GLASGOW ELLEN GHOLSON

PHASES OF AN INFERIOR PLANET

Ellen Glasgow

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Phase First

"Some turned to folly and the sweet works of the flesh."
– Hymn to Zeus.

CHAPTER I

Along Broadway at six o'clock a throng of pedestrians was stepping northward. A grayish day was settling into a gray evening, and a negative lack of color and elasticity had matured into a positive condition of atmospheric flatness. The air exhaled a limp and insipid moisture, like that given forth by a sponge newly steeped in an anæsthetic. Upon the sombre fretwork of leafless trees, bare against red-brick buildings, drops of water hung trembling, though as yet there had been no rainfall, and the straggling tufts of grass in the city parks drooped earthward like the damp and uncurled fringe of a woman's hair.

Spanning the remote west as a rainbow stretched an unfulfilled pledge of better things, for beyond the smoke-begrimed battalion of tenement chimney-pots a faint streak of mauve defined the line of the horizon – an ineffectual and transparent sheet of rose-tinted vapor, through which the indomitable neutrality of background was revealed. The city swam in a sea of mist, and the electric lights, coming slowly into being, must have seemed to a far-off observer a galaxy of wandering stars that had burst the woof of heaven and fallen from their allotted spheres to be caught like blossoms in the white obscurity of fog. Above them their deserted habitation frowned blackly down with closed doors and impenetrable walls.

The effect of the immortal transformation of day into night was singularly elusive. It had come so stealthily that the fleet-footed hours seemed to have tripped one another in the fever of the race, the monotonous grayness of their garments shrouding, as they fluttered past, the form of each sprightly elf.

Along Broadway the throng moved hurriedly. At a distance indescribably homogeneous, as it passed the lighted windows of shops it was seen to be composed of individual atoms, and their outlines were relieved against the garish interiors like a panorama of automatic silhouettes. Then, as they neared a crossing, a flood of radiant electricity, revealing minute details of face and figure, the atoms were revivified from automatic into animal existence.

With an inhuman disregard of caste and custom, the aberrant shadows of the passers-by met and mingled one into another. A phantasmagoric procession took place upon the sidewalk. The ethereal accompaniment of the physical substance of a Wall Street plutocrat glided sedately after that of a bedizened daughter of the people, whose way, beginning in the glare of the workhouse, was ending in the dusk of the river; a lady of quality, whose very shadow seemed pregnant with the odor of spice and sables, melted before the encroaching presence of a boot-black fresh from the Bowery; a gentleman of fashion gave place to the dull phantom of a woman with burning brows and fingers purple with the stain of many stitches. It was as if each material substance, warm with the lust of the flesh and reeking with a burnt-offering of vanity, was pursued by the inevitable presence of a tragic destiny.

At the corner of Seventeenth Street, a girl in a last season's coat left the crowd and paused before a photographer's window. As she passed from shadow into light the play of her limbs was suggested by the close folds of her shabby skirt. She had the light and steadfast gait of one to whom exercise is as essential as food, and more easily attained.

A man coming from Union Square turned to look at her as she passed.

"That girl is a *danseuse*," he said to his companion, "or she ought to be. She walks to music."

"Your induction is false," retorted the other. "She happens to be – "

And they passed on.

As the girl paused before the lighted window the outlines of head and shoulders were accentuated, while the rest of her body remained in obscurity. Her head was shapely and well poised. Beneath the small toque of black velvet, an aureole of dry brown hair framed her sensitive profile like a setting of old mahogany. Even in the half-light silhouette it could be noticed that eyes, hair, and complexion differed in tone rather than in color. Her sallow skin blended in peculiar harmony

with the gray-green of her eyes and the brown of her hair. Her face was long, with irregular features and straight brows. The bones of cheek and chin were rendered sharper by extreme thinness.

A new photograph of Alvary was displayed, and a small group had assembled about the window.

The girl looked at it for a moment; then, as some one in the crowd jostled against her, she turned with an exclamation of annoyance and entered the shop. Hesitating an instant, she drew a worn purse from her pocket, looked into it, gave a decisive little shrug, and approached the counter.

The shop-girl came up, and, recognizing her, nodded.

"Music?" she inquired, glancing at the leather roll which the other carried.

The girl shook her head slowly.

"No," she replied, "I want a photograph of Alvary – as Lohengrin. Oh, the Swan Song – "

A man who was sorting a pile of music in the rear of the shop came forward smiling. He was small and dark and foreign.

"Ah, mademoiselle," he said, "it ees a plaisir for w'ich I live, ees ze Elsa of your."

The girl smiled in return. In the clear light the glint of green in her eyes deepened.

"No," she replied, "this is Elsa." She pointed to a photograph in the case. "This is the only Elsa. I should not dare."

He bowed deprecatingly.

"Zat ees ontil you come," he said. "I live for ze day w'en we sing togezzer, you an' I. I live to sing wiss you in ze grand opera."

"Ah, monsieur," lamented the girl, regretfully, "one cannot live forever. The Lord has allotted a term."

She took her change, nodded gayly, and departed.

In the street she passed unheeded. She was as ignored by the crowd around her as the colorless shadow at her side. Upon a massive woman in a feather boa a dozen men gazed with evident desire, and after the sables enveloping the lady of quality the eyes of the boot-black yearned. But the girl moved among them unnoticed – she was insignificant and easily overlooked.

A violet falling upon the pavement from the breast of a woman in front of her, the girl lifted her skirt, and, to avoid crushing it, made a slight divergence from her path. Then impulsively she turned to rescue it from the cold sidewalk, but in so doing she stumbled against a man whose heel had been its Juggernaut. A tiny blot of purple marked the scene of its destruction.

Over the girl's face a shadow fell; she glanced up and caught the courteous smile of an acquaintance, and the shadow was lifted. But before her upward glance tended earthward it rested upon an overdriven horse standing in the gutter, and the shadow that returned had gathered to itself the force of a rain-cloud.

An impressionable and emotional temperament cast its light and darkness upon her features, as the shifting clouds cast their varying shades upon an evening landscape. With such a face, her moods must be as evanescent as the colors of a kaleidoscope.

As she neared an electric light she slipped the photograph she carried from its envelope, and surveyed it with warming eyes. She spoke in a soft whisper —

"I shall never sing Elsa – never – never! Lehmann is Elsa. But what does it matter? By the time I reach grand opera I shall have dinners – real dinners – with napkins the size of a sheet and vegetables of curious kinds. Then I'll grow fat and become famous. I may even sing Isolde."

She broke into a regretful little sigh. "And Alvary will be too old to be my Tristan."

At the corner of Twenty-third Street she took a cross-town car. It was crowded, and, with half-suppressed disgust, she rested the tips of her fingers upon a leather strap. The gloves covering the fingers were worn and badly mended, but the touch was delicate.

Something graceful and feminine and fragile in her unsteady figure caused half a dozen men to rise hastily, and she accepted a proffered seat with the merest inclination of her head.

With an involuntary coquetry she perceived that, as the newest feminine arrival, she was being stealthily regarded from behind the wall of newspapers skirting the opposite seat. She raised her hand to her loosened hair, half frowned, and glanced at the floor with demure indifference.

Beside her sat an Irishwoman with a heavy basket and a black bruise upon her temple. The girl looked at the woman and the bruise with an expression of repugnance. The repugnance was succeeded by a tidal wave of self-commiseration. She pitied herself that she was forced to make use of public means of conveyance. The onions in the Irishwoman's basket offended her nostrils.

Her gaze returned to her lap. As daintily as she had withdrawn her person from contact with the woman beside her, she withdrew her finely strung senses from contact with the odor of onions and the closeness of the humanity hemming her in.

She sat in disdainful self-absorption. Her sensitive features became impassive, her head drooped, the green in her eyes faded into gray, and the lashes obscured them. The shadow of her heavy hair rested like a veil upon her face.

When the car reached Ninth Avenue she got out, walked to Thirtieth Street, and crossed westward. Facing her stood the immense and unpicturesque apartment-house known as "The Gotham" – a monument of human Philistinism and brownstone-finished effrontery. She entered and passed through the unventilated hall to the restaurant at the rear.

As she crossed the threshold, a man seated at one of the larger tables looked up.

"My dear girl," he said, reproachfully, "lateness for dinner at The Gotham entails serious consequences. We were just planning a search-party."

His right-hand neighbor spoke warningly. "Don't believe him, Miss Musin; he refused to get uneasy until he had finished his dinner."

"When one is empty," retorted the first, "one can't get even uneasy. Anxiety can't be produced from a void."

The girl nodded good-evening, took her seat, and unfolded her napkin. The first gentleman passed her the butter, the second the water-bottle. The first was named Nevins. He was fair and pallid, with a long face that would have been round had nature supplied gratification as well as instinct. His shoulders were high and narrow, suggesting the perpetual shrug with which he met his fate. He was starving upon an artistic career. The second gentleman – Mr. Sellars – was sleek and middle-aged. Providence had intended him for a poet; life had made of him a philosopher – and a plumber. He was still a man of sentiment.

At the head of the table sat Mr. Paul – an apostle of pessimism, whose general flavor marked the pessimist rather than the apostle. The peculiarity of his face was its construction – the features which should have gone up coming down, and the features which should have come down going up. Perhaps had Mr. Paul himself moralized upon the fact, which is not likely, he would have concluded that it was merely a physical expression of his mental attitude towards the universe. He had long since arrived at the belief that whatever came in life was the thing of all others which should have kept away, and its coming was sufficient proof of its inappropriateness. He had become a pessimist, not from passion, but from principle. He had chosen his view of the eternal condition of things as deliberately as he would have selected the glasses with which to survey a given landscape. Having made his choice, he stood to it. No surreptitious favors at the hands of Providence were able to modify his honest conviction of its general unpleasantness.

The remaining persons at this particular table were of less importance. There was Miss Ramsey, the journalist, who was pretty and faded and harassed, and who ate her cold dinner, to which she usually arrived an hour late, in exhausted silence. Miss Ramsey was one whom, her friends said, adversity had softened; but Miss Ramsey herself knew that the softness of adversity is the softness of decay. There was Mr. Ardly, a handsome young fellow, who did the dramatic column of a large daily, and who regarded life as a gigantic jag, facing failure with facetiousness and gout with inconsequence. There was Mr. Morris, who was thin, and Mr. Mason, who was fat, and Mr. Hogarth, who was neither.

The restaurant consisted of a long and queerly shaped room. It had originally been divided into two apartments, but when the house had passed into the present management the partition had been torn down, and two long and narrow tables marked the line where the division had been. The walls were dingy and unpapered. Where the plaster was of an unusual degree of smokiness, several cheap chromos, in cheaper frames, had been hung, like brilliant patches laid upon a dingy background. Above the chromos lingered small bunches of evergreen – faded and dried remnants of the last holiday season – and from the tarnished and fly-specked chandelier hung a withered spray of mistletoe.

The room was crowded. There was not so much as a vacant seat at the tables. The hum of voices passed through the doors and into the rumble of the street without. In a far corner a lady in a blouse of geranium pink was engaged in catching reckless flies for the sustenance of the chameleon upon her breast; nearer at hand a gentleman was polishing his plate and knife with his napkin. It was warm and oppressive, and the voices sounded shrilly through the glare. The girl whom they had called "Miss Musin" looked up with absent-minded abruptness.

"I had as soon wear wooden shoes as eat with a pewter fork!" she remarked, irritably.

Mr. Nevins shook his flaxen head and laid down his spoon.

"So long as it remains a question of forks," he observed, "let us give thanks. Who knows when it may become one of food?" Then he sighed. "If it is only a sacrifice of decency, I'm equal to it, but I refuse to live without food."

"The audacity of youth!" commented Mr. Sellars, the philosopher. "I said the same at your age. But for taking the conceit out of one, commend me to experience."

"From a profound study of the subject," broke in Mr. Paul, grimly, "I have been able to calculate to a nicety that each one of these potatoes, taken internally, lessens an hour of one's existence. As a method of self-destruction" – and he proceeded to help himself – "there is none more efficacious than an exclusive diet of Gotham potatoes. Allow me to pass them." He looked at Miss Musin, but Mr. Nevins rose to the occasion.

"After such an analysis, my gallantry forbids," and he intercepted the dish.

The girl glanced up at him.

"Extinction long drawn out is boring," she said. "And is food the only factor of human life? It may be the most important, I admit, but important things should not always be talked of."

"I declare it quite staggers me," interrupted a cheerful individual, who was Mr. Morris, "to think of the number of things that should not be talked of – some amazingly interesting things, too! Do you know, sometimes I wonder if social intercourse will not finally be reduced to a number of persons assembling to sit in silent meditation upon the subjects which are not to be spoken of? One so soon exhausts the absolutely correct topics."

