much of love, Andrew, and you are very young to talk of marriage. Also, how could we marry when we have nothing to live on?»

«I have something,» he answered, «a couple of hundred a year or so, and my profession.»

«I'm afraid that won't be worth much to you for a long while, especially as you have made up your mind to work

in Whitechapel where everybody expects to be doctored for nothing.»

Now an idea occurred to Andrew, namely, to tell her that he had other prospects of a sort. He rejected it, however, first because they could not materialize except through the death of others, on which it seemed mean and unworthy to speculate, and secondly for the reason that he shared Dr. Watson's prejudices about rank – to a certain extent his contempt for it, and in short held the whole business sordid, not mete for discussion with this divine and adorable creature. Perhaps it was the greatest mistake of his life, or the wisest act. It depends in what light it is regarded in view of all that was to come. What could such things matter, he reflected, when love, holy, unalterable love and nothing less was at stake? So of those prospects he said nothing.

«Besides,» went on Rose, who had employed the interval in marshalling her arguments, «there is my father to be considered. If I married, he would be quite alone, and I promised my mother that I would always look after him. I could never break that promise, Andrew, just to please myself.»

«You might look after us both,» he suggested.

She shook her delicate head, and said:

«Three in a house would never agree, especially when both had such claims. You would grow jealous and he would be sore, and what would a poor woman do between you?»

«Then do you refuse me?» he asked bluntly. «Oh! don't tell me that you refuse me.»

«I never said so,» she replied, looking down. «I must have time to think.»

«Oh! take it then,» he answered. «I can come back tomorrow.»

«You silly, Andrew! I mean a long time, at least a year. So many things happen in a year and by then I should know – my own heart. In a year, too, you would know if you really cared about me. You must remember that in a way I am the first girl you have met, and doubtless you will see others whom you may think more suitable for many reasons and – better- looking.»

«I shall see no others,» he replied sternly.

«Well, even if you do not, surely you would not wish to take advantage of my weakness and inexperience to press me to an irrevocable decision. It would not be like you to do so, because you know that a girl who is openly engaged is always tarnished if after all it should come to nothing – whatever the reason.»

As it happened no argument could have been used more likely to appeal to Andrew. He tarnish Rose? Perish the thought! Sooner would he die.

«I see,» he said. «I never looked at it in that light. Take your year. At the end of it I shall claim you, and you will give me the answer that I want.»

She smiled in a dazzling fashion and avoiding that issue, said:

«Very well, so it is agreed. Meanwhile we will be the dearest of friends and you will say nothing as to an engagement, and I will say nothing even to my father. And now, dear Andrew,

good night. I hope you will always think of me as I think of you and come to see me whenever you can. Oh! I never said that you might kiss me again, but after all, one more makes no difference.»

Chapter IV

Somerville Black

It is doubtful whether all London held a happier man than was Andrew that night. Of course he was not finally and openly engaged, but then how good were Rose's reasons against such a course. How noble and unselfish! She thought of her father as a loving daughter should; she thought of him, Andrew, believing – though what put such a mad idea into her head he could not conceive – that he might wish to change his mind; she thought of what he would feel if by any chance their open betrothal came to an end, and he knew that thereby he had caused her name to be breathed upon; she thought, too, of how he might be hampered if he married very young and without sufficient means. In short, she thought of everybody and everything but herself. Oh! indeed she was a pearl above price, a woman whom a king might be glad to marry, an angel, one almost too good for this world. And she had let him kiss her, not once but often, and he knew – oh! full surely – that never, never would she have allowed this unless her heart told her that he was the one man on earth to whom she wished to give that holy right.

He walked back to Justice Street treading so lightly that figuratively he seemed to float, a precious sensation which is granted occasionally to the young. Mrs. Josky saw him

coming from her point of vantage on the doorstep and, like Dr. Somerville Black, at once diagnosed the case.

«He's been and gone and done it,» she said to herself. «Poor young man!»

Then she fled to prepare the supper.

A little later she arrived with that meal to find Andrew gazing rapturously at the ceiling.

«Anything wrong with the plaster, Mr. West?» she asked, «or are you expecting an angel to come down into Justice Street, because if so, I fancy you will have to wait a long while.»

«I was only thinking, Mrs. Josky.»

«What of? Medicines and such-like?» Then her eye fell upon the rose. «You had better put it in water,» she said, pointing to that flower, «for I think you've seen the best of it. Or perhaps you would like to press it, for then, being wired, it will hold together a long time, until you want to throw it away or get another.»

«That's a good idea,» said Andrew, and going to a shelf he took down a massive medical work (it chanced to be on diseases of the heart), and reverently deposited the rose between the pages.

«Better put some tissue-paper round it,» suggested Mrs. Josky, «or it will stain the pretty picture» (which was one of the pectoral cavity cut open to reveal the organs within).

Again Andrew obeyed while Mrs. Josky watched him gloomily.

«Is that a very rare sort of rose, Mr. West,» she asked while

she pretended to arrange the plates, «that you take such particular care of it? Or is there some other reason?»

Andrew could resist no longer. He must communicate his joy, and here was an ideal confidante, one who would triumph with him, and understand.

«There *is* another reason, Mrs. Josky,» he said solemnly. «This flower means a great deal to me; it is the gift of the lady whom I love.»

«Is it, indeed, Mr. West? Well, it is pretty and it didn't cost her much, but does the lady love *you*?»

«Oh! yes, I think so. There are some things which young and innocent girls don't say right out, you know, Mrs. Josky. But in view of what passed —» and he paused.

«Ah! kisses and the rest, I suppose. I've heard of them before, I have indeed. But what did pass, Mr. West? If you feel moved to tell me, I'll tell you what I think.»

So Andrew told her at great length and with an extraordinary wealth of detail, nor, although it agonized her to know that the chops were getting cold, did Mrs. Josky attempt to cut him short.

«I forgot,» said Andrew, when at length the history came to an end. «I promised secrecy; however, as you don't know who the lady is, it doesn't matter.»

«No, I don't know, so of course it doesn't matter. But I was trying to think this business out, Mr. West. You are kind of engaged to some one you met suddenlike, but she isn't engaged to you?»

«No, now you mention it, Mrs. Josky, not exactly engaged.»

«In short, the hook's in your mouth, but not in hers, and a year hence you are to find out whether she likes the taste of the bait.»

«I should never have thought of calling it a hook, Mrs. Josky.»

«Of course not, nobody does who is the right side of thirty. But somehow I didn't treat Josky like that, all take and no give, so to speak; and what's more, I don't think he would have stood it, if I had, for he wasn't romantic, wasn't Josky. 'Now you make up your mind, Emma,' he said to me, 'for I've got five minutes to spare for this job and no longer.'»

«Perhaps,» suggested Andrew, «the temperament of the late Mr. Josky and my own differ somewhat.»

«There ain't no doubt about that, Mr. West. They differs a lot. Well, there it is, you've gone through the top and one day you'll come out at the bottom, and then you'll know how you like it. Everybody does that kind of thing; why, I did myself before I met Josky. And now I'll take those chops down and warm them up.»

«I don't want any chops,» murmured Andrew.

«But you'll eat them all the same to support you through the trials of this mortal life,» and she departed, leaving him wondering.

Somehow the tale of his perfect romance had not been as enthusiastically received as he could have hoped. But then Mrs. Josky was – well, Mrs. Josky, and could hardly be expected to understand.

As a matter of fact that good woman understood with almost

painful clearness.

