

**RUDYARD
KIPLING**

UNDER THE
DEODARS

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THE EDUCATION OF OTIS YEEERE

I

In the pleasant orchard-closes
'God bless all our gains,' say we;
But 'May God bless all our losses,'
Better suits with our degree.

The Lost Bower.

This is the history of a failure; but the woman who failed said that it might be an instructive tale to put into print for the benefit of the younger generation. The younger generation does not want instruction, being perfectly willing to instruct if any one will listen to it. None the less, here begins the story where every right-minded story should begin, that is to say at Simla, where all things begin and many come to an evil end.

The mistake was due to a very clever woman making a blunder and not retrieving it. Men are licensed to stumble, but a clever

woman's mistake is outside the regular course of Nature and Providence; since all good people know that a woman is the only infallible thing in this world, except Government Paper of the '79 issue, bearing interest at four and a half per cent. Yet, we have to remember that six consecutive days of rehearsing the leading part of *The Fallen Angel*, at the New Gaiety Theatre where the plaster is not yet properly dry, might have brought about an unhingement of spirits which, again, might have led to eccentricities.

Mrs. Hauksbee came to 'The Foundry' to tiffin with Mrs. Mallowe, her one bosom friend, for she was in no sense 'a woman's woman.' And it was a woman's tiffin, the door shut to all the world; and they both talked chiffons, which is French for Mysteries.

'I've enjoyed an interval of sanity,' Mrs. Hauksbee announced, after tiffin was over and the two were comfortably settled in the little writing-room that opened out of Mrs. Mallowe's bedroom.

'My dear girl, what has he done?' said Mrs. Mallowe sweetly. It is noticeable that ladies of a certain age call each other 'dear girl,' just as commissioners of twenty-eight years' standing address their equals in the Civil List as 'my boy.'

'There's no he in the case. Who am I that an imaginary man should be always credited to me? Am I an Apache?'

'No, dear, but somebody's scalp is generally drying at your wigwam-door. Soaking rather.'

This was an allusion to the Hawley Boy, who was in the habit of riding all across Simla in the Rains, to call on Mrs. Hauksbee.

That lady laughed.

‘For my sins, the Aide at Tyrconnel last night told me off to The Mussuck. Hsh! Don’t laugh. One of my most devoted admirers. When the duff came some one really ought to teach them to make puddings at Tyrconnel The Mussuck was at liberty to attend to me.’

‘Sweet soul! I know his appetite,’ said Mrs. Mallowe. ‘Did he, oh did he, begin his wooing?’

‘By a special mercy of Providence, no. He explained his importance as a Pillar of the Empire. I didn’t laugh.’

‘Lucy, I don’t believe you.’

‘Ask Captain Sangar; he was on the other side. Well, as I was saying, The Mussuck dilated.’

‘I think I can see him doing it,’ said Mrs. Mallowe pensively, scratching her fox-terrier’s ears.

‘I was properly impressed. Most properly. I yawned openly. “Strict supervision, and play them off one against the other,” said The Mussuck, shovelling down his ice by tureenfuls, I assure you. “That, Mrs. Hauksbee, is the secret of our Government.”’

Mrs. Mallowe laughed long and merrily. ‘And what did you say?’

‘Did you ever know me at loss for an answer yet? I said: “So I have observed in my dealings with you.” The Mussuck swelled with pride. He is coming to call on me to-morrow. The Hawley Boy is coming too.’

““Strict supervision and play them off one against the other.

That, Mrs. Hauksbee, is the secret of our Government.” And I daresay if we could get to The Mussuck’s heart, we should find that he considers himself a man of the world.’

‘As he is of the other two things. I like The Mussuck, and I won’t have you call him names. He amuses me.’

‘He has reformed you, too, by what appears. Explain the interval of sanity, and hit Tim on the nose with the paper-cutter, please. That dog is too fond of sugar. Do you take milk in yours?’

‘No, thanks. Polly, I’m wearied of this life. It’s hollow.’

‘Turn religious, then. I always said that Rome would be your fate.’

‘Only exchanging half-a-dozen attaches in red for one in black, and if I fasted, the wrinkles would come, and never, never go. Has it ever struck you, dear, that I’m getting old?’

‘Thanks for your courtesy. I’ll return it. Ye-es, we are both not exactly how shall I put it?’