"We are a nation of prudes," declared Mr. Paul, with emphasis, "and there is no vice that rots a people to the core so rapidly as the vice of prudery. All our good red blood has passed into a limbo of social ostracism along with ladies' legs."

"I was just thinking," commented Mr. Hogarth, who aspired to the rakish and achieved the asinine, "that the last-named subject had been particularly in evidence of late. What with the ballet and the bicycle – " He blushed and glanced at Miss Musin.

She was smiling. "Oh, I don't object," she said, "so long as they are well shaped."

Mr. Nevins upheld her from an artistic stand-point.

"I hold," he said, authoritatively, "that indecency can only exist where beauty is wanting. All beauty is moral. I have noticed in regard to my models – "

"On the contrary," interrupted Mr. Paul, "there is no such thing as beauty. It is merely the creation of a diseased imagination pursuing novelty. We call nature beautiful, but it is only a term we employ to express a chimera of the senses. Nature is not beautiful. Its colors are glaringly defective. It is ugly. The universe is ugly. Civilization is ugly. We are ugly – "

"Oh, Mr. Paul!" said Miss Musin, reproachfully.

"Our one consolation," continued Mr. Paul, in an unmoved voice, "is the knowledge that if we could possibly have been uglier we should have been so created. Providence would have seen to it."

"When Providence provided ugliness," put in Mr. Morris, good-naturedly, "it provided ignorance along with it."

Mr. Ardly, who was eating his dinner with a copy of the *Evening Post* spread out upon his knees, looked up languidly.

"We are becoming unpleasantly personal," he remarked. "Personalities in conversation should be avoided as sedulously as onions in soup. They are stimulating, but vulgar."

Mr. Paul seized the bait of the unconscious thrower with avidity.

"Vulgarity," he announced, with ringing emphasis, "is the most prominent factor in the universe. It is as essential to our existence as the original slime from which we and it emanated. If there is one thing more vulgar than nature, it is civilization. Whatever remnant of innocence nature left in the mind of man civilization has wiped out. It has debased the human intellect – "

"And deformed the human figure," interpolated Mr. Nevins, with a sigh. "Oh, for the days of Praxiteles!"

The emotionless tones of Mr. Paul flowed smoothly on.

"And if there is one thing more vulgar than civilization, it is art."

Mr. Nevins retorted in a voice of storm.

"Sir," he cried, "art is my divinity!"

"A vulgar superstition," commented Mr. Paul, calmly; and he pointed to a poster beside Mr. Nevins's plate. "You call that art, I suppose?"

Mr. Nevins colored, but met him valiantly. "No," he returned; "I call that bread and meat."

As the girl next him rose from her chair she bestowed upon him an approving smile, which he returned with sentimental interest.

"You haven't finished," he remonstrated, in an aside. "My posters aren't only bread and meat; they are pie – principally pie."

The girl laughed and shook her head.

"And principally pumpkin," she returned. "No, thank you!"

She left the dining-room and mounted the stairs to the fourth landing. Her room was in the front of the house, and the way to it lay through a long and dimly lighted corridor, the floor of which was covered with figured oil-cloth.

As she slipped the key into the lock the door swung back, and a blast of damp air from the open window blew into her face. She crossed the room and stood for a moment with her hand upon the sash, looking down into the street. A train upon the elevated road was passing, and she saw the profiles of the passengers dark against the lighted interior. Clouds of white smoke, blown rearward by the engine's breath, hovered about the track, too light to fall. Then, as the wind chased westward, the clouds were torn asunder, and stray wreaths, deepening into gray, drifted along the cross street leading to the river.

The girl reached out and drew in a can of condensed milk from the fire-escape. Then she lowered the window and turned on the steam-heater in the corner, which set up a hissing monotone.

The room was small and square. There was a half-worn carpet upon the floor, and the walls were covered with cheap paper, the conspicuous feature of which was a sprawling design in green and yellow cornucopias. In one corner stood a small iron bedstead, partially concealed by a Japanese screen, which extended nominal protection to the wash-stand as well. On the wall above the screen an iron hook was visible, from which hung a couple of bath-towels and a scrubbing-brush suspended by a string. Nearer the window there was an upright piano, with a scarf of terra-cotta flung across it and a row of photographs of great singers arranged along the ledge. Here and there on the furniture vivid bits of drapery were pinned over barren places.

But with the proof of a sensuous craving for color a latent untidiness was discernible. Her slippers lay upon the hearth-rug where she had tossed them when dressing for the street; a box of hair-pins had been upset upon the bureau, and a half-open drawer revealed a tangled mass of net veiling.

Throwing her hat and coat upon the bed, the girl turned up the lights, selected a score of "Lucia" from a portfolio under the piano, and, seating herself at the music-stool, struck the key-board with sudden fervor. The light soprano notes rang out, filling the small room with a frail yet penetrating sweetness. It was a clear and brilliant voice, but it was a voice in miniature, of which the first freshness was marred – and it was not the voice for Lucia.

With quick dismay the girl realized it, and rising impatiently, tossed the score upon the carpet and left the piano.

Standing before the long mirror on the wall, she slipped off her walking-gown, letting it fall in a black heap to her feet. Then stepping over it, she kicked it aside and stood with gleaming arms and breast in the flickering gas-light. She loosened her heavy hair, drawing the pins from it one by one, until it fell in a brown mane upon her shoulders.

Doffing her conventional dress, she doffed conventionality as well. She was transformed into something seductive and subtle – something in woman's flesh as ethereal as sea-foam and as vivid as flame.

She smiled suddenly. Then to a humming accompaniment she twirled upon her toes, her steps growing faster and faster until her figure was obscured in the blur of action and her hair flew about her face like the hair of a painted witch.

The words of the air she hummed came with a dash of bravado from between her lips:

" – Ange ou diable,
Écume de la mer?"

Still smiling, she sank in an exhausted heap upon the floor.

Then she went to bed and fell asleep, lamenting that her head rested upon a cotton pillow-slip.

CHAPTER II

In time long past, when the Huguenots were better known, if less esteemed, an impecunious gentleman of France left his native land for the sake of faith and fortune.

Lured by that blatant boast of liberty which swelled the throats of the Western colonies, even while their hands were employed in meting out the reward of witchcraft and in forging the chains of slavery, he directed his way towards American soil.

His mission failed, and, in search of theological freedom, he only succeeded in weaving matrimonial fetters. Amid an unassorted medley of creeds and customs he came upon the red-cheeked daughter of a Swiss adventurer – an ambitious pioneer who lived upon the theory that the New World having been created for the service of its foreign invaders, the might of the sword was the right of possession.

The gentleman of France, deciding to found a farm and family in the land of his adoption, awoke suddenly to the knowledge that, to insure the success of such an enterprise, feminine intervention is a necessary evil.

Accordingly, he set about his preparations with an economic industry. Casting his eye upon a tract of land upon a Southern river, he acquired it for certain services rendered in an unguarded moment to the Swiss adventurer, who had acquired it in a manner that concerned himself alone.

The next step of the French gentleman was to build beside the Southern river a family mansion, whose door he promptly closed upon the Swiss adventurer, since virtue consists not so much in refusing to benefit by vice as in refusing to acknowledge the benefit. Not without a sense of nervous perturbation, he then proceeded to cast his gaze upon the most promising feminine pledges of progeny. From among a dozen or so of his fair neighbors he selected, with the experienced eye of a woman-fancier, the blooming specimen of Swiss buxomness, and, the adventurer coming to terms, the marriage had been celebrated without the retarding curtain-raiser of a romantic prelude.

The gentleman's name was Marcel Musin de Biencourt; the lady's has no place in the following history.

For a period matters progressed in natural sequence. The land was tilled, the cotton picked, and the lady installed in the best bedroom of the newly erected mansion. Had she played the part for which nature and her lord intended her, there is reason to suppose that she would have become a serviceable instrument in the preservation of the species.

But the gentleman had reckoned without Providence. With the ending of the year of her bridehood the roses in the lady's cheeks grew waxen, and she turned with a sigh of relief from the labor of travail to the rest of the little church-yard upon the hill.

The aspens shivered above her, the river purled between level fields far down below, and from the uprooted furrows around the dutiful corn put forth tender sprouts; but the lady had shirked her mission in its first fulfilment, and with the birth-time of the year she neither rose nor stirred.

In the best bedroom the dust thickened upon the chintz curtains, and a weak and sickly hostage to fortune yelled his new throat hoarse with premonition of the inhospitality of the planet upon which he had been precipitated.

Disappointed in his estimate of woman's nature, the gentleman of France decided to economize in material, and to rear a race from the unpromising specimen in his possession. Faithfully he strove to fulfil his part, and when the boy reached manhood, he laid himself down beside his wife upon the hill.

From this time on the family record is biblically concise. Marcel begot Marcel, and again Marcel begot Marcel, and yet again.

While the root Musin languished, De Biencourt, the lofty family tree, withered and died, to be forgotten. Neither in history nor in tradition, nor in the paths of private virtue, was a Musin known to have distinguished himself. If he took up arms in the American Revolution, he took them up in a

manner unworthy of record; if he favored the Declaration of Independence, he did not commit his preference to paper; if he excelled in any way, it was in the way of mediocrity – which is perhaps the safest way of all.

But extinction was not to be the end of the venturesome blood of the French gentleman. His spirit animated one of his name to confide to the care of his ex-slaves the mansion crumbling above his head, and to become a wanderer in the States which had been so nearly disunited. Like the minstrels of old, he strung his harp from his shoulder, and journeyed from South to North and from East to West. His Norman blood still ran blue in his veins, and his faith was the faith of his fathers.

In his travels he played his passage into the vivacious affections of an Irish maiden, who wore a rosary about her neck and a cross upon her sleeve. But these conspicuous badges of Popery failed to chill the passion of Marcel. And, in truth, if the maiden's heart was as black as the arch-fiend, her eyes (which is more to the point) were not less blue than heaven. With an improvidence sufficient to bleach the ghost of his colonial progenitor, he tossed forebodings into the capacious lap of the future, and stormed the yielding heart of young Ireland.

Love was lord, and their marriage-bonds were double-locked and barred by Protestant and Catholic clergy. But there is a power which laughs at religious locksmiths. Within six months the illusions with which each had draped the other melted before the fire and brimstone of ecclesiastical dispute. Between the kisses of their lips each offered petitions to a patient Omnipotence for the salvation of the other's soul. As the kisses grew colder the prayers grew warmer. There is a tendency in man, when he has fallen out with the human brother whom he has seen, to wax more zealous in his attentions to the Divine Father whom he has not. To be courteous to one's neighbor is so much more difficult than to be cringing to one's God.

And then a child was given. In the large family Bible upon the father's desk the event is recorded in two different hands, and the child was christened with two different names.

The first reads:

"Marie Musin, *born April* 24, 1868."

And the second:

"Mary Ann Musin, *born April* 24, 1868."

After fifteen years the matter was settled, as were most family matters, by the child herself.

"I will be both," she said, decisively. "I will be Mariana."

And Mariana she became.

In the same high-handed fashion the theological disputes of the parents were reduced to trifles as light as air.

"I will be a Presbyterian one Sunday and a Catholic the next," she concluded, with amiable acquiescence; "only on fast-days and lecture-nights I'll be a heathen."

For a time these regulations were observed with uncompromising impartiality, but, upon moving to a smaller town, she foresaw a diplomatic stroke.

"I think it better," she announced, sweetly, "for one of us to become an Episcopalian. I have noticed that most of the society people here are Episcopalians – and in that way the family will be so evenly distributed. I see that it will be easier for me to make the sacrifice than for either of you. Of course, I should love to go with you, mamma, but incense makes me sneeze; and you know, papa, I can't stand congregational singing. It grates upon my nerves. And I must be something, for I have so much religious feeling. I will be an Episcopalian."

She cast herself into the arms of the Church with all the zeal of a convert. From an artistic stand-point she repudiated insincerity, and, though cultivated, her professions were as fertile as the

most natural product. Even to herself she scorned to admit that her alliance with a particular creed was the result of aught but a moral tendency in that direction. And the burden of the truth was with her. She was as changeable as wind and as impressionable as wax, and the swelling tide of sentiment had taken an ecclesiastical turn.

She dressed in sober grays, and attended service with the regularity of the sexton; she decorated her walls with Madonnas; and she undertook, by way of the Sunday-school room, to lead a class of eight small boys into the path of righteousness. She read Christina Rossetti and George Herbert, and she placed tiny silver crosses, suspended from purple ribbons, in her school-books.