«She's a baggage, is that Rose Watson,» she said, addressing a vagrant black-beetle in the kitchen which she had failed to squash, «with no more heart than a dead heifer. She's keeping him hanging on, poor boy, while she looks round to see if she can't do better. Well, after all, her looks are her fortune, as the saying goes, and she mustn't be blamed if she takes them to the highest market. Still, I'm sorry for him, poor boy, for he thinks the world of her. It's just like the measles and he's got to get through with them, and that's all there is about it.»

Three days later Andrew went to tea again at Red Hall, but somehow never got a word alone with Rose, for Sister Angelica and a friend were constantly in evidence, and however long he sat seemed determined to sit longer. On the famous Elizabethan table, however, he observed a new set-out of china which, being a young man of taste and having some knowledge of such things, he was well aware must have been as costly as it was beautiful.

«What a pretty tea-service,» he remarked.

«Yes,» replied Rose, colouring. «Isn't it kind of Doctor Somerville Black? He sent them to me with a charming note to make up for those which he broke in the passage.»

«Oh!» said Andrew. «I thought Sister Angelica broke them by running the tray into his back.»

«Yes, I did,» said Angelica, «it was so dark with all the doors shut and no gas lit.»

Then the subject dropped, but Andrew left the rest of his

tea undrunk in the lovely Sèvres cup. Rose observed it as she observed everything, and took an opportunity to touch his hand and give him one of her most angelic glances. Also, when he went away, she pressed it and gave him another heavenly look, and once more he walked home on air, yet feeling as if there were something just a little wanting. Also, he wished that the opulent Somerville Black would keep his antique Sèvres tea-services to himself.

As time went on he wished it a great deal more, since Somerville Black always seemed to be about the place. His interest in the young woman with the three personalities was apparently insatiable; also, it spread to other of Dr. Watson's cases. As it happened, however, Andrew saw very little of him. Chance, or something else, so arranged matters that they did not come across each other. Once they met upon the doorstep of Red Hall when the jovial doctor favoured him with a jest or two, asking him which member of the «floral kingdom» attracted his attention in the house. At first Andrew could not understand the riddle, but afterwards remembered that there is a plant called Angelica and another named Rose. Occasionally he saw the fine carriage drawn by high-stepping horses speeding down the Whitechapel streets and inside of it caught sight of the doctor, looking more imposing and larger than ever in a resplendent fur-lined coat. One cold day, about this time too, he met Rose in the street, and noticed that she also was wearing a very beautiful long fur garment made of the finest sealskin with a collar and

cuffs apparently of sable, which became her graceful figure very well indeed. He told her so, whereon she coloured and changed the subject. Afterwards he remembered that his cousin Clara had a somewhat similar coat which their uncle, Lord Atterton, had given to her and that she had told him it cost a hundred guineas. So he supposed that Rose's garment must be an imitation, or perhaps one that she had inherited from her mother, since he was sure that her father could never have afforded to pay so much for such an article.

He made some allusion to the matter to Sister Angelica, who acknowledged it with a watery and vacuous smile and, like Rose, changed the subject. After this, although he was the most innocent and unsuspecting of men, it must be confessed that Andrew did sometimes wonder whence had come those wondrous furs.

So perhaps did her own father, who once then they came from visiting a patient together, observed Rose passing them on the further side of the road, remarked in his *distract* manner that she seemed to be very finely dressed, then coloured a little as though a thought had struck him, and looked down at the pavement.

For now, it should be explained, Andrew, being fully qualified, was acting as a kind of assistant to Dr. Watson. There was no agreement between them; they were not partners, nor was he paid. As he was so rarely paid himself, this detail appeared to escape the doctor's mind, nor, he being in funds, did it occur very vividly to that of Andrew. He had gravitated towards the Red

Hall surgery and begun to work there, that was all. Moreover, soon this work became of a very engrossing character, for the doctor's practice, as is common with those of a more or less gratis nature in a populous neighbourhood, was very large indeed and absorbed all Andrew's time. In fact, soon he found himself working about twelve hours a day, to say nothing of night calls, and with little leisure left for anything else, no, not even to visit Rose.

At intervals, however, that charming young lady did ask him to tea, though generally this happened on days when he chanced to be exceptionally busy and could not possibly be spared. It is difficult to leave Whitechapel mothers under certain circumstances when they have no one else to look after them, even to partake of tea with one's adored.

It was in connection with some most unusual case of this character, that once more he came into contact with Dr. Somerville Black. The details do not in the least matter, but the upshot of it was that Andrew, confronted by frightful and imminent emergency and with no one at hand to consult, resorted to an heroic surgical treatment which he had once read of as possible, though there was no clear record of its ever having been followed with success. Having done all he could, he ran out from the place with the object of finding Dr. Watson, leaving some local midwife in charge of the patient. In the main street he met a carriage blocked by an accident to an omnibus, and standing by it, Dr. Somerville Black who had descended to see what had

happened and, as a matter of fact, was returning after taking tea at Red Hall.

The doctor caught sight of him, and with his usual keenness guessed from his face that he was in trouble.

«What's wrong, Brother West?» he asked in his jovial tones.

Andrew stopped and remembering only that here was a famous physician, briefly detailed the circumstances.

«By Jove!» said the doctor, «that's interesting. I've given up that sort of work, but if you will allow me, I should like to have a look at the case, for I remember one like it when I was a medical student, and I have got half an hour to spare.»

Andrew, of course, was delighted and they returned together to the mean tenement house.

«I'll tell you what,» said Somerville Black when he had finished his examination, «this is a thing that Clinton ought to see. You know who I mean, Sir Claude Clinton, the great obstetrician. He's a friend of mine, and if you will wait here I'll drive off and see if I can find him. Your treatment has been tremendous, my friend; I've never known such a thing attempted, but I'm not sure that you haven't hit on the right line of action.»

Then off he went, and within a little over an hour was back with Sir Claude Clinton, a quiet, brave-faced man.

Again there was an examination, at the end of which Sir Claude turned and said to Andrew, with a little bow:

«I congratulate you on your courage and skill. I should scarcely have dared to attempt such an operation myself, and that

it should have been carried out at the right moment with only the assistance of a person like that,» and he nodded towards the parish midwife, «is almost unprecedented. Unless complications supervene, as is of course possible and even probable, I think that the woman should live and be none the worse. Anyhow, it was a great achievement which so far has been successful. With your leave I will meet you in consultation over this case to-morrow, should the patient still live. If she dies, perhaps you will let me have a telegram. Here is my address.»

Then he departed. A few minutes later, after giving some medical directions, Dr. Somerville Black and Andrew followed him from the house. In the street outside where his carriage stood, the former said suddenly:

«What are you doing now, West? Working for our friend, Brother Watson, in his extensive but unremunerative practice?»

«Yes,» answered Andrew, «and I don't know which is the more remarkable, the extent or the unremunerativeness.»

«Ah! just as I thought. Well, look here, my young friend, if you will allow me to say it, I've taken a fancy to you. Don't be mistaken, I'm some judge of character though little else, for my medical reputation, as Clinton there would tell you if you asked him, is more or less a sham – I mean, it is not founded on real attainments like Clinton's. Now I've added you up pretty thoroughly and I see your weak points, which are many. For instance, you are a dreamer and an idealist, both of which qualities are mistakes in our trade, also so nervous that you will

probably wear yourself out and die before you have reached my age, which is fifty-eight, whereas I, who am neither of these, hope to live another twenty years at least. Now tell me, ain't I right?»

«As to the first part of your diagnosis, I should say yes,» answered Andrew. «As to the rest, perhaps so. I neither know nor care.»