‘What we have been. “I feel it in my bones,” as Mrs. Crossley says. Polly, I’ve wasted my life.’

‘As how?’

‘Never mind how. I feel it. I want to be a Power before I die.’

‘Be a Power then. You’ve wits enough for anything and beauty!’

Mrs. Hauksbee pointed a teaspoon straight at her hostess. ‘Polly, if you heap compliments on me like this, I shall cease to believe that you’re a woman. Tell me how I am to be a Power.’

‘Inform The Mussuck that he is the most fascinating and

slimmest man in Asia, and he'll tell you anything and everything you please.'

'Bother The Mussuck! I mean an intellectual Power not a gas-power. Polly, I'm going to start a salon.'

Mrs. Mallowe turned lazily on the sofa and rested her head on her hand. 'Hear the words of the Preacher, the son of Baruch,' she said.

'Will you talk sensibly?'

'I will, dear, for I see that you are going to make a mistake.'

'I never made a mistake in my life at least, never one that I couldn't explain away afterwards.'

'Going to make a mistake,' went on Mrs. Mallowe composedly. 'It is impossible to start a salon in Simla. A bar would be much more to the point.'

'Perhaps, but why? It seems so easy.'

'Just what makes it so difficult. How many clever women are there in Simla?'

'Myself and yourself,' said Mrs. Hauksbee, without a moment's hesitation.

'Modest woman! Mrs. Feardon would thank you for that. And how many clever men?'

'Oh er hundreds,' said Mrs. Hauksbee vaguely.

'What a fatal blunder! Not one. They are all bespoke by the Government. Take my husband, for instance. Jack was a clever man, though I say so who shouldn't. Government has eaten him up. All his ideas and powers of conversation he really used to

be a good talker, even to his wife in the old days are taken from him by this this kitchen-sink of a Government. That's the case with every man up here who is at work. I don't suppose a Russian convict under the knout is able to amuse the rest of his gang; and all our men-folk here are gilded convicts.'

'But there are scores –'

'I know what you're going to say. Scores of idle men up on leave. I admit it, but they are all of two objectionable sets. The Civilian who'd be delightful if he had the military man's knowledge of the world and style, and the military man who'd be adorable if he had the Civilian's culture.'

'Detestable word! Have Civilians culchaw? I never studied the breed deeply.'

'Don't make fun of Jack's Service. Yes. They're like the teapoys in the Lakka Bazar good material but not polished. They can't help themselves, poor dears. A Civilian only begins to be tolerable after he has knocked about the world for fifteen years.'

'And a military man?'

'When he has had the same amount of service. The young of both species are horrible. You would have scores of them in your salon.'

'I would not!' said Mrs. Hauksbee fiercely.

'I would tell the bearer to darwaza band them. I'd put their own colonels and commissioners at the door to turn them away. I'd give them to the Topsham Girl to play with.'

'The Topsham Girl would be grateful for the gift. But to go

back to the salon. Allowing that you had gathered all your men and women together, what would you do with them? Make them talk? They would all with one accord begin to flirt. Your salon would become a glorified Peliti's a "Scandal Point" by lamplight.'

'There's a certain amount of wisdom in that view.'

'There's all the wisdom in the world in it. Surely, twelve Simla seasons ought to have taught you that you can't focus anything in India; and a salon, to be any good at all, must be permanent. In two seasons your roomful would be scattered all over Asia. We are only little bits of dirt on the hillsides here one day and blown down the road the next. We have lost the art of talking at least our men have. We have no cohesion.'

'George Eliot in the flesh,' interpolated Mrs. Hauksbee wickedly.

'And collectively, my dear scoffer, we, men and women alike, have no influence. Come into the verandah and look at the Mall!'

The two looked down on the now rapidly filling road, for all Simla was abroad to steal a stroll between a shower and a fog.

'How do you propose to fix that river? Look! There's The Mussuck head of goodness knows what. He is a power in the land, though he does eat like a costermonger. There's Colonel Blone, and General Grucher, and Sir Dugald Delane, and Sir Henry Haughton, and Mr. Jellalatty. All Heads of Departments, and all powerful.'

'And all my fervent admirers,' said Mrs. Hauksbee piously. 'Sir Henry Haughton raves about me. But go on.'