At the age of sixteen she attached herself to a society whose mission it was to cultivate, by frequent calls, the religious poor, and she neglected social observances to retard by her presence the domestic duties of the indigent members of the community. She descended in a special detachment upon a series of beer saloons, enforcing the pledge upon a number of helpless gentlemen, and thereby multiplying the sin of intemperance by that of perjury. While her mother mended the rents in her garments, Mariana promoted a circle of stocking-darners for the inhabitants of the almshouse.

At that period her expression was in perfect harmony with the tenor of her mind. The dramatic effect was always good.

In the daily school, which she attended when the fancy seized her, she ruled as a popular fetish. Between the younger children, whom she terrorized, and the elder, whom she mesmerized, there was an intermediate class with whom she was in high favor. As a tiny child she had caught the street songs quicker than any other, and had sung them better; and to the accompaniment of a hand-organ she could render a marvellous ballet.

During her tenth year she fell into a passionate friendship for one of the scholars – a stately girl with phlegmatic eyes of gray. For six months she paid her lover-like attentions in surreptitious ways, and expended her pocket-money in nosegays, with which to adorn the desk of her divinity. She wore a photograph of the gray-eyed girl above her heart, and lingered for an hour to walk home with her upon Fridays.

The friendship was sundered at last by visits exchanged between them, and Mariana's emotions became theological.

But this passed also. Vague amatory impulses of old racial meaning were born. At sixteen she was precipitated into a sentiment for the photograph, printed by the daily press, of a young fellow who was at that time in the custody of the State, preparatory to responding to a charge of highway-robbery. The photograph was romantic, the crime was also. It was a nineteenth-century attempt at a revival of the part of Claude Duval.

Mariana attended missions less and meditated more. She divided her time between her journal and the piano, showing a preference for songs of riotous sentiment. Without apparent trouble to herself, she grew wan and mysteriously poetic. She wore picturesque gowns with romantic draperies. Her hair possessed a charming disorder, the expression of her face passed from the placid into the intense. The dramatic effect was as good as ever. Her journal of that year contains a declaration of undying constancy. The object of this avowal is nominally the young highwayman – in reality the creation of an over-fertile brain craving the intoxicant of a great passion. The highwayman was but a picturesque nucleus round which her dreams clustered and from which they gathered color. She existed in a maze of the imagination, feasting upon the unsubstantial food of idealism. Her longings for fame and for love were so closely interwoven that even in her own mind it was impossible to disassociate them. If she bedewed her pillow with tears of anguish for the sake of a man whom she had never seen, and whom, seeing, she would have passed with averted eyes, the tears were often dried by ecstatic visions of artistic aspirations. And yet this romance of straw was not the less intense because it was the creation of overwrought susceptibilities; perhaps the more so. If real troubles were the only troubles, how many tortured hearts would be uplifted to the hills. And Mariana's mystical romance was a *daemon* that lured her in a dozen different disguises towards the quicksands of life.

But this passed also and was done with.

Her mother died, and her father married an early love. Mariana, who had been first, declined to become last. Dissensions followed swiftly, and the domestic atmosphere only cleared when Mariana departed from the paternal dwelling-place.

From the small Southern village, under the protection of an elderly female relation, she had flown to New York in search of theatrical employment. Failing in her object, she turned desperately to the culture of her voice, living meanwhile upon a meagre allowance donated by her father. The elderly female relation had remained with her for a time, but finding Mariana intractable in minor ways, and foreseeing a future in which she would serve as cat's-paw for the girl's vagaries, she had blessed her young relative and departed.

"One must either worship or detest you, my dear," she remarked as a parting shaft. "And to worship you means to wait upon you, which is wearing. Your personality is as absorbent as cotton. It absorbs the individual comfort of those around you. It is very pleasant to be absorbed, and you do it charmingly; but there is so much to see in the world, and I'm getting old fast enough."

So she went, leaving Mariana alone in a fourth-story front room of The Gotham apartment-house.

CHAPTER III

Mr. Nevins once said to Mariana: "You are as elusive as thistle-down whipped up with snow."

Mariana smiled that radiating, indescribable smile which dawned gradually from within, deepening until it burst into pervasive wealth of charm.

"Why snow?" was her query.

Mr. Paul, who apparently had been engrossed in his dinner, glanced up grimly. "The only possible reason for a metaphor," he observed, "is lack of reason."

Mr. Nevins dismissed him with a shrug and looked in sentimental perplexity at Mariana.

"Merely because it is impossible to whip up ice with anything," he replied.

"I should have supposed," interrupted Mr. Paul, in unabashed disapproval, "that the same objection would apply to thistle-down. It would certainly apply to a woman."

Miss Ramsey, who sat opposite, turned her tired eyes upon him.

"Life is not of your opinion, Mr. Paul," she said. "It whips us up with all kinds of ingredients, and it never seems to realize when we have been reduced to the proper consistency."

She looked worn and harassed, and had come in to dinner later than usual. It was the first remark she had made, and, after making it, she relapsed into silence. Her small red hands trembled as she lifted her fork, the rebellious lines between her brows grew deeper, and she ate her dinner with that complete exhaustion which so often passes for resignation in the eyes of our neighbors. Nervous prostration has produced more saints than all the sermons since Moses.

Mariana watched her sympathetically. She wondered why the gravy upon Miss Ramsey's plate congealed sooner than it did upon any one else's, while the sobbiest potatoes invariably fell to her share.

"A false metaphor!" commented Mr. Paul. "Most metaphors are false. I don't trust Shakespeare himself when he gets to metaphor. I always skip them."

"Oh, they have their uses," broke in the cheery tones of the optimist. "I'm not much on Shakespeare, but I've no doubt he has his uses also. As for metaphor, it is a convenient way of saying more than you mean."

"So is lying," retorted Mr. Paul, crossly, and the conversation languished. Mariana ate her dinner and looked at the table-cloth. Mr. Nevins ate his dinner and looked at Mariana. He regarded her as an artistic possibility. Her appearance was a source of constant interest to him, and he felt, were he in the position of nature, with the palette and brush of an omnipotent colorist, he might blend the harmonious lines of Mariana's person to better advantage. He resented the fact that her nose was irregular and her chin too long. He wondered how such a subject could have been wilfully neglected.

As for himself, he honestly felt that he had wasted no opportunities. Upon their first acquaintance he had made a poster of Mariana which undeniably surpassed the original. It represented her in a limp and scantily made gown of green, with strange reptiles sprawling over it, relieved against the ardor of a purple sunset. The hair was a marvel of the imagination.

Mariana had liked it, with the single exception of the reptilian figures.

"They have such an unpleasant suggestion," was her critical comment. "I feel quite like Medusa. Couldn't you change them into nice little butterflies and things?"

Mr. Nevins was afraid he could not. The poster satisfied him as it was. Miss Musin could not deny, he protested, that he had remodelled her nose and chin in an eminently successful job, and if the hair and eyes and complexion in the poster bore close resemblance in color, so did the hair and eyes and complexion in the original. He had done his best.

Mariana accepted his explanation and went complacently on her way, as enigmatical as a Chinese puzzle. She was full of swift surprises and tremulous changes, varying color with her

environment; gay one moment, and sad before the gayety had left her lips – cruel and calm, passionate and tender – always and ever herself.

Twice a week she went to Signor Morani's for a vocal lesson. Signor Morani was small and romantic and severe. In his youth he had travelled as Jenny Lind's barytone, and he had fallen a slave to her voice. He had worshipped a voice as other men worship a woman. Unlike other men, he had been faithful for a lifetime – to a voice.

When Mariana had gone to him, an emotional and aspiring soprano of nineteen, he had listened to her quietly and advised patience.

"You must wait," he said. "All art is waiting."

"I will not wait," said Mariana. "Waiting is starvation."

He looked at her critically.

"More of us starve than the world suspects," he answered. "It is the privilege of genius. This is a planet, my dear child, where mediocrity is exalted and genius brought low. It is a living fulfilment of the scriptural prophecy, 'The first shall be last and the last shall be first.'" Then he added: "Sing again."

Mariana stood up and sang. His words had depressed her, and her voice trembled. She looked at him wistfully, her hands hanging at her sides, her head thrown back. It was an aria from "Faust." He shook his head slowly.

"You will never be great," he said. "I can give you technique, but not volume. Your voice will never be great."

With a half-defiant gesture Mariana broke forth again. This time it was a popular song, with a quick refrain running through it. As she sang she acted the accompaniment half unconsciously.

Signor Morani frowned as she commenced, and then watched her attentively. In the fragile little girl, with the changeable eyes of green and the aureole of shadowless hair, he scented possibilities.

"Your voice will never be great," he repeated; "but you may make men believe so."

"And you will take me?" pleaded Mariana. She stretched out her beautiful hands. Her eyes prayed. Her flexible tones drooped.

Signor Morani took her hands in his with kindly reassurance.

"Yes," he said – "yes; it will keep you out of mischief, at least."

And it had kept her out of mischief. It had opened a channel for her emotions. Like a tide, the romanticism of her nature veered towards art. She became the most fanatical of devotees. She breathed it and lived it. In her heart it transplanted all other religions, and the æstheticism of its expression gained a marvellous hold upon her faith. Above the little mosaic altar at her bedside she enshrined a bust of Wagner, and she worshipped it as some more orthodox believer had once worshipped an enshrined Madonna. At midnight she held devotional services all alone, sitting before the piano, bending to the uses of a litany the intellectual rhapsodies of Beethoven or the sensuous repinings of Chopin, while the little red flame sent up praise and incense from dried rose leaves and cinnamon to the memories of dead musicians. She introduced a rare, sensuous beauty into this new worship, as she had introduced it into the old. She typified the Church when, in its fresh young passion, and suffused with the dying splendors of paganism, it turned from the primitive exercises of its founders and revived the worship of the gracious Madonna of Old Egypt in the worship of the Madonna of Nazareth, and the flower-scented feasts of Venus in the Purification of the Virgin. There existed in the girl an unsatisfied restlessness of self, resulting in the desire for complete submergence of soul in idea. Her nature veered constantly from extreme to extreme; there was no semblance of a saner medium, and as a system must have exponents, the high priests and priestesses of art became her lesser divinities.

She began to haunt the Metropolitan Opera-house. From the fifth gallery she looked down every evening upon an Italian or German landscape. She herself trembled like a harp swept by invisible fingers; she grew pale with Marguerite, wept over the dead Juliet, and went mad with the madness of Lucia.

When the voice of that fair Bride of Lammermoor who sang for us that season was borne to her on the notes of a flute which flagged beneath the exceeding sweetness of the human notes they carried, Mariana grasped the railing with her quivering hands and bowed her head in an ecstasy of appreciation. It was the ecstasy with which a monk in mediæval days must have thrilled when he faced in a dim cathedral some beautiful and earthly Virgin of the great Raphael. It was the purest form of sensuous self-abnegation. Then, as the curtain fell, she would rise and step gropingly towards the door, cast into sudden darkness. Wrapped in that mental state as in a mantle, she would descend the stairs and pass out into the street. At such times she was as far removed from the existence to which she was returning as was the poor mad Lucia herself. And then in the night she would awake and sing softly to herself in the stillness, lying with seraphic eyes and hands clasped upon her breast, until the morning sun flashed into her face and the day began.

There was also a tragic side to her emotions. Her past inheritance of ages of image-worshippers laid hold upon her. From being merely symbols of art the singers became divinities in their own right. She haunted their hotels for fleeting glimpses of them. She bought their photographs with the money which should have gone for a winter hat. She would gladly have kissed the dust upon which they trod. After her first hearing of "Tristan and Isolde," she placed the prima donna's photograph beneath the bust of Wagner, and worshipped her for weeks as a bright particular star.

In the evening she attended the opera alone. Returning when it was over, she crossed Broadway, boarded a car, and, reaching The Gotham, toiled up to the fourth landing. She was innocent of prudery, and she went unharmed. Perhaps her complete absorption in something beyond herself was her safeguard. At all events, she brushed men by, glanced at them with unseeing eyes, and passed placidly on her way.