«Also you are very inexperienced, for book learning with a certain amount of hospital work is not experience as I understand it. But you have the insight of a fine temperament and with it courage, otherwise you could never have conceived and carried out that operation on the good woman in there at the critical instant and without assistance, one from which, as he said, Clinton himself would have shrunk. Also you have youth on your side, to regain which I would give back all that I have won in life. The upshot of it is that I like you, West, especially as you are a gentleman which I ain't quite, and – are you open to an offer?»

«What sort of an offer?» asked Andrew astonished.

«Something of this kind. You come to me as an assistant, not as a partner, mind you, with a salary of, let us say, £500 a year to begin with. Then if you do as well as I expect you will, the partnership can follow, and in a few years' time when you are old enough and I die or grow tired of it, the whole bag of tricks, which means one of the finest businesses in London, £8000 a year, for that's what my books have averaged lately after deducting twenty per cent for expenses.»

Andrew heard and, understanding the magnitude and unusual nature of the offer made by one of the great men of the profession to a complete novice like himself, flushed with pride and pleasure. Yet oddly enough, his first impulse was to refuse. Why? He did not know exactly. The opening offered was splendid and made *bona fide*: Dr. Watson could easily replace him with some other young man anxious to gain experience, and after all, however democratic one might be, the atmosphere of Park Lane was more agreeable than that of Whitechapel. No, it was none of these things; it was that there existed some antagonism between the offerer and himself, not a personal antagonism, for individually, within his limitations, he liked Somerville Black whose essential goodness he recognised, as much as Somerville Black liked him, but rather one of circumstance. It was the facts of life that antagonized them, their interests, he felt, were directly opposite upon some vital matter which at the moment his mind did not define. All he knew was that it existed and would continue to exist, and on account of it he wished to say No.

Then another idea came to him, namely, that if he said Yes, he might be able to marry Rose within a year. By that time he was sure that he would have established himself firmly with Somerville Black and, loving him as he was quite certain that she did, that his prospects would be such that she would no longer feel it her duty to postpone their union.

These reflections settled the matter.

«Thank you,» he said. «It is awfully good of you, seeing what

you are and what I am, and I'll come when it is convenient for Doctor Watson to let me go. Indeed, I am very much flattered.»

«No, you ain't, young man,» answered Black with one of his jolly laughs. «You think me a successful Society doctor, a kind of quack, not fit to hold a candle to men like Clinton, or even Watson, and in a way you are right. But I am not altogether a quack, as I think I could prove to you if I were to take the trouble to tell you all that has been passing through your mind during the last few minutes, which I think I can guess pretty well. Learn to control your features, West, it is one of the first duties of a doctor; and don't let your eyes advertise your thoughts. Just one more thing, don't think that I am a man to take advantage of my position and money to do another any wrong. Never, never. I have to see my road pretty clear before I set foot on it, and it must be a straight one. Now I am off. This afternoon's job has cost me more than ten guineas already. Drop me a line to say when you can come and we will settle the details in any way you like. Good-bye, give my love to the Flower-garden at Red Hall, if you are going that way, and tell Sister Rose – oh! well, never mind.»

He bustled off to his carriage, leaving a stream of chaff behind him as was his fashion. At its door, however, he halted and calling Andrew to him, suddenly became professional.

«Look here,» he said, «about that case of yours yonder. You've done everything possible, or so Clinton would say, but I tell you there is a great deal more to do. I believe you have saved the woman's life; now it remains for you to save her mind. The

probability is, although Clinton would never think of it, that when she understands what has happened, she will go mad. If you can prevent that, I shall think even better of you than I do.»

I am not certain that he is not a big doctor after all, although he is jealous of Clinton because of his European reputation, thought Andrew, as he watched Somerville Black's carriage disappear amidst the motley equipages of the squalid street.

Chapter V

Arabella

As it happened, Andrew did visit the «Flower-garden» at Red Hall that afternoon, because Rose, for him the queen of all flowers, had asked him to tea. Owing to circumstances that have been set out, he arrived a little late for which he was reproached by Rose, who opened the front door for him.

«Oh! Andrew,» she said, «I did hope that you would have been in time for once, since then we might have had a few minutes together. Now that can't be, as Angelica and my father are waiting for their tea, and immediately afterwards my cousin Emma is coming for me and we are going to the theatre where we have a box.»

«What theatre? I didn't know any of them began before eight o'clock, and who gave you the box?» asked Andrew rather heavily, for something about all these announcements chilled him.

«The Haymarket, which takes a long time to reach by bus; also we must be early because of the crowd, and Emma has the box.»

«I see,» replied Andrew without conviction, whereon she brushed his hand with her own and after a quick glance up the passage, bent her sweet face towards him. Then, when the inevitable had happened, with a little sigh of happiness, she

flitted before him into the sitting-room.

Following more slowly, for he had paused to hang up his hat, Andrew met Dr. Watson who was coming from the surgery, and stopped to report to him all that had happened in connection with his remarkable case. Watson listened entranced.

«You did right, quite right,» he said, «though I'm not certain that I should have dared. However, if Clinton has approved, all is well, for I think him the greatest authority in Europe. It was good of him to come, too, but those big men are often like that and will do for nothing what they would charge fifty guineas for if they were called in. Well, my boy, you must be tired, come and have some tea. We will talk about it afterwards.»

So they went in and drank tea out of the porridge-bowls, the best china not being in evidence, and Andrew, who had eaten little that day, devoured sundry slices of the thick bread and butter, also some *marrons glacés* which Rose presented to him in an elegant and expensive-looking box, after all of which he felt much refreshed.

Presently, in a rather nervous kind of way, like one who feels it incumbent on her to show an active interest in the proceedings of some one else, she asked Andrew what he had been doing.

«Well,» he answered gaily, «if you want to know, subject to your father's consent, I have been accepting an appointment, or rather a kind of partnership in the making.»

«Indeed! Oh! do tell me about it. Will you be well paid?»

«Very well, much more than I am worth, five hundred pounds

a year to begin with, which means a lot to me,» and he glanced at her with meaning.

«Five hundred pounds a year!» she exclaimed, opening her big blue eyes, while Sister Angelica, in a thin voice like that of a far echo, repeated, «Five hundred pounds a year!» from the shadows at the end of the long Elizabethan table, and even Dr. Watson, awaking from his reveries, looked extremely interested. «Who offered you that?» and again Sister Angelica echoed, «Who offered you that?»

«You would never guess though. It was a friend of yours, Doctor Somerville Black.»

Rose's face fell.

«Really,» she said in a voice so quiet that it was almost stern, «and what are you to do? Go somewhere to look after the patients whom he sends away to that watering-place of which he is so fond?»

«No,» answered Andrew, «I am to stop here to help him in London.»

«Oh! that will be delightful for you,» she said, smiling mechanically. «And now I must try on my new dress before Emma comes to fetch me, so good-bye, An – I mean Mr. West – I *do* congratulate you. I do indeed.» Then for one moment she let her beautiful blue eyes rest on his, and turning, glided away.

As it happened, doubtless by the merest accident, Dr. Somerville Black found himself for a little while in the box that was occupied by Rose and her cousin Emma at the Haymarket

that night. Being busy he did not stop long, which in a sense did not trouble him as he was no playgoer, and in fact had not been inside a theatre for years. Arriving in the middle of an act, he waited until its end and then asked what it was all about. Rose, with the very same sweet smile and the very same glance of the perfect eyes that had entranced Andrew in the afternoon, explained to the best of her ability, which was not very well, since she had no natural gift towards synopsis.