‘One by one, these men are worth something. Collectively, they’re just a mob of Anglo-Indians. Who cares for what Anglo-Indians say? Your salon won’t weld the Departments together and make you mistress of India, dear. And these creatures won’t talk administrative “shop” in a crowd your salon because they are so afraid of the men in the lower ranks overhearing it. They have forgotten what of Literature and Art they ever knew, and the women – ’

‘Can’t talk about anything except the last Gymkhana, or the sins of their last nurse. I was calling on Mrs. Derwills this morning.’

‘You admit that? They can talk to the subalterns though, and the subalterns can talk to them. Your salon would suit their views admirably, if you respected the religious prejudices of the country and provided plenty of kala juggahs.’

‘Plenty of kala juggahs. Oh my poor little idea! Kala juggahs in a salon! But who made you so awfully clever?’

‘Perhaps I’ve tried myself; or perhaps I know a woman who has. I have preached and expounded the whole matter and the conclusion thereof.’

‘You needn’t go on. “Is Vanity.” Polly, I thank you. These vermin’ Mrs. Hauksbee waved her hand from the verandah to two men in the crowd below who had raised their hats to her ‘these vermin shall not rejoice in a new Scandal Point or an extra Peliti’s. I will abandon the notion of a salon. It did seem so tempting, though. But what shall I do? I must do something.’

‘Why? Are not Abana and Pharpap?’

‘Jack has made you nearly as bad as himself! I want to, of course. I’m tired of everything and everybody, from a moonlight picnic at Seepee to the blandishments of The Mussuck.’

‘Yes that comes, too, sooner or later. Have you nerve enough to make your bow yet?’

Mrs. Hauksbee’s mouth shut grimly. Then she laughed. ‘I think I see myself doing it. Big pink placards on the Mall: “Mrs. Hauksbee! Positively her last appearance on any stage! This is to give notice!” No more dances; no more rides; no more luncheons; no more theatricals with supper to follow; no more sparring with one’s dearest, dearest friend; no more fencing with an inconvenient man who hasn’t wit enough to clothe what he’s pleased to call his sentiments in passable speech; no more parading of The Mussuck while Mrs. Tarkass calls all round Simla, spreading horrible stories about me! No more of anything that is thoroughly wearying, abominable, and detestable, but, all the same, makes life worth the having. Yes! I see it all! Don’t interrupt, Polly, I’m inspired. A mauve and white striped “cloud” round my excellent shoulders, a seat in the fifth row of the Gaiety, and both horses sold. Delightful vision! A comfortable arm-chair, situated in three different draughts, at every ball-room; and nice, large, sensible shoes for all the couples to stumble over as they go into the verandah! Then at supper. Can’t you imagine the scene? The greedy mob gone away. Reluctant subaltern, pink all over like a newly-powdered baby, they really ought to

tan subalterns before they are exported, Polly, sent back by the hostess to do his duty. Slouches up to me across the room, tugging at a glove two sizes too large for him I hate a man who wears gloves like overcoats and trying to look as if he'd thought of it from the first. "May I ah-have the pleasure 'f takin' you 'nt supper?" Then I get up with a hungry smile. Just like this.'

'Lucy, how can you be so absurd?'

'And sweep out on his arm. So! After supper I shall go away early, you know, because I shall be afraid of catching cold. No one will look for my 'rickshaw. Mine, so please you! I shall stand, always with that mauve and white "cloud" over my head, while the wet soaks into my dear, old, venerable feet, and Tom swears and shouts for the mem-sahib's gharri. Then home to bed at half-past eleven! Truly excellent life helped out by the visits of the Padri, just fresh from burying somebody down below there.' She pointed through the pines toward the Cemetery, and continued with vigorous dramatic gesture,

'Listen! I see it all down, down even to the stays! Such stays! Six-eight a pair, Polly, with red flannel or list, is it? that they put into the tops of those fearful things. I can draw you a picture of them.'

'Lucy, for Heaven's sake, don't go waving your arms about in that idiotic manner! Recollect every one can see you from the Mall.'

'Let them see! They'll think I am rehearsing for The Fallen Angel. Look! There's The Mussuck. How badly he rides. There!'

She blew a kiss to the venerable Indian administrator with infinite grace.