Mariana was famished for romance, but not for the romance of the street. She had an instinctive aversion to things common and of vulgar intent. Her unsatisfied desire was but the craving of a young and impressionable heart for untried emotion. It was the poetry of living she thirsted for – poetry in æsthetic proportions, with a careful adjustment of light and shade. She desired harmonious effects and exquisite schemes of color, all as appropriate settings to a romance which she could arrange and blend in treatment as an artist arranges models of still life. So, for a time, she expended herself upon great singers. A new tenor appeared as Edgardo. Upon the stage he was dark and fierce and impassioned. He made an adorable lover. He sang to Lucia, not to the audience, and he threw half his arias into his eyes. Mariana was enraptured. She fell desperately in love. During the day she went about in meditative abstraction; during the night she turned upon her little cotton pillow-slip, and wept to think how far below him she must ever remain. She even wished herself a chorus girl, that she might intercept his glances. She grew frantically jealous of the prima donna, whom, also, she adored. She imagined innumerable romances in which he enacted upon the stage of life the part of Edgardo. Then, through the kindness of Signor Morani, she was introduced to the object of her regard, and the awakening was abrupt. He was fat and commonplace. He proved to be the faithful husband of a red-faced little German wife, and the devoted father of a number of red-faced German children. He possessed no qualities for romantic development, and Mariana recovered.

For a period her susceptibilities abated. The wave of activity spent its violence. Life flowed for her like a meadow stream, sensitive to faint impressions from a passing breeze, but calm when the breeze was afar.

Upon a night of "Carmen" she saw from the fifth gallery a velvet rose fall from the prima donna's bosom to the stage. When the curtain fell she rushed madly down and begged it of an usher. She carried it home, and hung it upon the wall above her bed. At night, before falling asleep, she would draw the curtains aside, and, in the electric light that flooded the room, cast her eyes upon the vivid bit of color. In the early morning she would awake, and, raising herself upon her elbow, touch it reverently with her hand. It was homage rendered to her own ambition.

At The Gotham, her bare little chamber, with its garish wall-paper, was a source of acute discomfort to her. Once, after a long spell of pneumonia, she had fallen into a fit of desperation, and had attacked the paper with a breakfast-knife. The result was a square of whitewashed wall above the bureau. An atmosphere of harmony was so necessary to her growth that she seemed to droop and pine in uncongenial environment. In the apartment-house, with its close, unventilated halls, its creaking elevator, its wretchedly served dinners, she had always felt strangely ill at ease. Her last prayer at night was that the morrow might see her transplanted to richer soil, her first thought upon awakening was that the coming day was pregnant with possibilities. Life in its entirety, life with passionate color and emotional fulfilment, was the food she craved.

Of Mariana, Mr. Ardly had made a laborious and profound analysis.

"That young person is a self-igniting taper," he had concluded. "If some one doesn't apply the match, she will go off of her own accord – and she will burn herself out before time has cast a wet blanket upon her."

He himself was a self-contained young fellow, who, like a greater before him, followed with wisdom both wine and women. His life was regulated by a theory which he had propounded in youth and attempted to practice in maturer years. The theory asserted that experience was the one reliable test of existing conditions. "I refused to believe that alcohol was an intoxicant," he had once said, "until I tested it."

When Mariana first arrived, he surprised in his heart an embryonic sentiment concerning her, and proceeded to crush it as coolly as he would have crushed a fly that encroached upon the private domain of his person.

"I have no dissipations," he explained, when discussing the affair with Mariana. "I neither drink nor love."

"Which is unwise," retorted Mariana. "I do both in moderation. And a man who has never been in love is always a great school-boy. I should be continually expecting him to tread upon my gown or to break my fan. Sentiment is the greatest civilizer of the race. If I were you I would begin immediately."

"I dislike all effort," returned Ardly, gravely, "and love is cloying. Over-loving produces mental indigestion, as over-eating produces physical. I have suffered from it, and experience has made me abstemious. I shall abstain from falling in love with you."

"What a pity!" sighed Mariana, lifting her lashes.

"Well, I can't agree with you," argued Ardly, "and I don't regret it. I am very comfortable as I am."

"I am not," retorted Mariana. "I detest the dinners. Who could be comfortable on overdone mutton and cold potatoes?"

"Even in the matter of food I am without prejudices," declared the other. "I had as soon want a good dinner and have a poor one as have a good one and want none. These are the only conditions with which I am acquainted. There may be estates where things are more equally adjusted, but I know nothing of them; I have not experienced them."

Mariana sighed. "You are as depressing as Mr. Paul," she complained.

"I only speak of what I know," explained Ardly, complacently. "Upon other matters I have no opinions, and I calmly repeat that I have found appetite and gratification to be situated upon opposite sides of a revolving globe. When one's up the other's down."

"I shall cut a passage through," said Mariana. "If life doesn't equalize things, I will."

"And I will watch the process," remarked Ardly, indolently.

It was shortly after this that Mariana went to Long Island for a holiday, spending a couple of weeks in the cottage of an acquaintance, who, by dint of successive matrimonial ventures, had succeeded in reaching the equilibrium to which Mariana aspired.

Upon returning to New York the girl found her distaste for The Gotham to have trebled. When she had toiled up the dingy stairway and installed herself in her old place, she sat upon her trunk

and looked about her. Never had the room appeared so dull, so desperately plain. The close odor caused by lack of ventilation offended her nostrils, and yet she hesitated to fling back the shutters and reveal the rusty balcony with its spindling fire-escape, beyond which stretched the sombre outlook, the elevated road looming like a skeleton in the foreground. The door into the hall was ajar, and she could see a dull expanse of corridor, lighted day and night by a solitary and ineffectual electric jet.

A sob stuck in her throat, and, crossing to the window, she raised it and threw back the shutters, letting in a thin stream of dust and sunshine. Her geranium stood where she had left it, and its withered and yellow leaves smote her with accusing neglect.

"Oh, you poor thing!" she cried, in an impulsive burst of pity.

Then she saw that it had been freshly watered, and that its famished leaves were unfolding. Turning her eyes, they encountered a row of small pots containing seedlings which lined her neighbor's window, encroaching slightly upon her own possession. Before them a man was standing, a watering-can in one hand, a small trowel in the other. As Mariana stepped upon the fire-escape he turned in evident resentment, glanced at her indifferently, and resumed his task of invigoration.

The afternoon sun shone full upon him, and Mariana saw him plainly. He was young, with stooping shoulders, and he wore a cheap and shabby suit of clothes, with apparent disregard of their quality. His face was thin and cleanly shaven, there was a nervous tension about the mouth, and the hair, falling dark and heavy upon the temples, lent a haggardness to his colorless and burned-out profile. It was a face in which the poetic principle was obscured by an ascetic veneering. In his whole appearance was borne out the suggestion flashing from the eyes – a suggestion of mental sustentation upon physical force.

Mariana regarded him mutely. Her gaze was almost tragic in its intensity. For a moment her lips quivered and her fingers interlaced. Then she retreated into her room, slamming the shutters after her. Throwing herself into a chair, she buried her face in her hands.

"I – I can't have even that to myself!" she said, and burst into tears.

CHAPTER IV

Mariana's neighbor sat in his room. He sat motionless, his head resting upon his hands, his arms resting upon an office desk, which was plainly finished and of cheap walnut. At his left elbow a lamp cast an illumination upon his relaxed and exhausted figure, upon the straight, dark hair, upon the bulging brow, and upon the sinewy and squarely shaped hands, with their thin and nervous fingers.

The desk upon which he leaned was covered with a litter of closely written letter-sheets, and at the back a row of pigeon-holes contained an unassorted profusion of manuscripts.

The walls of the room were lined with roughly constructed shelves of painted wood, which were filled to overflowing with well-worn volumes in English, French, and German, Oken's *Die Zeugung* upon the north side confronting Darwin's *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication* upon the south. A cabinet in one corner contained a number of alcoholic specimens of embryonic development, and a small table near by supported a microscope and several instruments for physiological experiments. Above the mantel, perhaps arranged in freakish disregard of superstition, hung a skull and a pair of cross-bones, and beneath them a series of photographs illustrating the evolution of rudimentary nervous systems.

Upon the hearth, within convenient reach of the desk, stood a small spirit-stove, and on it a coffee-pot, which emitted a strong and stimulating aroma. Beside it a table was spread, with the remains of a cold supper and an unused cup and saucer.

The man lifted his head from his hands, turned up the wick of the lamp, and took up his pen.

From without came the rumble of the elevated road and the shrill cries of a newsboy proclaiming the redundant virtues of the *Evening Post.* A warm August breeze, entering at the open window, which was raised from the floor, caused the flame of the lamp to flicker slightly. Outside upon the fire-escape the young plants were arranged in rows of systematic precision, their tender leaves revealed in the narrow path of lamplight leading from the heated room to the iron railing overlooking the street. With absent-minded elaboration the man drew an irregular line upon the paper before him. The line bore no relation whatever to the heading of the paper, which was written in a remarkably firm and heavy hand, and read:

"Transmission of Acquired Characteristics."

Suddenly he laid the pen aside, and rose, wiping the moisture from his brow with his handkerchief. Then he threw off his coat and drew up his shirt-sleeves. It was oppressively warm, and the lamp seemed to possess the heating qualities of a Latrobe stove. For a couple of minutes he walked slowly up and down the uncarpeted floor. From the adjoining room came the sound of a piano and a woman singing. He shook his head impatiently, but the sound continued, and he yawned and stretched his arms with resentful resignation. After which he lifted the coffee-pot from the little stove and filled the cup upon the table.

Returning to his seat, he drank his coffee slowly, allowing his abstracted gaze to wander through the window and into the city night without. Upon the drawn shades of the opposite tenement-house he could trace the shadows of men and women passing to and fro like the unsubstantial outlines of figures remembered in a dream. His thoughts fluttered restlessly. He was tired. Yes, but the coffee would get him into shape again, and he must work. It was barely ten o'clock. The day had been trying. The experiments made in the college laboratory had been unsuccessful. He had gone about them wrongly. Professor Myers had been mistaken in his calculations. It was unfortunate. The opportunity for work had been excellent, and in September, when the session began, his lectures at that infernal Woman's College would take a good two hours daily, to say nothing of the preparations. What a bore it would be! If he had only money enough to follow out his work independently he might make

a splendid success of it. True, he had spent enough on those travels and excavations in Egypt and Assyria to have supported an ordinary Philistine in comfort for an ordinary lifetime. But he did not regret them. They had given balance to his judgment, and he had acquired an immense amount of information. And those studies in Ancient India. Why, they had even more direct bearing upon his theories. Involuntarily his glance strayed round the book-lined walls and to the manuscripts in his desk. He devoured the closely written, almost illegible pages with insatiable eyes – eyes stricken with the mania for knowledge. The bronzed and sallow face he turned towards the light was suffused with the glow of a consuming purpose. In its deep-eyed, thin-lipped severity of drawing, every sensuous curve had been erased by lines of toil.

He set the cup aside and returned to his work. From a drawer of his desk he drew a thick volume, consisting of a number of legal-cap sheets, bound with a systematic regard for subject. Upon the cover was written in printed letters: "Notes," and beneath: "A History of Man, with Special Application of the Science of Ontogeny."

After consulting this briefly he laid it away and fell to writing. From the adjoining room still came the sound of a woman singing. The voice was light and flippant.

"Damn it!" said the man, suddenly, with angry impatience. He said it vehemently, looking up from his work with nervous irritability. At the same moment there came a slight tap at his door.

He laid aside his pen, rose, and opened it. Mr. Paul stood upon the outside.

"Well, Mr. Algarcife," he began, grimly, "you see I have broken a life-long principle and taken a man at his word. I came for the book you spoke of."

Algarcife welcomed him impatiently. "So I suppose I must prove your principle relative, if not erroneous," he answered. His voice was singularly full and clear. "It was *Milligan on the Vocabulary of Aboriginal Tasmanians*, was it not? Yes, I think it will aid you."

Mr. Paul came in and they sat down. Algarcife offered him coffee and cigars, but he declined. He sat stiffly in his chair and looked at the other with cynical interest.

"You write all night on this lye, I suppose?" he said, abruptly. "A combined production of brains and coffee."

Algarcife lighted his pipe and leaned back in his chair, blowing gray circles of smoke upon the atmosphere.

"You are right," he responded; "I find I do my best work after midnight, when I am drunk on caffeine or coffee. I suppose it will do for me in the end."

Mr. Paul returned his indifferent gaze with one of severity. "You are all nerves as it is," he said. "You haven't an ounce of good barbarian blood in your body – merely a colorless machine for ratiocination. I tell you, there is no bigger fool than the man who, because he possesses a few brains, forgets that he is an animal."

The other laughed abstractedly.

"What wholesome truths you deliver," he said. "I think Luther must have had your manner. Well, if I were in your place, I should probably say the same, though less forcibly. But they are theories. You see, I argue this way: with one man's mind and one man's power of work, I could never accomplish what I have before me – any more than poor Buckle, with the brain of a giant, could accomplish what he undertook. It is too big for a single man in this stage of development. So, with one man's mind, I intend to do six men's amount of labor. If I hold out, I will have my reward; if I go to pieces, I shall at least have the satisfaction of a good fight."