«Ah!» said the doctor with a yawn, «most thrilling, I have no doubt, but I find real life quite interesting enough for me. You see, I have just come here from a death-bed, that of a lady who was rather great in her quiet way and who has suffered from cancer for three years without a murmur. So the sham sufferings of that painted minx at so much a night don't move me very deeply, but I am glad that you young people like them, having none of your own. By the way, I know the lady; she's consulted me several times and never paid my bill, and I who have seen more of her than you have, can tell you that she is uncommonly plain and has an execrable figure which goes out wherever it ought to come in and goes in wherever it ought to come out.»

«Oh! Doctor,» said Rose, «how can you say such things of the beautiful Elfrida Verney?»

«Perhaps because she hasn't paid my bill, or perhaps because they happen to be true. It isn't easy to disentangle human motives even if they chance to be one's own. By the way, did you see young West before you left home? And if so, had he any more

news of that case in Hozier's Lane?»

«I saw him,» answered Rose, «but he said nothing to me about Hozier's Lane.»

«No, of course he wouldn't. When a man sees you, young lady, he thinks of things different to Hozier's Lanes, and people hovering on the edge of death. I admit I do myself who am nearly forty years his senior,» and he looked at her and sighed.

«He told me,» went on Rose, hurriedly, blushing beneath those admiring eyes, «that you had asked him to come to help you in your work.»

«Yes, I did. I have a high opinion of that young man, although he has weaknesses like the rest of us. Have you anything to say against it? By your voice I gather you don't approve.»

«Oh! no, though of course my father will miss him, and I should have thought that more experience among the poor would have been useful to him before he went into a fashionable practice.»

«Would you, indeed. Well, my dear, now that we have come to professional matters, perhaps you will allow me to form my own judgment. I'll listen to yours on actresses or fur coats, or china, or anything that is pretty and useless, but not upon whom I should choose to be my assistant in my work, which is ugly but I hope on the whole useful, even if well paid. Now I must be off if I want to catch that lady in time, for, you see, I promised to be with her when she died and I don't give her more than another hour or two. Here, young woman, bring a couple of boxes of those

chocolates, the best you've got. Now good night to both of you. I hope you will enjoy the rest of the play. You'll find my small brougham waiting outside to take you home; I've told the door-porter about it. I'll come and see you soon at Red Hall; indeed, I may be down there to-morrow about that case of West's.»

Then with a smile and a nod he was gone.

«What an interesting man the Doctor is,» said Cousin Emma, a neutral-tinted person who had been observing everything from the corner of the box.

«Yes, very,» answered Rose in the intervals of crunching up one of the chocolates with her pearl-like teeth. «But I wish he wouldn't come here and talk about death-beds; it spoils the play.» Then taking another chocolate, she added, «Hush! the curtain is going up and we mustn't miss anything.»

Having triumphantly pulled his case in Hozier's Lane out of the very jaws of death and generally wound up his medical affairs with Brother Watson by inducting another young man into his honourable but unpaid share in that extensive practice, Andrew departed from Red Hall and proceeded to Harley Street. To be accurate, he did not altogether proceed since he continued to reside at Justice Street. Dr. Somerville Black had suggested that he should take rooms in his neighbourhood and even half-offered to put him up on the top floor of the great Harley Street mansion, while at the same time suggesting that he might find himself more independent elsewhere. But when Andrew brought the subject to the notice of Mrs. Josky, there was such an explosion

that he never even dared to allude to it again. Growing frigid, Mrs. Josky began by asking whether he thought that he had been cheated in her house, because, if so, she was willing to produce the accounts – if she could find them, though she rather believed that she had used the most of them for Laurie's curl-papers. However, doubtless the tradesmen would «come forward» to corroborate her statements.

When Andrew disclaimed any such idea with an almost agonized emphasis, she took another tack, or rather tacks. Was the cooking not to his taste? She knew that sometimes in Whitechapel one did not get quite the freshest fish. Herself, recently, she had been made very ill by a bad herring, but she thanked both her own God and that of the deceased Josky, who was of another sort though which she had never really understood, that the said herring, although she had bought it for him, inspired her with doubts, so that she determined to eat it herself.

Again Andrew waved his hands wildly and began to explain, till she cut him short.

Perhaps, she suggested, it was the distance that troubled him. If so she had a friend, a connection indeed, for he was a relative of Josky's, who happened to be under certain obligations to her and owned a really tip-top hansom cab. For a very moderate sum this person, his horses and his cab would be at Andrew's disposal day and night, «for,» added Mrs. Josky darkly, «I'll see he don't cheat you. He'd know better than to try it on with me, would

Amos, unless he wants to see them hosses and that cab at his uncle's, I mean, up the spout.»

Andrew murmured something about trams and buses, but again she cut him short.

«I know what it is,» she said. «It's the neighbourhood which you think low, having as it were gone up in the world. Well, I have been considering a move myself. Give me a fortnight and I'll see what I can do over Harley Street way. I'm told there's a good opening for my kind of trade round about Marylebone Road.»

«But it isn't the neighbourhood,» gasped Andrew.

«Then it must be that there dratted girl, what they call the Whitechapel Rose,» ejaculated Mrs. Josky, «and Abraham and all the prophets, as Josky used to say, only know what I am to do against her. I'll make bold to say one thing, though, Mr. Andrew, and that is, you look out that you don't find her in Harley Street before you.»

«Whatever do you mean?» asked Andrew amazed.

Mrs. Josky pulled herself up, fearing that she might have gone too far, and Andrew, recovering strength, gathered himself for another charge, when the Fates intervened in the shape of stifled sobs followed by a piercing howl, proceeding from the landing outside. Mrs. Josky heard and inspiration took her.

«Listen to that poor child, Mr. Andrew,» she said, «what you dragged up from the bottom of the grave. She's been eavesdropping, having guessed what was in your heart, for which I'll smack her head afterwards, and that's why she's howling

outside there, like a cat on the tiles, because she can't bear to think that you're so cruel as to go and leave her, which she never would have believed of you, nor for the matter of that, wouldn't I unless I had heard it with my own ears and on the right side of the door.»

Then with frightful suddenness Mrs. Josky also burst into tears.

«Stop! Stop!» cried Andrew, «and I'll stop too – for all my life, if you like.»

Instantly, Mrs. Josky's tears dried up, and at the same moment the howls from the landing died away.

«That's all right, Sir,» she said in a matter-of-fact voice, «and I'm glad, since there won't be any need for me, who hate changes, to look for a new lodger. When one knows the weaknesses of a gentleman, however bad they may be to put up with, one doesn't wish to try those of another that might be worse. Now I've got a beautiful crab for you for supper, and a bottle of white wine to drink with it, that a friend of mine in the trade gave me. Shatter Squirm, I think he called it, which I hope it won't make you do, and a toasted cheese to follow. So I'll be off to dress it and to smack the head of that Laurie if I can catch her, to teach her not to listen at doors.»

So she went with triumph in her eye, metaphorically flapping her wings, and leaving Andrew so prostrate that it took the best part of the bottle of Château Yquem to restore his equilibrium. Until circumstances separated them, never again did he venture

to suggest that he should depart from the shelter of Mrs. Josky's hospitable roof.

While he was digesting the crab and toasted cheese with Château Yquem sauce, which did not prove altogether an easy process, Andrew reflected on many things. Amongst others his mind dwelt upon a single sentence he recalled, standing up like a rock above the foaming flood of Mrs. Josky's eloquence, that in which she had so rudely spoken of Rose as «a dratted girl,» and requested him to beware lest he should find her «in Harley Street before him.» What on earth did she mean by that? It suggested that affection for him might take Rose to Harley Street, which, though flattering, was absurd, seeing that there was no one there of whom she could be jealous and she could always meet him at her own home if she wished. Could she then be suffering from some illness of which Mrs. Josky was aware, that would cause her to consult Dr. Somerville Black? No, that, too, was absurd, for never had he known anyone so entirely healthy.