‘Now,’ she continued, ‘he’ll be chaffed about that at the Club in the delicate manner those brutes of men affect, and the Hawley Boy will tell me all about it softening the details for fear of shocking me. That boy is too good to live, Polly. I’ve serious thoughts of recommending him to throw up his commission and go into the Church. In his present frame of mind he would obey me. Happy, happy child!’

‘Never again,’ said Mrs. Mallowe, with an affectation of indignation, ‘shall you tiffin here! “Lucindy your behaviour is scand’lus.”’

‘All your fault,’ retorted Mrs. Hauksbee, ‘for suggesting such a thing as my abdication. No! jamais! nevaire! I will act, dance, ride, frivol, talk scandal, dine out, and appropriate the legitimate captives of any woman I choose, until I d-r-r-rop, or a better woman than I puts me to shame before all Simla, and it’s dust and ashes in my mouth while I’m doing it!’

She swept into the drawing-room. Mrs. Mallowe followed and put an arm round her waist.

‘I’m not!’ said Mrs. Hauksbee defiantly, rummaging for her handkerchief. ‘I’ve been dining out the last ten nights, and rehearsing in the afternoon. You’d be tired yourself. It’s only because I’m tired.’

Mrs. Mallowe did not offer Mrs. Hauksbee any pity or ask her to lie down, but gave her another cup of tea, and went on with

the talk.

'I've been through that too, dear,' she said.

'I remember,' said Mrs. Hauksbee, a gleam of fun on her face.

'In '84, wasn't it? You went out a great deal less next season.'

Mrs. Mallowe smiled in a superior and Sphinx-like fashion.

'I became an Influence,' said she.

'Good gracious, child, you didn't join the Theosophists and kiss Buddha's big toe, did you? I tried to get into their set once, but they cast me out for a sceptic without a chance of improving my poor little mind, too.'

'No, I didn't Theosophilander. Jack says –'

'Never mind Jack. What a husband says is known before.

What did you do?'

'I made a lasting impression.'

'So have I for four months. But that didn't console me in the least. I hated the man. Will you stop smiling in that inscrutable way and tell me what you mean?'

Mrs. Mallowe told.

'And you mean to say that it is absolutely Platonic on both sides?'

'Absolutely, or I should never have taken it up.'

'And his last promotion was due to you?'

Mrs. Mallowe nodded.

'And you warned him against the Topsham Girl?'

Another nod.

'And told him of Sir Dugald Delane's private memo about

him?"

A third nod.

'Why?'

'What a question to ask a woman! Because it amused me at first. I am proud of my property now. If I live, he shall continue to be successful. Yes, I will put him upon the straight road to Knighthood, and everything else that a man values. The rest depends upon himself.'

'Polly, you are a most extraordinary woman.'

'Not in the least. I'm concentrated, that's all. You diffuse yourself, dear; and though all Simla knows your skill in managing a team.'

'Can't you choose a prettier word?'

'Team, of half-a-dozen, from The Mussuck to the Hawley Boy, you gain nothing by it. Not even amusement.'

'And you?'

'Try my recipe. Take a man, not a boy, mind, but an almost mature, unattached man, and be his guide, philosopher, and friend. You'll find it the most interesting occupation that you ever embarked on. It can be done you needn't look like that because I've done it.'

'There's an element of risk about it that makes the notion attractive. I'll get such a man and say to him, "Now, understand that there must be no flirtation. Do exactly what I tell you, profit by my instruction and counsels, and all will yet be well." Is that the idea?'

‘More or less,’ said Mrs. Mallowe, with an unfathomable smile. ‘But be sure he understands.’

II

Dribble-dribble trickle-trickle
What a lot of raw dust!
My dollie’s had an accident
And out came all the sawdust!

Nursery Rhyme.

So Mrs. Hauksbee, in ‘The Foundry’ which overlooks Simla Mall, sat at the feet of Mrs. Mallowe and gathered wisdom. The end of the Conference was the Great Idea upon which Mrs. Hauksbee so plumed herself.

‘I warn you,’ said Mrs. Mallowe, beginning to repent of her suggestion, ‘that the matter is not half so easy as it looks. Any woman even the Topsham Girl can catch a man, but very, very few know how to manage him when caught.’