His voice was distinct and forcible, with a widely varied range of expression.

There was a second tap at the door, and Mr. Nevins entered, looking depressed and ill-humored.

"Hello, Anthony!" he called. "What! is Mr. Paul squandering your midnight oil? You should have sent him to bed long ago."

"It is not my hour for retiring," responded Mr. Paul.

Anthony interrupted pacifically.

"Mr. Paul is exhorting me," he said, "and I have no doubt that, with slight modifications, his sermon may be adapted to your case. He predicts brain-softening and general senility."

"An inspired prophecy," returned Mr. Nevins, crossly, "and savoring of Jeremiah. As for myself, it is but common justice that a man who has conscientiously refused the cultivation of the mind should not be called upon to lose what he doesn't possess." Then he grew suddenly cheerful. "Confound it! What's the use of being a philosopher on paper when you can be one in practice. What's the use of dying when you can eat, drink, and be merry?"

"Eating," remarked Mr. Paul, with depressing effect, "produces dyspepsia, drinking produces gout."

"And thought, paresis," added Anthony, lightly. "They are all merely different forms of dissipation. I have chosen mine; Nevins has chosen his. Only, as a matter of taste, I'd rather die by work than wine. Personally, I prefer consumption to apoplexy."

"There is such a thing as the means justifying the end," responded Mr. Nevins, in reckless ill-humor. "And it is a great principle. If I wasn't a fool, I'd make a bonfire of my brush and palette, and start afresh on a level with my appetite. I would become the apostle of good-living, which means fast living. I tell you, an hour of downright devilment is worth all the art since Adam. Aristippus is greater than Raphael."

"What has gone wrong?" demanded Algarcife, soothingly. "Too much purple in the 'Andromeda'? I always said that purple was the imperial color of his satanic majesty. If you had followed the orthodox art of your college days, and hadn't gone wandering after strange gods, you might have escaped a dash of that purple melancholia."

"You're a proper fellow," returned Mr. Nevins, with disgust. "Who was it that won that last debate in '82 by a glowing defence of Christianity against agnosticism, and, when the Reverend Miles lit out about the new orator in his flock, floored him with: 'Was that good? Then what a magnificent thing I could have made of the other side!'"

Mr. Paul had opened his book, and glanced up with candid lack of interest. Anthony laughed languidly.

"I saw Miles some weeks ago," he said, "and he is still talking about my 'defection,' as he calls it. I couldn't convince him that I was merely the counsel for a weak case, and that I was always an agnostic at heart."

Mr. Nevins lighted a cigar in silence. Then he nodded abruptly towards the wall. "What's that noise?" he demanded, irritably.

"That," replied Algarcife, "is a fiend in woman's form, who makes night hideous. I can't begin to work until she sings herself hoarse, and she doesn't do that until midnight. Verily, she is possessed of seven devils, and singing devils at that."

Mr. Nevins was listening attentively. His irritability had vanished.

"Why, it's Mariana!" he exclaimed. "Bless her pretty throat! An hour of Mariana is worth all the spoken or unspoken thoughts of – of Marcus Aurelius, to say nothing of Solomon."

Mr. Paul closed his book and looked up gravely. "A worthy young woman," he observed, "though a trifle fast. As for Solomon, his wisdom has been greatly exaggerated."

"Fast!" protested Mr. Nevins. "She's as fast as – as Mr. Paul – "

"Your insinuation is absurd," returned Mr. Paul, stiffly. But Mr. Nevins was not to be suppressed.

"Then don't display your ignorance of such matters. As for this St. Anthony, he thinks every woman who walks the New York streets a bleached pattern of virtue. I don't believe he'd know a painted Jezebel unless she wore a scarlet letter."

Anthony turned upon him resentfully. "Confound it, Nevins," he said, "I am not a born fool!"

"Only an innocent," retorted Mr. Nevins, complacently.

A resounding rap upon the panels of the door interrupted them. Mr. Nevins rose.

"That's Ardly," he said. "He and I are doing New York to-night."

Ardly came inside, and stood with his hand upon the door-knob.

"Come on, Nevins," he said. "I've got to do a column on that new *danseuse*. She dances like a midge, but, by Jove! she has a figure to swear by – "

"And escape perjury," added Mr. Nevins. "Mariana says it is false."

"Mariana," replied Ardly, "is a sworn enemy to polite illusions. She surveys the stage through a microscope situated upon the end of a lorgnette. It is a mistake. One should never look at a woman through glasses unless they be rose-colored ones. A man preserves this principle, and his faith in plumpness and curves along with it; a woman penetrates to the padding and powder. Come on, Nevins."

Mr. Nevins followed him into the hall, and then turned to look in again. "Algarcife, won't you join us on a jolly little drunk? Won't you, Mr. Paul?"

When they had gone, and Mr. Paul had gone likewise, though upon a different way, Anthony heated the coffee, drank two cups, and resumed his work.

"Taken collectively," he remarked, "the human race is a consummate nuisance. What a deuced opportunity for work the last man will have – only, most likely, he'll be an ass."

The next day he passed Mariana on the stairs without seeing her. He was returning from the college laboratory, and his mind was full of his experiments. Later in the afternoon, when he watered his plants, he turned his can, in absent-minded custom, upon the geranium, and saw that there was a scarlet bloom among the leaves. The sight pleased him. It was as if he had given sustenance to a famished life.

But Mariana, engrossed in lesser things, had seen him upon the stairs and upon the balcony. She still cherished an unreasonable resentment at what she considered his trespass upon her individual rights; and yet, despite herself, the trenchant quality in the dark, massive-browed face had not been without effect upon her. The ascetic self-repression that chastened his lips, and the utter absence of emotion in the mental heat of his glance tantalized her in its very unlikeness to her own nature. She, who thrilled into responsive joy or gloom at reflected light or shade, found her quick senses awake to each passing impression, and had learned to recognize her neighbor's step upon the stair; while he, wrapped in an intellectual trance, created his environment at will, and was as oblivious of the girl at the other end of the fire-escape as he was to the articles of furniture in his room.

It was as if semi-barbarism, in all its exuberance of undisciplined emotion, had converged with the highest type of modern civilization – the civilization in which the flesh is degraded from its pedestal and forced to serve as a jangled vehicle for the progress of the mind.

The next night, as Algarcife stood at his window looking idly down upon the street below, he heard the sound of a woman sobbing in the adjoining room. His first impulse was to hasten in the direction from whence the sound came. He curbed the impulse with a shake.

"Hang it," he said, "it is no business of mine!"

But the suppressed sobbing from the darkness beyond invited him with its enlistment of his quick sympathies.

The electric light, falling upon the fire-escape, cast inky shadows from end to end. They formed themselves into dense outlines, which shivered as if stirred by a phantom breeze.

He turned and went back to his desk. Upon the table he had spread the supper of which he intended partaking at eleven o'clock. For an unknown reason he had conceived an aversion to the restaurant in the basement, and seldom entered it. He slept late in the day and worked at night, and his meals were apt to be at irregular hours.

He wrote a line, and rose and went back to the window. For an instant he stood and listened, then stepped out upon the fire-escape and walked across the shivering shadows towards the open window beyond.

Upon the little door beneath the window a girl was leaning, her head bowed upon her outstretched arm. The light in the room beyond was low, but he could see distinctly the slight outlines of her figure and the confusion of her heavy hair. She was sobbing softly.

"I beg your pardon," he said, the sympathetic quality in his voice dominating, "but I am sure that I can help you."

His forcible self-confidence exercised a compelling effect. The girl lifted her head and looked at him. Tears stood in her eyes, and as the electric light caught the clear drops they cast out scintillant flashes. Against the dim interior her head, with its nimbus of hair, had the droop and poise of the head of a mediæval saint.

"Oh, but you don't know how unhappy I am!" she said.

He spoke as he would have spoken to Mr. Paul in the same circumstances. "You have no one to whom you can go?"

"No."

"Then tell me about it."

His tone was that in which a physician might inquire the condition of a patient's digestion. It was absolutely devoid of the recognition of sex.

"Oh, I have worked so hard!" said Mariana.

"Yes?"

"And I hoped to sing in opera, and – Morani tells me that – it will be impossible."

"Ah!" In the peculiar power of his voice the exclamation had the warmth of a handshake.

Mariana rested her chin upon her clasped hands and looked at him. "He says it must be a music-hall – or – or nothing," she added.

He was silent for a moment. He felt that it was a case in which his sympathy could be exceeded only by his ignorance. "And this is why you are unhappy?" he asked. "Is there nothing else?"

She gave a little sob. "I am tired," she said. "My allowance hasn't come – and I missed my dinner, and I am – hungry."

Algarcife responded with relieved cheerfulness.

"Why, we are prepared for that," he said. "I was just sitting down to my supper, and you will join me."

In his complete estrangement from the artificial restraints of society, it seemed to him the simplest of possible adjustments of the difficulty. He felt that his intervention had not been wholly without beneficial results.

Mariana glanced swiftly up into his face.

"Come!" he said; and she rose and followed him.

CHAPTER V

As Mariana crossed the threshold the light dazzled her, and she raised her hand to her eyes. Then she lowered it and looked at him between half-closed lids. It was a trick of mannerism which heightened the subtlety of her smile. In the deep shadows cast by her lashes her eyes were untranslatable.

"You are very hospitable," she said.

"A virtue which covers a multitude of sins," he answered, pleasantly. "If you will make yourself at home, I'll fix things up a bit."

He opened the doors of the cupboard and took out a plate and a cup and saucer, which he placed before her. "I am sorry I can't offer you a napkin," he said, apologetically, "but they allow me only one a day, and I had that at luncheon."

Mariana laughed merrily. The effects of recent tears were visible only in the added lustre of her glance and the pallor of her face. She had grown suddenly mirthful.

"Don't let's be civilized!" she pleaded. "I abhor civilization. It invented so many unnecessary evils. Barbarians didn't want napkins; they wanted only food. I am a barbarian."

Algarcife cut the cold chicken and passed her the bread and butter.

"Why, none of us are really civilized, you know," he returned, dogmatically. "True, we have a thin layer of hypocrisy, which we call civilization. It prompts us to sugar-coat the sins which our forefathers swallowed in the rough; that is all. It is purely artificial. In a hundred thousand years it may get soaked in, and then the artificial refinement will become real and civilization will set in."

Mariana leaned forward with a pretty show of interest. She did not quite understand what he meant, but she adapted herself instinctively to whatever he might mean.

"And then?" she questioned.

"And then we will realize that to be civilized is to shrink as instinctively from inflicting as from enduring pain. Sympathy is merely a quickening of the imagination, in which state we are able to propel ourselves mentally into conditions other than our own." His manner was aggressive in its self-assertiveness. Then he smiled, regarded her with critical keenness, and lifted the coffee-pot.

"I sha'n't give you coffee," he said, "because it is not good for you. You need rest. Why, your hands are trembling! You shall have milk instead."

"I don't like milk," returned Mariana, fretfully. "I'd rather have coffee, please. I want to be stimulated."

"But not artificially," he responded. His gaze softened. "This is my party, you know," he said, "and it isn't polite to ask for what is not offered you. Come here."

He had risen and was standing beside his desk. Mariana went up to him. The power of his will had enthralled her, and she felt strangely submissive. Her coquetry she recognized as an unworthy weapon, and it was discarded. She grew suddenly shy and nervous, and stood before him in the flushed timidity of a young feminine thing.

He had taken a bottle from a shelf and was measuring some dark liquid into a wine-glass. As Mariana reached him he took her hand with frank kindliness. In his cool and composed touch there was not so much as a suggestion of sexual difference. The possibility that, as a woman, she possessed an attraction for him, as a man, was ignored in its entirety.

"You have cried half the evening?"

"Yes."

"Drink this." His tone was peremptory.

He gave her the glass, watching her as she looked into it, with the gleam of a smile in his intent regard. Mariana hesitated an instant. Then she drank it with a slight grimace.

"Your hospitality has taken an unpleasant turn," she remarked. "You might at least give me something to destroy the taste."

He laughed and pointed to a plate of grapes, and they sat down to supper.

The girl glanced about the room critically. Then she looked at her companion.

"I don't quite like your room," she observed. "It is grewsome."

"It is a work-shop," he answered. "But your dislike is pure nonsense. Skulls and cross-bones are as natural in their way as flesh and blood. Nothing in nature is repellent to the mind that follows her."

Mariana repressed a shudder. "I have no doubt that toads are natural enough in their way," she returned, "but I don't like the way of toads."

Anthony met her serious protest lightly.