And, now that he came to think of it, why had Rose herself received the news of his appointment in the way she did? He would have expected her to be delighted, seeing that it meant that within less than the appointed year he ought, with ordinary fortune, to be in a position to support her comfortably as his wife. And yet, although she had of course congratulated him, there was something in her tone which did not suggest delight, but rather a hidden reserve of disapproval. Perhaps she thought that he should not have left her father, even to better his fortune for her sake,

being the unselfish creature that she was. He could not say; all he knew was that Dr. Watson himself took an entirely different view. There was no doubt about his pleasure at such a chance having come in the way of his unpaid assistant. At length Andrew gave it up and went to bed where, in his uneasy slumbers, the crab and the toasted cheese seemed to take up the problem and argue it out in a fashion as grotesque as it was unpleasant.

Next morning he presented himself at Harley Street and began his career as a fashionable physician.

«Glad to see you,» said Somerville Black in his jolly tones. «That will be your kennel,» and he showed him a kind of ante-chamber to the consulting-room. «All the books here, you see» – with a sweep of his arm he indicated shelves of medical works – «I don't read them much myself, prefer to study the living subject. But you may get something out of them. The other kind of books are in those drawers, and it will be your job to keep them in future. By the way, would you like a cheque on account? No. Well, so much the better. They think me liberal, but if you only knew how I hate parting with money! Comes from associating so much with Jews, I suppose. Talking of Jews, there's an old woman of that ancient race coming to see me presently, but she must see you instead as I have to go off to something really important, a little girl who is supposed to have swallowed a latch-key. She – the old woman I mean – has nothing the matter with her, except stinginess which has congested her liver. Listen to what she has got to say and prescribe Epsom Salts morning and

evening in double doses. Good-bye, the door doesn't fit very well, but that don't matter as you will be able to listen to all that goes on in here and pick up some wrinkles. I dare say a lot of people will turn up and I mayn't be back till lunch. There's a list of their names and appointments on that desk; I've put their most probable diseases underneath. Do the best you can with them, and take the fees if they offer any, which I don't suppose they will.»

Then he swept off like a hurricane, leaving Andrew terrified and bewildered.

Three minutes later the butler, Tompkins, a venerable, white-whiskered individual who looked like a cross between a stage peer and a mute, ushered in the old Jewess, Mrs. Solomon Isaacs by name, who stared at him amazed.

At first their interview was tumultuous, as she began by telling him that she had come to see the doctor, not the under-footman. Andrew laughed and replied with some repartee which made the other laugh also. Then she set out her symptoms, glad of a new listener, and ended by saying that if he prescribed Epsom Salts for her, she would throw them at his head. He replied that he would never dream of doing such a thing, as her case was far too serious, and wrote out a prescription in which the despised Epsom Salts appeared under an enormous Latin name. This pleased her so much that she departed, saying that she hoped she would see him again next time she called and not the doctor, and actually left her two guineas on the table, an event which

Somerville Black afterwards declared partook of the miraculous.

Others came also. Some of them refused to see him, while others consented, and with these on the whole he got on fairly well. Still, it was a tired young man who received Dr. Black upon his return and, retiring to his own compartment, joyfully left him to deal with the remaining appointments.

At length they were all worked through, and as they washed their hands together in the lavatory, Black congratulated Andrew on his modicum of success.

«You'll do all right,» he said, «or would if you didn't look as if you had just come from school. I think a pair of glasses would help you, just window-glass in a frame, you know, and if you didn't mind, a little doctoring of your hair to give it a pepper-and-salt appearance; they would soon put up with the rest. But most of these old women can't stick a fellow who looks as though he has been sucking lollypops won in a bet on leap-frog.»

Andrew, who felt nettled at these pointed allusions to the juvenility of his appearance, ignored the subject and asked what happened to the child who had swallowed the latch-key.

«Nothing at all,» answered the doctor, «thanks to me. When I got there they had three of the big surgeons, to say nothing of an anæsthetist and two hospital nurses, and were just going to operate. 'Hold on a bit,' I said, 'for I am the family physician to this household.' Then I made a few investigations and, to cut the story short, I found the latch-key in the child's bed, where she had hidden it to tease the nurse who made use of it for her own

purposes. After that she went to sleep and dreamed that she had swallowed it, and waking up of course simulated the symptoms, or they thought she did. My word! you never saw a crowd look sillier than did those learned members of our profession when I produced that key. One of them wanted to operate all the same, thinking that I had played a trick on them, but the patient has now gone for a walk in the park, while her parent is signing cheques for half-fees. But let us go to lunch, for I expect Arabella is waiting and nothing upsets her temper more than my being late for lunch. She's my daughter, you know, and I hope for your sake that she may take a liking for you, which is more than she has ever done to me. Or if she has, she conceals it very well. You be advised by me, and if she speaks of her health, shake your head and look sad. Above everything, don't tell her that she looks quite well, or is only suffering from too much money and nothing to do.»

Then he led the way to the dining-room, Andrew following with some trepidation, for this description of Arabella frightened him.

From the doorway he caught sight of a tall and elegant-looking woman of about thirty years of age, very beautifully dressed, standing in front of a fire and staring at the clock.

«Hullo! my dear,» said the Doctor with such boisterous geniality that Andrew suspected it of being forced, «are you here already?»

She looked round at him and Andrew saw that she was well-

favoured enough, but with a thin-lipped, rather ill-tempered mouth and restless, discontented eyes, in almost every respect the exact opposite to her father, although oddly enough in her general appearance she resembled him.

«I have been here exactly forty-two minutes, Father,» she said, pointing to the clock. «You may remember that our luncheon hour, fixed by yourself, is twenty minutes past one, which allows five minutes for accidental delay, and it is now twelve minutes past two, which means of course that all the food is spoiled and I shall have another attack of indigestion.»

«Sorry, my love, but I was detained by another young lady —»

«Oh! don't trouble to explain, Father. I am quite aware that everybody comes before me. My health or convenience does not matter.»

At this moment she caught sight of Andrew, who was hovering indeterminate in the doorway reflecting with affection on 13 Justice Street and Mrs. Josky, and her whole attitude changed.

«Is that Doctor West?» she asked with animation. «If so, you might introduce me. I should like to apologize to him for a spoiled luncheon.»

Then Andrew rose to the occasion nobly.

«It is I, Miss Somerville Black, who have to apologize to you,» he said humbly. «The truth is that owing to a stupid mistake I made, I am afraid that I delayed your father. You see, I am a novice here.»

«Splendid,» muttered Dr. Black.

«I quite understand,» said Arabella, «but I am afraid that my wretched indigestion makes me peevish.»

«No wonder,» said Andrew. «Have you tried the new cure? We were very successful with it in Whitechapel.»

«Oh! What is it?» she asked with intense interest, which evidently was shared by her father.

«Something very simple, so simple that I am almost afraid to mention it to you in your father's presence.»

«Oh! don't mind me,» broke in Dr. Black, «I'm always ready to learn.»