‘My child,’ was the answer, ‘I’ve been a female St. Simon Stylites looking down upon men for these these years past. Ask The Mussuck whether I can manage them.’

Mrs. Hauksbee departed humming, ‘I’ll go to him and say to him in manner most ironical.’ Mrs. Mallowe laughed to herself. Then she grew suddenly sober. ‘I wonder whether I’ve done

well in advising that amusement? Lucy's a clever woman, but a thought too careless.'

A week later the two met at a Monday Pop. 'Well?' said Mrs. Mallowe.

'I've caught him!' said Mrs. Hauksbee: her eyes were dancing with merriment.

'Who is it, mad woman? I'm sorry I ever spoke to you about it.'

'Look between the pillars. In the third row; fourth from the end. You can see his face now. Look!'

'Otis Yeere! Of all the improbable and impossible people! I don't believe you.'

'Hsh! Wait till Mrs. Tarkass begins murdering Milton Wellings; and I'll tell you all about it. S-s-ss! That woman's voice always reminds me of an Underground train coming into Earl's Court with the brakes on. Now listen. It is really Otis Yeere.'

'So I see, but does it follow that he is your property?'

'He is! By right of trove. I found him, lonely and unbefriended, the very next night after our talk, at the Dugald Delanes' burra-khana. I liked his eyes, and I talked to him. Next day he called. Next day we went for a ride together, and to-day he's tied to my 'richshaw-wheels hand and foot. You'll see when the concert's over. He doesn't know I'm here yet.'

'Thank goodness you haven't chosen a boy. What are you going to do with him, assuming that you've got him?'

'Assuming, indeed! Does a woman do I ever make a mistake in that sort of thing? First' Mrs. Hauksbee ticked off the items

ostentatiously on her little gloved fingers ‘First, my dear, I shall dress him properly. At present his raiment is a disgrace, and he wears a dress-shirt like a crumpled sheet of the Pioneer. Secondly, after I have made him presentable, I shall form his manners his morals are above reproach.’

‘You seem to have discovered a great deal about him considering the shortness of your acquaintance.’

‘Surely you ought to know that the first proof a man gives of his interest in a woman is by talking to her about his own sweet self. If the woman listens without yawning, he begins to like her. If she flatters the animal’s vanity, he ends by adoring her.’

‘In some cases.’

‘Never mind the exceptions. I know which one you are thinking of. Thirdly, and lastly, after he is polished and made pretty, I shall, as you said, be his guide, philosopher, and friend, and he shall become a success as great a success as your friend. I always wondered how that man got on. Did The Mussuck come to you with the Civil List and, dropping on one knee no, two knees, a la Gibbon hand it to you and say, “Adorable angel, choose your friend’s appointment”?’

‘Lucy, your long experiences of the Military Department have demoralised you. One doesn’t do that sort of thing on the Civil Side.’

‘No disrespect meant to Jack’s Service, my dear. I only asked for information. Give me three months, and see what changes I shall work in my prey.’

‘Go your own way since you must. But I’m sorry that I was weak enough to suggest the amusement.’

“I am all discretion, and may be trusted to an in-finite extent,” quoted Mrs. Hauksbee from *The Fallen Angel*; and the conversation ceased with Mrs. Tarkass’s last, long-drawn war-whoop.

Her bitterest enemies and she had many could hardly accuse Mrs. Hauksbee of wasting her time. Otis Yeere was one of those wandering ‘dumb’ characters, foredoomed through life to be nobody’s property. Ten years in Her Majesty’s Bengal Civil Service, spent, for the most part, in undesirable Districts, had given him little to be proud of, and nothing to bring confidence. Old enough to have lost the first fine careless rapture that showers on the immature ‘Stunt imaginary Commissionerships and Stars, and sends him into the collar with coltish earnestness and abandon; too young to be yet able to look back upon the progress he had made, and thank Providence that under the conditions of the day he had come even so far, he stood upon the dead-centre of his career. And when a man stands still he feels the slightest impulse from without. Fortune had ruled that Otis Yeere should be, for the first part of his service, one of the rank and file who are ground up in the wheels of the Administration; losing heart and soul, and mind and strength, in the process. Until steam replaces manual power in the working of the Empire, there must always be this percentage must always be the men who are used up, expended, in the mere mechanical routine. For

these promotion is far off and the mill-grind of every day very instant. The Secretariats know them only by name; they are not the picked men of the Districts with Divisions and Collectorates awaiting them. They are simply the rank and file the food for fever sharing with the ryot and the plough-bullock the honour of being the plinth on which the State rests. The older ones have lost their aspirations; the younger are putting theirs aside with a sigh. Both learn to endure patiently until the end of the day. Twelve years in the rank and file, men say, will sap the hearts of the bravest and dull the wits of the most keen.