"You are a beautiful subject for morbid psychology," he said. "Why, toads are eminently respectable creatures, and if we regard them without prejudice, we will discover that, as a point of justice, they have an equal right with ourselves to the possession of this planet. Only, right is not might, you know."

"But I love beautiful things," protested Mariana. She looked at him wistfully, like a child desiring approbation. There was an amber light in her eyes.

He smiled upon her.

"So do I," he made answer; "but to me each one of those nice little specimens is a special revelation of beauty."

The girl broke her bread daintily. "You misunderstand me," she said, with flattering earnestness and a deprecatory inflection in her voice. Her head drooped sideways on its slender throat. There was a virginal illusiveness about her that tinged with seriousness the lightness of her words. "Surely you love art," she said.

"Oh, I like painting, if that is what you mean," he answered, carelessly, though her image in his eyes was relieved against a sudden warmth. "That is, I like Raphael and Murillo and a few of the modern French fellows. As for music, I don't know one note from another. The only air I ever caught was 'In the Fragrant Summer-time,' and that was an accident. I thought it was 'Maryland.'"

Mariana did not smile. She shrank from him, and he felt as if he had struck her.

"It isn't worth your thinking of," he said, "nor am I."

Mariana protested with her restless hands.

"Oh, but I can't help thinking of it," she answered. "It is dreadful. Why, such things are a part of my religion!"

He returned her startled gaze with one of amusement.

"I might supply you with an alphabetical dictionary of my peculiar vices. An unabridged edition would serve for a criminal catalogue as well. A – Acrimony, Adhesiveness, Atheism, Aggressiveness, Aggravation, Ambition, Artfulness – "

"Oh, stop!" cried Mariana. "You bewilder me."

He leaned back in his chair and fixed his intent gaze upon her. His eyes were so deeply set as to be almost indistinguishable, but in the spell of lamplight she saw that the pupils differed in color, one having a hazel cast, while the other was of a decided gray.

"Why, I thought you displayed an interest in the subject!" he rejoined. "You lack the genius of patience."

"Patience," returned Mariana, with a swift change of manner, "is only lack of vitality. I haven't an atom of it."

A shade of the nervous irritability, which appeared from apparently no provocation, was in his voice as he answered:

"There is nothing fate likes better than to drill it into us. And it is not without its usefulness. If patience is the bugbear of youth, it is the panacea of middle age. We learn to sit and wait as we learn to accept passivity for passion and indifference for belief. The worst of it is that it is a lesson

which none of us may skip and most of us are forced to learn by heart." He spoke slowly, his voice softened. Beneath the veneering of philosophic asceticism, the scarlet veins of primeval nature were still palpitant. The chill lines of self-restraint in his face might, in the whirlwind of strong passions, become ingulfed in chaos.

With an effort Mariana threw off the spell of his personality. She straightened herself with an energetic movement. From the childlike her manner passed to the imperious. Her head poised itself proudly, her eyes darkened, her lips lost their pliant curve and grew audacious.

"That is as grewsome as your room," she said. "Let's talk of pleasant things."

The changes in her mystified Algarcife. He regarded her gravely. "Of yourself, or of myself?" he demanded.

"The first would only display your ignorance. I should prefer the latter. Begin, please." She had grown vivid.

He spoke jestingly. "Here goes. Name, Algarcife. Christened Anthony. Age, twenty-seven years, three weeks, ten days. Height, five feet eleven inches. Complexion, anæmic. Physique, bad. Disposition, worse. Manners, still worse. Does the exactness of my information satisfy you?"

"No;" she enveloped him in her smile. "You haven't told me anything I want to know. I could have guessed your height, and your manners I have tested. What were you doing before I came in?"

"Cursing my luck."

"And before that?" She leaned forward eagerly.

"Dogging at a theory of heredity which will reconcile Darwin's gemmules, Weismann's germ-plasm, and Galton's stirp."

She wrinkled her brows in perplexity. Her show of interest had not fled. A woman who cannot talk of the things she knows nothing about might as well be a man.

"And you will do it?" she asked. He had a sudden consciousness that no one had ever been quite so in sympathy with him as this elusive little woman with the changeable eyes.

"Well, I hardly think so," he said. "At any rate, I expect to discover what Spencer would call the germ of truth in each one of them, and then I suppose I'll formulate a theory of my own which will contain the best in all of them."

Her manner did not betray her ignorance of his meaning.

"And you will explain it all to me when it is finished?" she asked.

His smile cast a light upon her.

"If you wish it," he answered, "but I had no idea that you cared for such things."

"You did not know me," she responded, reproachfully. "I am very, very ignorant, but I want so much to learn." Then her voice regained its brightness. "And you have read all these books?" she questioned.

He followed with his eyes her swift gestures.

"Those," he answered, pointing to the north shelves, "I have skimmed. Those behind you, I have read; and those," he nodded towards his right, "I know word for word."

"And what do you do?" The delicacy of her manner imbued the question with unconscious flattery.

"I – oh, I eke out an existence with the assistance of the Bodley College."

"What have you to do with it? Oh, I beg your pardon! I had forgotten we were almost strangers."

He answered, naturally.

"It is my unhappy fate to endeavor to instil a few brains and a good deal of information into the heads of sixty-one young females."

"And don't you like them?" queried Mariana, eagerly.

"I do not."

"Why?"

"What an inquisitor you are, to be sure!"

"But tell me," she pleaded.

"Why?" he demanded, in his turn.

She lowered her lashes, looking at her quiet hands.

"Because I want so much to know."

His smiling eyes were probing her. "Tell me why."

She raised her lashes suddenly and returned his gaze. There was a wistful sincerity in her eyes.

"I wish to know," she said, slowly, "so that I may not be like them."

For a moment he regarded her silently. Then he spoke. "My reasons are valid. They giggle; they flirt; and they put candy in my pockets."

"And you don't like women at all?"

"I like nice, sensible women, who wear square-toed shoes, and who don't distort themselves with corsets."

The girl put out her pretty foot in its pointed and high-heeled slipper. Then she shook her head with mock seriousness.

"I don't suppose you think that very sensible?" she remarked.

He looked at it critically.

"Well, hardly. No, it isn't in the least sensible, but it – it is very small, isn't it?"

"Oh yes," responded Mariana, eagerly. She felt a sudden desire to flaunt her graces in his face. He was watching the play of her hands, but she became conscious, with an aggrieved surprise, that he was not thinking of them.

"But you don't like just mere – mere women?" she asked, gravely.

"Are you a mere – mere woman?"

"Yes."

"Then I like them."

The radiance that overflowed her eyes startled him.

"But you aren't just a mere – mere man," she volunteered.

"But I am – a good deal merer, in fact, than many others. I am a shape of clay."

"Then I like shapes of clay," said Mariana.

For an instant they looked at each other in silence. In Mariana's self-conscious eyes there was a soft suffusion of shyness; in his subjective ones there was the quickening of an involuntary interest.

"Then we agree most amicably," he remarked, quietly. As she rose he stood facing her. "It is time for your sleep and my work," he added, and held out his hand.

As Mariana placed her own within it she flashed whitely with a sudden resentment of his cool dismissal.

"Good-night!" she said.

He looked down at her as she lingered before him. "I want to be of use to you," he said, frankly, "but things have an unfortunate way of slipping my memory. If at any time I can serve you, just come to the fire-escape and call me."

"No," answered the girl, pettishly, "certainly not."

His brow wrinkled. "That was rude, I know," he rejoined, "but I meant it honestly."

"I have no doubt of it."

As she turned to go he detained her with a compelling touch.

"You aren't angry?"

"No."

"And you forgive me?"

"I have nothing to forgive. Indeed, I am grateful for your charity."

He surveyed her in puzzled scrutiny. "Well, I am sure I sha'n't forget you," he said. "Yes, I am quite sure of it."

"What a marvellous memory!" exclaimed Mariana, crossly, and she stepped out upon the fire-escape.

"Good-night!" he called.

"Good-night!" she responded, and entered her room.

"He is very rude," she whispered as she closed the shutters. In the half-light she undressed and sat in her night-gown, brushing the heavy tangles of her hair. Then she lighted the flame before the little altar and said her prayers; kneeling with bowed head. As she turned off the light she spoke again. "I am not sure that I don't like rudeness," she added.

Meanwhile Algarcife had watched her vanish into the shadows, a smile lightening the gravity of his face. When she had disappeared he turned to his desk. With his singular powers of concentration, he had not taken up his pen before all impressions save those relating to the subject in hand had been banished from his mind. His expression was buoyant and alert. Turning over his papers, he passed with a sense of reinvigoration to the matter before him.

"Yes; I think, after all, that a strongly modified theory of pangenesis may survive," he said.

CHAPTER VI

At the extreme end of the corridor upon which Mariana's door opened there was a small apartment occupied by three young women from the South, who were bent upon aims of art.

They had moved in a month before, and had celebrated a room-warming by asking Mariana and several of the other lodgers to a feast of beer and pretzels. Since then the girl had seen them occasionally. She knew that they lived in a semi-poverty-stricken Bohemia, and that the pretty one with pink cheeks and a ragged and uncurled fringe of hair, whose name was Freighley, worked in Mr. Nevins's studio and did chrysanthemums in oils. She had once heard Mr. Nevins remark that she was a pupil worth having, and upon asking, "Has she talent?" had met with, "Not a bit, but she's pretty."

"Then it is a pity she isn't a model," said Mariana.

"An example of the eternal contrariness of things," responded Mr. Nevins. "All the good-looking ones want to paint and all the ugly ones want to be painted." Then he rumpled his flaxen head. "In this confounded century everything is in the wrong place, from a woman to her waist-line."

After this Mariana accompanied Miss Freighley on students' day to the Metropolitan Museum, and watched her make a laborious copy of "The Christian Martyr." Upon returning she was introduced to Miss Hill and Miss Oliver, who shared the apartment, and was told to make herself at home.

Then, one rainy Saturday afternoon there was a knock at her door, and, opening it, she found Miss Freighley upon the outside.

"It is our mending afternoon," she said, "and we want you to come and sit with us. If you have any sewing to do, just bring it."

Mariana picked up her work-basket, and, finding that her thimble was missing, began rummaging in a bureau-drawer.

"I never mend anything until I go to put it on," she said. "It saves so much trouble."

Then she found her thimble and followed Miss Freighley into the hall.

Miss Freighley laughed in a pretty, inconsequential way. She had a soft, monotonous voice, and spoke with a marked elimination of vowel sounds.

"We take the last Saturday of the month," she said. "Only Juliet and I do Gerty's things, because she can't sew, and she cleans our palettes and brushes in return."

She swung open the door of the apartment, and they entered a room which served as studio and general lounging-room in one.

A tall girl, sitting upon the hearth-rug beside a heap of freshly laundered garments, stood up and held out a limp, thin hand.

"I told Carrie she would find you," she said, speaking with a slight drawl and an affected listlessness.

She was angular, with a consumptive chest and narrow shoulders. She wore her hair – which was vivid, like flame, with golden ripples in the undulations – coiled confusedly upon the crown of her head. Her name was Juliet Hill. A mistaken but well-known colorist had once traced in her a likeness to Rossetti's "Beata Beatrix." The tracing had resulted in the spoiling of a woman without the making of an artist.

Mariana threw herself upon a divan near the hearth-rug and looked down upon the pile of clothes.

"What a lot of them!" she observed, sympathetically.

Miss Hill drew a stocking from the heap and ran her darning-egg into the heel to locate a hole.

"It is, rather," she responded, "but we never mend until everything we have is in rags. I couldn't find a single pair of stockings this morning, so I knew it was time."

"If you had looked into Gerty's bureau-drawer you might have found them," said Miss Freighley, seating herself upon the end of the divan. "Gerty never marks her things, and somehow she gets all of ours. Regularly once a month I institute a search through her belongings, and discover more of my clothes than I knew I possessed. Here, give me that night-gown, Juliet. The laundress tore every bit of lace off the sleeve. What a shame!"

Mariana removed a guitar from the couch and leaned back among the pillows, glancing about the room. The walls were covered with coarse hangings, decorated in vague outlines of flying cranes and vaguer rushes. Here and there were tacked groups of unframed water-colors and drawings in charcoal – all crude and fanciful and feminine. Upon a small shelf above the door stood a plaster bust, and upon it a dejected and moth-eaten raven – the relic of a past passion for taxidermy. In the centre of the room were several easels, a desk, with Webster's Unabridged for a foot-stool, and a collection of palettes, half-used tubes of paint, and unassorted legs and arms in plaster.

"How do you ever find anything?" asked Mariana, leaning upon her arm.