«Well, then, it is hot water drunk before and after each meal, also on getting up and at bedtime with about six drops of lemon juice, not more, please, and not less, in each tumblerful. That's the first part of it. The second is not to become a slave to regularity. Doctor Watson, with whom I have been working and who originated this cure, is very strong on that point. He declares that it is our rigid system of meals at fixed hours which accounts for most of these troubles from which no other animal seems to suffer. For instance, himself he will sometimes breakfast at seven and sometimes at eleven, and dine at any hour of the day or night, with the result that he has a perfect digestion.»

«I see,» said Arabella, «I dare say there is a great deal in the idea. Tompkins, give me some boiling water and a lemon.»

«And bring me some too, Tompkins,» said the doctor, «with the whisky.»

After this things went very well indeed. Andrew discoursed

to Arabella about her ailments and afterwards of other matters, with the result that she was soon in the best of tempers, while the Doctor ate an excellent lunch in peace.

«Magnificent, my boy,» he said, «magnificent,» when at last she had departed beaming. «Splendid idea, that hot water, and the six drops of lemon were a perfect stroke of genius. Only I foresee that she will want me to take it also – without the whisky. You know,» he added, changing his tone, «my daughter is a good girl enough, but she has this crank about her health. To tell you the truth, there was a little disappointment a few years ago. If she could only get married, she would be all right. But when a woman is always talking of her digestion – well, it makes a man think that it might interfere with his.»

Chapter VI

The Hospital

Andrew's career as assistant to Dr. Somerville Black in his fashionable and lucrative practice may be summarized in very few words, especially as it was short. He was quite successful in his humble rôle of medical bottle-washer, but the whole business bored him to distraction, because in it, so far as he was concerned, there was absolutely nothing of any importance. Many serious cases came to Dr. Black and received the benefit of his singular gift of diagnosis and shrewd and valuable advice. But he did not deal with them himself; after indicating their nature, almost invariably he passed them on to the real experts in the various branches of medical lore. Still less of course did Andrew deal with them, whose function was simply to hold the stage when the doctor was not there, with any gag that might be convenient, often by calling on and chatting with patients suffering from nothing in particular, when Black had not time to visit them. Very soon, indeed, he came to understand that so far as essentials were concerned and at the bottom he cared for nothing else, he would learn more of his trade in a single month at Whitechapel than he could hope to do in a year in Park Lane, although his pecuniary earnings might be in an inverse ratio.

At first Andrew was amused and interested, but quickly grew

weary and, being intensely zealous and thorough by nature, came to the conclusion that however much he might hope to make out of it ultimately, this Park Lane practice was no place for him, although for reasons of his own it was desirable that he should stay there for a while until he found another opening. Otherwise how was he to marry Rose Watson, as he hoped and expected to do, at the end of his year of probation? This was one of his troubles, but he was faced by another that was even worse than his daily struggle between professional conscience and personal advantage. Arabella, who was a good many years his senior, took a fancy to him which soon became very marked. On every possible occasion she consulted him about her imaginary symptoms, deferring to his advice in a fashion which he thought pathetic, since he knew it to be based on nothing.

Now Andrew, although he could play a part for a while and appreciate a joke, was at bottom an earnest and upright young man. Therefore at length the truth burst out of him, even where his master's daughter was concerned.

«It is absurd of you, Miss Black,» he said, «to consult me, a mere novice, when you have at your command your father, who in his own way is one of the most skilled of our profession, and all its other members as well. But since you persist in doing so, I will tell you what I think. It is that you are a perfectly healthy woman; there is nothing at all the matter with you.»

Thus quoth the exasperated Andrew, reflecting, not altogether with regret, that the speech would put a full stop to his practice

as second fiddle to a fashionable physician. Arabella's pale but statuesque face flushed a little as she heard, but to his surprise she showed no anger, only great interest.

«How curious that you should tell me that,» she said. «Nobody else has, not even my father. They all give me prescriptions.»

«Because they are afraid of you and do not want to be worried,» blurted out Andrew. «I could give you a prescription also and one which would prove a perfect cure for all your ailments, which are real enough in their way.»

«Indeed, and what is it?»

«To cease thinking about yourself and begin to think about others. You have too much to your hand. Stop taking, and give.»

In a nebulous fashion it came home to Arabella that his words embodied a fine idea.

«How?» she asked, then added with an outgush of truth, «I am a failure, Doctor West, and a very unhappy woman. My father and I do not get on. We bore each other and I am a disappointment to him. Of course we are very wealthy, but that does not seem to help matters since we have no society, except that of other doctors and rich, common people whom my father sometimes entertains for professional reasons. They do not care for me, and I,» she added sighing, «have attracted no one outside because, you see, I am stupid and interest nobody, and am not good-looking enough to please them otherwise. Also I am a fidget, I know it, and so, between one thing and another, even the money does not seem to help me and I feel very lonely, having

no relations. What is the use of driving out in beautiful clothes and a splendid carriage and pair, when everybody looks at your fur coat and the horses and not at you, and if they talk about you at all, only say that you will have a lot of money?» she ended pathetically with a kind of sob.

«I don't know,» said Andrew who was touched. «None, I should think. But, dash it all! Miss Arabella, it is your own fault. Why are you eternally talking about your health and making fusses because people are late for luncheon, and so forth, till you get the reputation of being a crank, as I do myself for different reasons. Don't stop to answer, but since you have been so good as to consult me and as crank calls to crank, I'll give you my advice. Imagine that you have only two pounds a week to live on and stick to that limit, and take a boxful of your oldest clothes – if you have any old clothes – and go out to work.»

She considered him a little and then asked:

«Would you think better of me if I did?»

«I don't quite see what I have to do with it, but of course I should.»

«Then I'll try, if you will show me how.»

Andrew ran his fingers through his wavy hair and studied her with his dark eyes. Suddenly an idea came to him and he said:

«Doctor Watson, with whom I worked before I came here, keeps a curious hospital of his own, a sort of home for irritating and indefinite cases, generally of elderly females whom the regular hospitals won't take and who are not mad enough to

be sent to an asylum, broken-down ladies and that kind, with a few drug victims whom he treats mostly by suggestion. It is reported that he does this on the interest of a sum of money, thirty thousand pounds, which a grateful patient left him to apply as he thought best. He might have kept it for himself if he wished, but being the man he is, took a different view and never tried. So he runs this place, helping out the expenses with such voluntary contributions as he can get. His nurses are also voluntary and therefore hard to find. I believe he wants one now, and she need not be skilled but just ready to work. Do you understand?»

«Yes, I think so. But wouldn't money be more serviceable?»

«For him, but not for you,» replied Andrew almost rudely.

«Where should I live? In the hospital?» she asked again.

«No, I think not, the patients would get upon your nerves at night, and perhaps you might get upon theirs. But I've no doubt that he would put you up at Red Hall, where there is lots of room, if you don't mind roughing it. And now I must be off. I've to meet your father about a case of an hysterical young woman. Her fit always takes her at five o'clock, and it's a quarter to now. Forgive me if I have made suggestions which I dare say you think foolish.»

«I don't think them foolish,» gasped Arabella. «I think them extremely wise, though I fear that I shall be very useless at first. Will you take me to see Doctor Watson?»

Andrew reflected. Here was a good excuse for another visit to Red Hall, or in other words, to see Rose.

«Yes,» he answered, «that is, if you do not mind calling at 13 Justice Street where I live, at, say, twenty minutes to six. If I am not there by then, as I expect to be, my landlady, Mrs. Josky, will look after you till I come. Does that suit you? Very well. Now I must be off.»