Out of this life Otis Yeere had fled for a few months; drifting, in the hope of a little masculine society, into Simla. When his leave was over he would return to his swampy, sour-green, under-manned Bengal district; to the native Assistant, the native Doctor, the native Magistrate, the steaming, sweltering Station, the ill-kempt City, and the undisguised insolence of the Municipality that babbled away the lives of men. Life was cheap, however. The soil spawned humanity, as it bred frogs in the Rains, and the gap of the sickness of one season was filled to overflowing by the fecundity of the next. Otis was unfeignedly thankful to lay down his work for a little while and escape from the seething, whining, weakly hive, impotent to help itself, but strong in its power to cripple, thwart, and annoy the sunkeneyed man who, by official irony, was said to be 'in charge' of it.

'I knew there were women-dowdies in Bengal. They come up here sometimes. But I didn't know that there were men-dowds,

too.'

Then, for the first time, it occurred to Otis Yeere that his clothes wore rather the mark of the ages. It will be seen that his friendship with Mrs. Hauksbee had made great strides.

As that lady truthfully says, a man is never so happy as when he is talking about himself. From Otis Yeere's lips Mrs. Hauksbee, before long, learned everything that she wished to know about the subject of her experiment: learned what manner of life he had led in what she vaguely called 'those awful cholera districts'; learned, too, but this knowledge came later, what manner of life he had purposed to lead and what dreams he had dreamed in the year of grace '77, before the reality had knocked the heart out of him. Very pleasant are the shady bridle-paths round Prospect Hill for the telling of such confidences.

'Not yet,' said Mrs. Hauksbee to Mrs. Maliowe. 'Not yet. I must wait until the man is properly dressed, at least. Great heavens, is it possible that he doesn't know what an honour it is to be taken up by Me!'

Mrs. Hauksbee did not reckon false modesty as one of her failings.

'Always with Mrs. Hauksbee!' murmured Mrs. Mallowe, with her sweetest smile, to Otis. 'Oh you men, you men! Here are our Punjabis growling because you've monopolised the nicest woman in Simla. They'll tear you to pieces on the Mall, some day, Mr. Yeere.'

Mrs. Mallowe rattled downhill, having satisfied herself, by a

glance through the fringe of her sunshade, of the effect of her words.

The shot went home. Of a surety Otis Yeere was somebody in this bewildering whirl of Simla had monopolised the nicest woman in it, and the Punjabis were growling. The notion justified a mild glow of vanity. He had never looked upon his acquaintance with Mrs. Hauksbee as a matter for general interest.

The knowledge of envy was a pleasant feeling to the man of no account. It was intensified later in the day when a luncher at the Club said spitefully, 'Well, for a debilitated Ditcher, Yeere, you are going it. Hasn't any kind friend told you that she's the most dangerous woman in Simla?'

Yeere chuckled and passed out. When, oh, when would his new clothes be ready? He descended into the Mall to inquire; and Mrs. Hauksbee, coming over the Church Ridge in her 'rickshaw, looked down upon him approvingly. 'He's learning to carry himself as if he were a man, instead of a piece of furniture, and,' she screwed up her eyes to see the better through the sunlight 'he is a man when he holds himself like that. O blessed Conceit, what should we be without you?'

With the new clothes came a new stock of self-confidence. Otis Yeere discovered that he could enter a room without breaking into a gentle perspiration could cross one, even to talk to Mrs. Hauksbee, as though rooms were meant to be crossed. He was for the first time in nine years proud of himself, and contented with his life, satisfied with his new clothes, and

rejoicing in the friendship of Mrs. Hauksbee.

‘Conceit is what the poor fellow wants,’ she said in confidence to Mrs. Mallowe. ‘I believe they must use Civilians to plough the fields with in Lower Bengal. You see I have to begin from the very beginning haven’t I? But you’ll admit, won’t you, dear, that he is immensely improved since I took him in hand. Only give me a little more time and he won’t know himself.’