"We don't," responded a small, dark girl, coming from the tiny kitchen with a dish of cooling caramels in her hand; "we don't find, we just lose." She placed the dish upon the table and drew up a chair. "I would mortgage a share of my life if I could turn my old mammy loose in here for an hour."

"Gerty used to be particular," explained Miss Freighley; "but it is a vicious habit, and we broke her of it. Even now it attacks her at intervals, and she gets out a duster and goes to work."

"I can't write in a mess," interrupted Miss Oliver, a shade ruefully. "I haven't written a line since I came to New York." Then she sighed. "I only wish I hadn't written a word before coming. At home I thought I was a genius; now I know I am a fool."

"I have felt the same way," said Mariana, sympathetically, "but it doesn't last. The first stage-manager I went to I almost fell at his feet; the next almost fell at mine. Neither of them gave me a place, but they taught me the value of men."

"I don't think it's worth learning," returned Miss Oliver, passing her caramels. "Try one, and see if they are hard."

"Poor Gerty!" drawled Miss Hill, watching Mariana bite the caramel. "She faces editors and all kinds of bad characters. Her views of life are depressing."

"They are not views," remonstrated Miss Oliver, "they are facts. Facts are always depressing, except when they are maddening."

"I have begged her to leave off writing and take to water-color or china painting," said Miss Freighley, cheerfully, "but she won't."

"How can she?" asked Mariana.

"Of course I can't," retorted Miss Oliver, shortly. "I never had a paint-brush in my hand in my life, except when I was cleaning it."

Miss Freighley laid her sewing aside and stretched her arms.

"It only requires a little determination," she said, "and I have it. I got tired of Alabama. I couldn't come to New York without an object, so I invented one. It was as good as any other, and I stuck to it."

Miss Hill shook her head, and her glorious hair shone like amber.

"Art is serious," she said, slowly. She was just entering the life-class at the Art League.

"But the artist is not," returned Miss Freighley, "and one can be an artist without having any art. I am. They think at home I am learning to paint pictures to go on the parlor wall in place of the portraits that were burned in the war. But I am not. I am here because I love New York, and – "

"Claude Nevins," concluded Miss Oliver.

Mariana looked up with interest. "How nice!" she said. "He told me you were awfully pretty."

Miss Freighley blushed and laughed.

"Nonsense!" she rejoined; "but Gerty is so faithful to her young fellow down South that it has gone to her brain."

"I am faithful because I have no opportunity for faithlessness," sang Gerty to an accompaniment she was picking upon the guitar. "I have been in love one – two – six times since I came to New York. Once it was with an editor, who accepted my first story. He was short and thick and gray-haired, but I loved him. Once it was with that dark, ill-fed man who rooms next to Mariana. He almost knocked me down upon the stairway and forgot to apologize. I have forgotten the honorable others, as the Japanese say, but I know it is six times, because whenever it happened I made a little cross-mark on my desk, and there are six of them."

"It must have been Mr. Ardly," said Mariana. "I never look at him without thinking what an adorable lover he would make."

"He has such nice hands," said Miss Oliver. "I do like a man with nice hands."

"And he is clean-shaven," added Miss Freighley. "I detest a man with a beard."

Miss Hill crossed her thin ankles upon the hearth.

"Love should be taken seriously," she said, with a wistful look in her dark eyes.

Miss Freighley's pretty, inconsequent laugh broke in.

"That is one of Juliet's platitudes," she said. "But, my dear, it shouldn't be taken seriously. Indeed, it shouldn't be taken at all – except in cases of extreme *ennui*, and then in broken doses. The women who take men seriously – and taking love means taking men, of course – sit down at home and grow shapeless and have babies galore. To grow shapeless is the fate of the woman who takes sentiment seriously. It is a more convincing argument against it than all the statistics of the divorce court – "

"For the Lord's sake, Carrie, beware of woman's rights," protested Miss Oliver. "That is exactly what Mrs. Simpson said in her lecture on 'Our Tyrant, Man.' Why, those dear old aunts of yours in Alabama have inserted an additional clause in their Litany: 'From intemperance, evil desires, and woman's suffrage, good Lord deliver us!' They are grounded in the belief that the new woman is an *édition de luxe* of the devil."

Mariana rose and shook out her skirts. "I must go," she said, "and you haven't done a bit of work."

"So we haven't," replied Miss Hill, picking up her needle. "But take some caramels – do."

Mariana took a caramel and went out into the hall. Algarcife's door was open, and he was standing upon the threshold talking to Claude Nevins.

As Mariana passed, Nevins smiled and called to her:

"I say, Miss Musin, here is a vandal who complains that you make night hideous."

Algarcife scowled.

"Nevins is a fool," he retorted, "and if he doesn't know it, he ought to be told so."

"Thanks," returned Nevins, amiably, "but I have long since learned not to believe anything I hear."

Anthony's irritation increased. "I should have thought the presumptive evidence sufficient to overcome any personal bias," he replied.

Nevins spread out his hands with an imperturbable shrug.

"My dear fellow, I never found my conclusions upon presumptive evidence. Had I done so, I should hold life to be a hollow mockery – whereas I am convinced that it is a deuced solid one."

"You are so bad-tempered – both of you," said Mariana; "but, Mr. Algarcife, do you really object to my singing? I can't keep silent, you know."

Algarcife smiled.

"I never supposed that you could," he answered. "And as for music, I had as soon listen to you as to – to Patti."

"Not that he values your accomplishments more, but Patti's less," observed Nevins, placidly.

"On the other hand, I should say that Miss Musin would make decidedly the less noise," said Anthony.

"He's a brute, isn't he, Mariana?" asked Nevins – and added, "Now I never said you made anything hideous, did I?"

Mariana laughed, looking a little vexed. "If you wouldn't always repeat everything you hear other people say, it would be wiser," she responded, tartly.

"Such is the reward of virtue," sighed Nevins. "All my life I have been held as responsible for other people's speeches as for my own. And all from a conscientious endeavor to let my neighbors see themselves as others see them – "

Algarcife smiled good-humoredly. "Whatever bad qualities Nevins may possess," he said, "he has at least the courage of his convictions – "

Nevins shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know about the convictions," he rejoined, "but I've got the courage all right." Then he looked at Mariana. "Is that an implement of housewifery that I see?" he demanded.

"I have been to a darning-party," she answered, "but we didn't darn anything – not even circumstances."

"Lucky circumstances!" ejaculated Nevins. Then he lowered his voice. "I should not have believed it of you," he protested; "to attend a darning-party, and to leave not only me, but my socks, outside."

Mariana flushed angrily.

"You are insufferable," she said, "and you haven't a particle of tact – not a particle. Only yesterday I heard you tell Mr. Morris that his head looked like an advertisement for sapolio, and the day before you told Miss Freighley that I said she didn't know how to dress her hair."

"It was true," said Nevins. "You can't make a liar of me, Mariana."

"I wish you wouldn't call me Mariana," she retorted; and he went upon his way with a lament.

As Mariana laid her hand upon her door-knob she looked at Anthony.

"Mr. Algarcife," she said, "do you really mind my singing so very much?"

From the end of the corridor Nevins's voice was heard chanting:

"How fickle women are,
Fickle as falling star."

"I wish that Nevins would attend to his own affairs," Algarcife responded. "As for me, you may dance a break-down every night of your life, and, if it amuses you, I'll grin and bear it."

CHAPTER VII

During Algarcife's first term at college, a fellow fraternity man remarked of him that he resembled the eternal void, in that he might have been anything and was nothing. Algarcife accepted the criticism with a shrug.

"Wait and see," he responded, shortly, and the fraternity man had waited and had seen.

In that first year Anthony succeeded in sowing a supply of wild oats sufficient for the domestication of the species. He was improvident from principle and reckless from an inborn distrust of accepted dogmas. "I shall live as I please," he replied, in answer to the warnings of a classmate, "and I shall think as I damn please."

For a year he went about his dissipations in a kind of inquiring ardor. He called it "seeing life," and he pursued his observations with entire obliviousness to public regard, but with philosophic concern as to the accuracy of the information obtained. He was known to have got drunk upon whiskey and light wine in order to test the differences in effect, and it was rumored that he made love to the homeliest and most virtuous daughter of the saloon-keeper that he might convince himself whether her virtue was the logical resultant of her homeliness. Into all experiments he carried an entire absence of prejudice, and a half-defiant acceptance of consequences.

"It is a sheer waste of time," said John Driscoll, of the Senior class. "You haven't learned the first principle of scientific dissipation. Instead of plunging into excesses, you stroll into them. By Jove! if you broke every command in the Decalogue, you would appear to sin in moderation."

Algarcife laughed. "I am going to reform," he said. "I am not enough of an artist to see the æsthetic values of vice. Let's become decent. It is more economical."

It was at this time that he reduced his living expenses one-half, and appropriated the surplus funds to the support of a young mechanic, whose health had collapsed in the struggle to work his way to a university degree. "He not only gave it," declared the young mechanic, in a burst of gratitude, "but he gave it without knowing that he did a generous thing."

When Algarcife left college that summer he followed Driscoll to his cabin in the Adirondacks and spent several months botanizing. The chance application to science decided the tenor of his mind, and, upon his return to study, he refused to bow beneath the weight of authority hurled upon him. He denounced the classics and a classical training. Several courses he declared superficial, and he mastered various systems of moral philosophy that he might refute the fallacies of the professor. The brilliancy which he had frittered during the preceding year was turned into newer channels, and the closeness of his reliance upon inductive reasoning caused him to become at once a source of amusement to his classmates and of annoyance to his instructor. To see him rise in class, his face charged with the nervous vigor which seized him in moments of excitement, his keen glance riveted upon the professor as he mercilessly dissected his utterances, was an event which, to his fellow-students, rendered even old Monckton's lectures of interest.

Then he took a prominent part in a debating society. With a readiness which his friends declared to spring from love of logic, his enemies from lack of principle, he accepted either side of a given argument, and had been known to undertake at once the negative and the affirmative, detecting his own weaknesses as ruthlessly as he had detected those of old Monckton.

Before leaving college, and at the urgency of his guardian, he had carried through with dogged distaste a course in dogmatic theology. It was then that he fell into the way of writing theses from opposite sides of a subject, and when handing in a treatise upon "Historical Evidences of Christianity," or "The Pelagian Heresy," it was invariably accompanied by the remark: "I wish you'd look over that 'Lack of Historical Evidences,' or 'Defence of Pelagianism,' at the same time. You know, I always do the other side."

And it was "the other side" which finally drove him out of theology and his guardian into despair. Whether it was an argument in moral philosophy, a mooted question in Egyptology, or a stand in current politics, Algarcife was ready with what his classmates called "the damned eternal opposition." It was even said that a facetious professor, in remarking to his class that it was "a fine day," had turned in absent-minded custom and called upon Mr. Algarcife for "the other side," an appeal which drew a howl of approbation from hilarious students.

Anthony was not popular at college, though his friends were steadfast. It was not until later years, when life had tempered the incisive irony of his speech and endowed him with the diplomacy of indifference, that men fell beneath the attraction of his personality. At that time he was looked upon in an ominous light, and the scintillant scepticism which he carried fearlessly into every department of knowledge caused him to be regarded as one who might prove himself to be an enemy to society. Even his voice, which long afterwards exerted so potent an influence, had not then gained its varied range and richness of expression.

So, when, years later, the public lauded the qualities they had formerly condemned, there was no inconsistence – since life is more colored by points of view than by principles. At the end of his theological course he had delivered an address, at the request of his class, upon the "Christian Revelation." When it was over he went into his guardian's room, the flame of a long determination in his eyes. The paper which he had read was still in his hands, and he laid it upon the table as he spoke.

"It can't be," he said. "I give it up."

The man whom he addressed rose slowly and faced him, standing, a tall, gaunt figure in his clerical coat. His hair was white, and at a first glance he presented the impression of a statue modelled in plaster, so much did the value of form outweigh that of color in his appearance. In meeting his eyes an observer would, perhaps, have gained a conception of expression rather than shade. One would have said that the eyes were benevolent, not that they were gray or blue. His forehead was high and somewhat narrow, three heavy furrows running diagonally between the eyebrows – ruts left by the constant passage of perplexities. He was called Father Speares, and was an impassioned leader of the High Church movement.

"Do you mean it?" he asked, slowly – "that you give up your faith?"

Algarcife's brow wrinkled in sudden irritation. "That I have given up long ago," he answered. "If I ever had any, it was an ingrafted product. What I do mean is that I give up the Church – that I give up theology – that I give up religion."

The other flinched suddenly. He put out one frail, white hand as if in protest.

"I – I cannot believe it," he said.

"And yet I have been honest."