At twenty minutes to six accordingly, or rather before it, one of Dr. Black's smart broughams drew up at 13 Justice Street. Arabella, like many other idle and aimless women, having developed an idea, was anxious to act upon it in a hurry. Moreover, she desired greatly to please Andrew and to advance herself in his good opinion. At the bottom Arabella had something in her. Circumstances and environment had made her what she was, also youthful ailments which she could not believe she had outgrown. Had she been otherwise placed she might have been a useful woman enough, although perhaps one not altogether easy to live with in any intimate relation. Now she was determined that she would do something.

She never stopped to consult her father, since it had long been agreed between them that provided she did not trouble him, she was free to go her own way. Also she possessed a considerable fortune inherited from her mother, and therefore no financial question would arise between them. Lastly, they did not get on, and she was quite certain that he would not object to her temporary absence from his house. This indeed proved to be the case.

After he had left her it suddenly occurred to Andrew that he

ought not to have made his suggestion to Arabella without first consulting her father. Therefore when he met him, he told him what he had done and of the surprising way in which she had welcomed his quite random and casual idea.

The doctor was not in the least disturbed, indeed he laughed.

«It's just one of her whimsies,» he said; «she is as full of them as a pod is of peas. If she takes the business on I expect she will be back in a week. But I agree with you that what she wants is work and an occupation in life, for though she was delicate once, her only real weakness now is her temper. If only she could marry some decent fellow and have half a dozen children she would be as right as rain.»

He reflected a little, then added:

«But I don't know how she would get on in that flower garden at Red Hall, that is if Watson is fool enough to have anything to do with her as a nurse for his softies. Yet perhaps it is as well that she should become acquainted with —» then he checked himself suddenly and turned the subject by saying, «But let us leave Arabella to manage her own affairs, which she is quite old enough to do, and attend to ours. I have no doubt I shall hear plenty about them in due course.»

Laurie, an inquisitive and observant child, was fond of watching what went on in the street, which in summer she did from the doorstep, and in winter through the window of the room where Mrs. Josky carried on her somewhat mysterious commercial transactions. This habit of hers had a business side,

since she kept the shop, noted the arrival of customers who often liked to call after dark, and if necessary, summoned her mother should she be cooking or otherwise employed. Presently from this coign of vantage she perceived the brougham with its fast, high-trotting horse which, after some hesitation and preliminary search by a footman, pulled up in front of their door, information that Laurie conveyed at the top of her voice to her mother in the kitchen below.

Mrs. Josky arrived in a hurry and peeped through the window just in time to see the tall and statuesque Arabella descend from the brougham of which the door was held open by the long-coated footman.

«My!» said Mrs. Josky, «I wonder what she is coming here for. To sell something on the sly, perhaps, but if it's them sables she's got on, they're beyond me.»

Then she went to the door where a colloquy ensued, which resulted in her showing Arabella up to Andrew's sitting-room, where she lighted the gas with a box of matches which she produced from her pocket.

«I'll have the fire going in a minute, Ma'am, which in general I don't do before half-past six, since Mr. West doesn't ever eat before eight nowadays, and sometimes later, that's trying enough to one who has to cook his meals. I understood you to say you wished to see him, Ma'am,» she added interrogatively, for curiosity burned within her like a fire.

«Yes,» replied Arabella. «I am Miss Somerville Black, and

Doctor West arranged to meet me here at twenty minutes to six.»

«Then you will have ten minutes to wait, Miss, as it is only half- past five; or mayhap longer, as he isn't a very punctual gentleman, which is awkward if it is a case of sudden sickness.»

«There is no sickness in the matter,» replied Arabella shortly.
«Doctor West is going to take me to Red Hall.»

«Oh!» exclaimed Mrs. Josky, in the intervals of puffing at the fire, «to see Miss Rose, I suppose. But perhaps you know her already if you are Doctor Somerville Black's daughter, Miss, since he goes there often enough.»

«Who is Miss Rose?» inquired Arabella, now as curious as Mrs. Josky herself.

«Why,» replied Mrs. Josky between her puffs, «who should she be, except Rose Watson, the Whitechapel Rose they call her because she's such a beauty. It is a strange thing, Miss, if you haven't heard of her, being Doctor Black's daughter and Doctor West's friend, seeing that according to all accounts they both worship the ground she walks on. But there, men are men and like to keep things to themselves, and small blame to them.»

«Do they?» answered Arabella rather vacuously, «and – is this young lady so very beautiful?»

«To be honest, Miss, there ain't no doubt about that, so far as face and figure go, which is what men look to, though for the rest, to my mind as empty as a tin can with a hole in it.»

«You don't seem to like her,» said Arabella.

«Who likes a young woman what leads a young gentleman

that's been her lodger for long and dragged her child out of the grave, a fool's dance, meaning to shut the door in his face at the end of the room?» inquired Mrs. Josky enigmatically as she ceased from her fire-raising labours.

Arabella, more interested than she had been in anything for years, was about to ask what on earth she meant, when Mrs. Josky held up a warning finger and exclaimed in a stage whisper:

«Hush! he's coming. I hear his step in the street and I'd know it among a thousand, since he don't walk, he runs, being always in such a blooming hurry, and Laurie what loves him, will have the door open before he gets there. There, don't you hear her kissing him, which sometimes I should like to do myself. And to think of his wasting himself on that there Rose what will come to pieces presently leaving nothing but a stalk in his hand and that full enough of prickles. But mum's the word about her, Miss, of whom I've no doubt you'll get to know plenty before all's done,» she added with ominous emphasis.

In another moment Andrew rushed into the room, freeing himself from Laurie who was clinging to his hand, and began apologies.

«No need to be humble, Mr. West,» interposed Mrs. Josky severely. «Seeing that the young lady, your visitor, says you weren't due till twenty to, which leaves you with a minute to spare by the clock, which I keep exactly to church time, as did Josky before me. And now, you'll have your tea and an egg before you start wherever you may be going, since you won't get nothing

there, except —»

«No, no, Mrs. Josky,» broke in Andrew, «many thanks, but we must be getting on.»

«Ah! I thought you would be in a hurry and I hope you will find yourself well paid. May I expect to see you back to-night, Mr. West, for dinner, I mean, and will this lady be with you?»

«Yes, of course, Mrs. Josky – I mean No; I mean I shall be alone. Time? Oh! the same as usual. Come one, Miss Black, the horse is getting cold.»

«And so will the dinner be,» murmured Mrs. Josky, «before I see you again. If only this one would take you off that one, it might be a good job. But she hasn't got the looks, at least of the right sort, and there ain't the stuffing in her.»

«Mrs. Josky seems to be very fond of you, Doctor West,» remarked Arabella in the brougham.

«Yes, now you mention it, I suppose she is. She's a dear soul, but she makes me eat too much,» replied Andrew, absently, for his mind was fixed upon the sure and certain hope of seeing Rose.

As in common in such cases, he was destined to disappointment, for when they reached Red Hall, Sister Angelica who opened the door informed them that Rose was out, adding vaguely that she had not the least idea where she had gone or when she would be in again.

The information seemed to strike Andrew like a blow, for he stood quite still, as though at a loss what to do next, then

murmured something about «another time.»

«But,» suggested Arabella, «I thought that we came to see Doctor Watson. You did not tell me that this young lady managed the hospital.»

«Of course not, and of course we did – I mean, come to see Doctor Watson. Is he in, Sister Angelica?»

«Oh! yes,» replied Angelica. «You'll find him having his tea about an hour late, as I know to my cost, having had to boil the water three times.»

So saying, she melted away nebulously into the darkness of the passage, leaving them to their own devices.

«Come on,» said Andrew to Arabella. «Perhaps you had better take my hand, as I know the steps and they haven't lit the gas.»