"Honest! Yes, I suppose so. Honest – " he lifted the paper from the table and unfolded it mechanically. "And yet you could write this?"

Anthony shook his head impatiently. "I was but a special pleader with the side assigned, and you knew it."

"But I did not know your power – nor do you. It convinced me – convinced me, though I came with the knowledge that your words were empty – empty and rotten – "

"They were words. The case was given me, and I defended it as a lawyer defends a client. What else could I do?"

Father Speares sighed and passed his hand across his brow.

"It is not the first disappointment of my life," he said, "but it is the greatest."

Algarcife was looking through the open window to the sunlight falling upon the waving grass. A large butterfly, with black and yellow wings, was dancing above a clump of dandelions.

"I am sorry," he said, more gently – "sorry for that – but it can't be helped. I am not a theologian, but a scientist; I am not a believer, but an agnostic; I am not a priest, but a man."

"But you are young. The pendulum may swing back – "

"Never," said Algarcife – "never." He lifted his head, looking into the other's eyes. "Don't you see that when a man has once conceived the magnitude of the universe he can never bow his head to a creed? Don't you see that when he has grasped the essential verity in all religions he no longer allies himself to a single one? Don't you see that when he has realized the dominance of law in religions – the law of their growth and decay, of their evolution and dissolution, when he has once grasped the fact that man creates, and is not created by, his god – don't you see that he can never bind himself to the old beliefs?"

"I see that he can awake to the knowledge of the spiritual life as well as to the physical – that he can grasp the existence of a vital ethical principle in nature. I shall pray for you, and I shall hope – "

Algarcife frowned. "I am sick of it," he said – "sick to death. To please you, I plodded away at theology for three solid years. To please you, I weighed assumptions as light as air. To please you, I read all the rot of all the Fathers – and I am sick of it. I shall live my own life in my own way."

"And may God help you!" said the elder man; and then, "Where will you go?"

"To Egypt – to India – to the old civilizations."

"And then?"

"I do not know. I shall work and I shall succeed – with or without the help of God."

And he had gone. During the next few years he travelled in Africa and Asia, when the sudden loss of his income recalled him to America. Finding it fruitless to rebel, he resigned himself philosophically, secured a position as instructor in a woman's college, made up an annual deficit by writing for the scientific reviews, and continued his studies. His physical nature he believed he had rendered quiescent.

Some days after his encounter with Mariana he came upon her again. He had just entered the park at the Seventy-second Street entrance, on his way from his lecture at the Bodley College. The battered bonnet of a beggar-woman had blown beneath the horses' hoofs in the drive, and he had stopped to rescue it, when he heard his name called, and saw Mariana beside him.

She spoke impulsively.

"I have been watching you," she said.

He looked at her in perplexity.

"Indeed! And what have you discovered?"

"I discovered that you are a gentleman."

He laughed outright.

"Your powers of intuition are positively miraculous," he replied.

She upbraided him with a glance.

"You are unkind," she said.

"Am I?"

"You are unkind to me." Her manner had grown subtly personal. He felt suddenly as if he had known her from the beginning of time and through various transmigrations.

"You laugh at me," she added. "You were kinder to that woman – "

He broke in upon her, perplexity giving place to amusement.

"Oh!" he said; "so that is what you mean! Why, if you were to lose your hat, I shouldn't laugh, I assure you."

Mariana walked on silently. Her eyes were bent upon the gray sidewalk, there was a faint flush in her face. A line of men seated upon the benches beside the way surveyed her with interest.

"Miss Musin!"

Her face quickened.

"I have a confession to make."

She looked up inquiringly. A finger of sunlight pierced the branches of an elm and pointed to her upraised face.

"I have rather bad manners," he went on. "It is a failing which you must accept as you accept the color of my hair – "

Mariana smiled.

"I say just what I think," he added.

Mariana frowned.

"That is what I complain of," she responded. Then she laughed so brightly that a tiny child, toddling with a toy upon the walk, looked up and clapped its hands.

His eyes warmed.

"But you will take me for better or for worse?" he demanded.

"Could it be better?" she asked, demurely.

"That is a matter of opinion."

They left the park and turned into a cross-town street. The distant blocks sloped down into the blue blur of the river, from which several gaunt, gray masts rose like phantom wrecks evolved from the mist. Beyond them the filmy outline of the opposite shore was revealed.

Suddenly Mariana stopped.

"This is Morani's, and I must go in." She held out her hand.

"How is the voice?" he asked.

"I am nursing it. Some day you shall hear it."

"I have heard it," he responded.

She smiled.

"Oh, I forgot. You are next door. Well, some day you shall hear it in opera."

"Shall I?"

"And I shall sing Elsa with Alvary. My God! I would give ten years of my life for that – to sing with Alvary."

He smiled at the warmth in her words and, as he smiled he became conscious that her artistic passion ignited the fire of a more material passion in himself. A fugitive desire seized him to possess the woman before him, body and brain. From the quivering of his pulses he knew that the physical nature he had drugged had stirred in response to a passing appeal.

"Good-bye," said Mariana. She tripped lightly up the brown-stone steps. As she opened the outer door she turned with a smile and a nod. Then the door closed and he went on his way. But the leaping of his pulses was not appeased.

CHAPTER VIII

One morning, several days later, Mariana, looking from her window, saw Anthony standing upon the fire-escape. He had thrown a handful of crumbs to a swarm of noisy sparrows quarrelling about his feet.

As he stood there with the morning sunlight flashing upon his face and gilding the dark abundance of his hair, the singularly mystic beauty of his appearance was brought into bold relief. It was a beauty which contained no suggestion of physical supremacy. He seemed the survival of a lost type – of those purified prophets of old who walked with God and trampled upon the flesh which was His handiwork. It was the striking contrast between the intellectual tenor of his mind and its physical expression which emphasized his personality. To the boldest advance in scientific progress he had the effect of uniting a suggestion of that poetized mysticism which constitutes the charm of a remote past. With the addition of the yellow robe and a beggar's bowl, he might have been transformed into one of the Enlightened of nigh on three thousand years ago, and have followed the Blessed One upon his pilgrimage towards Nirvana. The modernity of his mind was almost tantalizing in its inconsistency with his external aspect.

Mariana, looking through the open window, smiled unconsciously. Anthony glanced up, saw her, and nodded.

"Good-morning," he called. "Won't you come out and help quiet these rogues?"

Mariana opened the little door beneath the window and stepped outside. She looked shy and girlish, and the flutter with which she greeted him had a quaint suggestion of flattery.

He came towards her, and they stood together beside the railing. Beneath them the noise of trade and traffic went on tumultuously. Overhead the sky was of a still, intense blueness, the horizon flecked by several church-spires, which rose sharply against the burning remoteness. Across the tenement roofs lines of drying garments fluttered like banners.

Mariana, in her cotton gown of dull blue, cast a slender shadow across the fire-escape. In the morning light her eyes showed gray and limpid. The sallow tones of her skin were exaggerated, and the peculiar harmony of hair and brows and complexion was strongly marked. She was looking her plainest, and she knew it.

But Anthony did not. He had seen her, perhaps, half a dozen times, and upon each occasion he had discovered his previous conceptions of her to be erroneous. Her extreme mobility of mood and manner at once perplexed and attracted him. Yesterday he had resolved her character into a compound of surface emotions. Now he told himself that she was cool and calm and sweetly reasonable.

"I am glad you like sparrows," she said, "because nobody else does, and, somehow, it doesn't seem fair. You do like them, don't you?"

"I believe," he answered, "that I have two passions beyond the usual number with which man is supplied – a passion for books and a passion for animals. I can't say I have a special regard for sparrows, but I like them. They are hardy little fellows, though a trifle pugnacious, and they have learned the value of co-operation."

"I had a canary," remarked Mariana, with pathos, "but it died. Everything that belongs to me always dies, sooner or later."

He laughed, looking at her with quizzical humor. "Do you expect them to escape the common fate?" he demanded; and then: "If there is anything that could give me an attack of horrors sooner than a dancing dog – and there isn't – it would be a bird in a cage. I left my last lodgings because my neighbor kept a mocking-bird outside of her window. If it had been a canary I might have endured it, but I knew that if I stayed there a week longer I should break in and set that bird free. I used to hear it at night beating itself against the cage."

"Oh, hush!" said Mariana, putting her hands to her ears. She wondered vaguely at his peculiar sensitiveness of sympathy. It was a type of manhood that she had not before encountered – one as unlike the jovial, fox-hunting heroes of her childish days as mind is unlike matter. She remembered that among them such expressions would have been regarded as a mark of effeminacy and ruthlessly laughed to scorn. She even remembered that her own father had denounced a prohibition of prize-fighting as "mawkish rot." This eccentric type of nervous vigor, in which all remnants of semi-barbarism were apparently extinguished, possessed a fascination for her in its very strangeness. In his character all those active virtues around which her youthful romances were woven held no place. Patriotism was modified into a sense of general humanity; chivalry was tempered into commonplace politeness. She did not know that the force which attracted her was but a dominant mentality; that where the mind holds sway the character is modified accordingly. With a great expenditure of nerve force those attributes which result from physical hardihood occupy a less prominent part. In Anthony she beheld, without knowing it, a forced and abnormal result of existing conditions. Nature often foreshadows a coming civilization by an advance-guard of individuals. As a supreme test she places a century before his time the victim of her experiments in vivisection. And a character that might have fitted with uncut edges into the circle of existence, had he but been permitted to insert himself at the proper moment, has often been trampled into nothingness by the incessant trend of the inopportune. The priest of the coming generation is the pariah of the present, and the dogma of to-morrow the heresy of to-day.

To Mariana's ignorant eyes Anthony seemed one in whom passion had been annihilated. In reality it was only smothered beneath the weight of a strenuous will. Let the pressure be removed, and it would burst forth the fiercer for its long confinement, ingulfing perhaps the whole organism in its destructive flame.

"Oh, hush!" Mariana had said, and turned from him. "You seem to delight in unpleasant things. I make it a point to believe that suffering and death do not exist. I *know* they do, but I *believe* they do not."

He drew nearer. Across his face she saw a sudden flash – so vivid that it seemed the awakening of a dormant element in his nature. "You are wonderfully vital," he said. "There is as much life in you as there is in a dozen of us poor effete mortals. What is your secret?"

The girl leaned her arm upon the railing and rested her chin in her hand. She looked up at him and her eyes grew darker. "It is the pure animal love of existence," she answered. "I love the world. I love living and breathing, and feeling the blood quicken in my veins. I love dancing and singing and eating and sleeping. The simple sensuousness of life is delicious to me. If I could not be a queen, I had rather be a beggar upon the road-side than to be nothing. If I could not be a human being, I had rather be a butterfly in the sunshine than not to be at all. So long as I had the blue sky and the air and the world about me I could not be miserable. It is life – life in its physical fulfilment – that I love. So long as they leave me the open world I can be happy. Only, if I were taken and shut up in an ugly dungeon I should want to die. And even then there would be hope."

She had spoken passionately, the words coming quickly from between her parted lips. She seemed so light and etherealized as to be almost bodiless. The materialistic philosophy to which she gave utterance was spiritualized by her own illusiveness.

For an instant she hesitated, looking across the tenement roofs to the horizon beyond. Then she went on: "I am different from you – oh, so different! Where you think, I feel. You are all mind, I am all senses. I am only fulfilling my place in nature when I am hearing or seeing or feeling beautiful things. My sense of beauty is my soul."

Anthony watched her with steadfast intentness. He had never before seen her in this mood, and it was a new surprise to him. His former generalizations were displaced.

But if he had known it, the present aspect was a result of his own influence upon Mariana. In a moment of contrition for small deceptions, she had been precipitated into an extravagant self-abasement.

"You are disappointed," she added, presently, meeting his gaze. "You expected something different, but I am shallow, and I can't help it." It was like her that in the tendency to self-depreciation she was as sincere as she had been in the former tendency to self-esteem.

And perhaps Anthony was the juster judge of the two. He was certainly the more dispassionate.

"I have told you," concluded Mariana, with an eager catch at the redeeming grace, "because I want to be truthful."

"My dear girl," responded Anthony, a warm friendliness in his voice, "you might have spared yourself this little piece of analysis. It is as useless as most morbid rot of the kind. It doesn't in the least affect what I think of you, and what I do think of you is of little consequence."

"But what do you think?" demanded Mariana.

"I think that you know yourself just a little less well than you know that old lady wheeling her cart of vegetables in the street below. Had she, by the way, known herself a little better she would not have flown into such a rage because she spilled a few. If we knew ourselves we would see that things are not very much our fault, after all, and that a few slips the more or less on our uphill road are very little matter."

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