Presently they found themselves in the sitting-room where Doctor Watson was seated at the Elizabethan table, a cup of cold tea before him, which his interest in the book he was reading had caused him to forget to drink. Looking up at the noise of their entry, he caught sight of a tall female form in the shadow, and concluded that it was that of his daughter.

«I'm glad you're back, Rose,» he said, «for really this tea is undrinkable; I think it must have been made yesterday and stood ever since. Angelica's gifts do not lie in the way of tea-making; I meant to speak about it before, but I so seldom see you now, for you are never down to breakfast —»

«It is I, Doctor Watson,» interrupted Andrew hurriedly, «and

this lady is not Rose, but Miss Somerville Black, who has come to see you.»

«Didn't know there was a Miss Somerville Black,» muttered the doctor to himself, then added aloud,

«Ah! a patient, I suppose. Will you like to go into the surgery, Miss Black?»

Then ensued explanations, and the end of it was that Dr. Watson said that if Arabella cared to make a trial of the hospital, he would be pleased; also, that she was very welcome to lodge at Red Hall as a paying guest, since he was sorry to say that he could not afford to put her up for nothing, that is if she was not fastidious and if she did not mind poisonous tea and erratic meals. He suggested, however, that first she had better come and see the hospital which was almost next door, at once if it suited her, before the patients went to bed.

To Andrew's surprise Arabella answered firmly that it did suit her. Moreover, she proposed that he should return to Justice Street in the brougham, and send it back to take her home.

As Andrew saw no signs of Rose and, having had no lunch that day, suddenly began to think with affection of Mrs. Josky's dinner, he went, leaving Dr. Watson and Arabella to settle things as they pleased. He did not care how they settled them, for Rose being absent, the world was empty to him, and void of interest.

Here it may be stated that, conducted by Dr. Watson, Arabella went over the hospital. She saw the patients, a number of miserable old women belonging to the rag-tag and bobtail of a

certain class of female who, most of them, had seen better days and fallen under the bondage of moral weaknesses connected with their bodily plight.

They did not interest her very much, though being good-hearted, she pitied their woes. But suddenly, in a kind of flash, it came home to her that if she lost her money, under certain quite conceivable circumstances she might become just like one of these aimless and futile women, a thought that gave her a shock and ultimately an inspiration.

Now she had one talent; she was an admirable housewife. No establishment was better run than that of her father, and although he never realized it, she managed everything and at a minimum of expense, considering its costly scale. At once she observed that this hospital was *not* well run, and pointed out sundry details to Dr. Watson which struck him very much. Also she asked if she might see the books, only to find that there was none that could be produced. In the end she said:

«Well, I do not know whether I should be useful here as a nurse, but I think that I could do the housekeeping, if only I was told how much there is to spend.»

«Then for heaven's sake try,» exclaimed the doctor, «for I am in despair about it and Rose gives me no help, although it is a woman's business.»

They went back to Red Hall and there, subject to her father's consent, fixed up matters to their mutual satisfaction, the agreement being that Arabella was to fill the position of matron

for a month on trial.

Just as she was going away Rose returned and for the first time the two women came face to face.

While Dr. Watson introduced them they studied each other with results that were pleasing to neither. Arabella admitted to herself that Rose really was beautiful, of that there could be no doubt, but concluded at once that she did not like her. Rose set down Arabella as plain, which she was not for her features were good. What she lacked was colour and any vivacity whereof her general boredom with life had robbed her. Also she reciprocated Arabella's distaste. In short, the two women felt that their attitude towards each other was one of antagonism. Meanwhile Arabella was wondering what Mrs. Josky had meant by saying that her father worshipped the ground that this girl walked on. As regarded Andrew she could understand. Though it made her jealous, since she had conceived so strong a liking for him herself, it was only natural that a young man should be attracted by such a face and form. But what could a man of her father's age find in her to worship?

In another minute they had parted, since after a few rather awkward words Arabella announced that she must hurry or she would be late for dinner. When she was gone Rose asked her father why she had come. He told her and she listened astonished.

«Do you believe all that, Father?» she said.

«Why not, Rose?»

«Do you think it likely that a lady who has thousands and

thousands would want to come to work in that dreadful hospital among those horrid old women?»

«It seems that she does,» answered her father in his musing voice. «After all, why not? Is it impossible that a woman, however rich, should be touched by a sense of the higher things? If so, what do you suggest is her reason?»

«Oh!» exclaimed Rose with unusual irritation, for hers was a placid nature, «to please Andrew – I mean Doctor West, probably, or —» and she paused.

«Or what, Rose?»

«To spy upon me,» she answered and, turning, left the room.

Now what on earth did she mean by that? reflected her father. What conceivable reason could Miss Black have that would induce her to spy upon Rose? Then this good, easy man, whose mind was lost in those higher things of which he had never spoken to a daughter who understood nothing about them, shrugged his shoulders and gave up the problem, wondering as he did so what she would say when she learned that Miss Black was to live in the house. It occurred to him that she might object, also that, speaking generally, his home was uncomfortable. Whenever he mentioned it, always he was informed that this was because of his Socialistic cranks which led him to prefer teacups without saucers, and so forth, an argument that hitherto had reduced him to silence. Now, however, he began to doubt its force, remembering that saucers and tablecloths are not the whole of domestic life.

«Oh!» he muttered to himself as he felt his way towards the surgery down the dark passage where it had not occurred to anyone to light the gas, «the truth is that Rose and I cannot understand each other and don't get on. I wish she would marry, though if she did I am not sure that her husband would praise her in the end. Beauty isn't everything, especially when the heart inside of it is small,» he added with as much bitterness as his gentle nature could conceive.

Chapter VII

Andrew's Farewell

Arabella went to the hospital, and, like Bottom, was translated. For the first time in her idle, aimless and luxurious life, she found herself with work to do and faced by real responsibility which called out innate qualities inherited from her vigorous and active-brained father. Soon she forgot her own petty ailments in attending to the real illnesses of others, some of which, as it happened, were serious at the time. Also her natural talent for housewifery was given full scope and she used it to great advantage. Soon, like herself, that hospital was also transformed, so much so that it would have been difficult to recognise it as the same place. The meals were punctual and sufficient; the old women looked tidier and more cheerful, while the house by degrees attained to a perfect cleanliness. The only people who seemed dissatisfied with the change were the servants, two rather rough women who had acted as under-nurses. In course of time, however, even these became reconciled, since when once its back was broken, they found the work lighter than it had been before.

It must be admitted that there was another cause for this transformation, although of it Dr. Watson never knew. When Arabella took charge of the place she found the accounts in a sad state, also that expenditure had outrun income. Now Arabella

was blessed with this world's goods and had a large balance at her bankers. So in some mysterious way that the doctor never quite mastered, very shortly income overtook expenditure and one of his great anxieties was removed.

Moreover, this paying guest made her influence felt in his own home. She became great friends with the amiable but vacuous Angelica, and in her spare time would assist her in the kitchen, for Arabella loved a kitchen. No longer did the gas stove prove a mystery measureless to woman; no longer was the tea an undrinkable essence or dinner a feast more movable than that of Easter. Only Rose, who viewed these changes with a kind of indolent disapproval, remained precisely the same, since she was one of those women who do not vary. She never had taken and never meant to take any trouble about anything, except her own comfort and personal appearance. To these she had always attended and to these she continued to attend. Between her and Arabella there was established a state of armed neutrality, superimposed upon a basis of cordial dislike. Each of them despised the other, but neither being warlike by nature, matters never proceeded to a state of open quarrel.

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