Indeed, Yeere was rapidly beginning to forget what he had been. One of his own rank and file put the matter brutally when he asked Yeere, in reference to nothing, ‘And who has been making you a Member of Council, lately? You carry the side of half-a-dozen of ‘em.’

‘I I’m awf’ly sorry. I didn’t mean it, you know,’ said Yeere apologetically.

‘There’ll be no holding you,’ continued the old stager grimly. ‘Climb down, Otis climb down, and get all that beastly affectation knocked out of you with fever! Three thousand a month wouldn’t support it.’

Yeere repeated the incident to Mrs. Hauksbee. He had come to look upon her as his Mother Confessor.

‘And you apologised!’ she said. ‘Oh, shame! I hate a man who apologises. Never apologise for what your friend called “side.” Never! It’s a man’s business to be insolent and overbearing until he meets with a stronger. Now, you bad boy, listen to me.’

Simply and straightforwardly, as the ‘rickshaw loitered round Jakko, Mrs. Hauksbee preached to Otis Yeere the Great Gospel

of Conceit, illustrating it with living pictures encountered during their Sunday afternoon stroll.

‘Good gracious!’ she ended with the personal argument, ‘you’ll apologise next for being my attache – ’

‘Never!’ said Otis Yeere. ‘That’s another thing altogether. I shall always be.’

‘What’s coming?’ thought Mrs. Hauksbee.

‘Proud of that,’ said Otis.

‘Safe for the present,’ she said to herself.

‘But I’m afraid I have grown conceited. Like Jeshurun, you know. When he waxed fat, then he kicked. It’s the having no worry on one’s mind and the Hill air, I suppose.’

‘Hill air, indeed!’ said Mrs. Hauksbee to herself. ‘He’d have been hiding in the Club till the last day of his leave, if I hadn’t discovered him.’ And aloud,

‘Why shouldn’t you be? You have every right to.’

‘I! Why?’

‘Oh, hundreds of things. I’m not going to waste this lovely afternoon by explaining; but I know you have. What was that heap of manuscript you showed me about the grammar of the aboriginal what’s their names?’

‘Gullals. A piece of nonsense. I’ve far too much work to do to bother over Gullals now. You should see my District. Come down with your husband some day and I’ll show you round. Such a lovely place in the Rains! A sheet of water with the railway-embankment and the snakes sticking out, and, in the summer,

green flies and green squash. The people would die of fear if you shook a dogwhip at 'em. But they know you're forbidden to do that, so they conspire to make your life a burden to you. My District's worked by some man at Darjiling, on the strength of a native pleader's false reports. Oh, it's a heavenly place!

Otis Yeere laughed bitterly.

'There's not the least necessity that you should stay in it. Why do you?'

'Because I must. How'm I to get out of it?'

'How! In a hundred and fifty ways. If there weren't so many people on the road I'd like to box your ears. Ask, my dear boy, ask! Look! There is young Hexarly with six years' service and half your talents. He asked for what he wanted, and he got it. See, down by the Convent! There's McArthurson, who has come to his present position by asking sheer, downright asking after he had pushed himself out of the rank and file. One man is as good as another in your service believe me. I've seen Simla for more seasons than I care to think about. Do you suppose men are chosen for appointments because of their special fitness beforehand? You have all passed a high test what do you call it? in the beginning, and, except for the few who have gone altogether to the bad, you can all work hard. Asking does the rest. Call it cheek, call it insolence, call it anything you like, but ask! Men argue yes, I know what men say that a man, by the mere audacity of his request, must have some good in him. A weak man doesn't say: "Give me this and that." He whines: "Why haven't I been

given this and that?" If you were in the Army, I should say learn to spin plates or play a tambourine with your toes. As it is ask! You belong to a Service that ought to be able to command the Channel Fleet, or set a leg at twenty minutes' notice, and yet you hesitate over asking to escape from a squashy green district where you admit you are not master. Drop the Bengal Government altogether. Even Darjiling is a little out-of-the-way hole. I was there once, and the rents were extortionate. Assert yourself. Get the Government of India to take you over. Try to get on the Frontier, where every man has a grand chance if he can trust himself. Go somewhere! Do something! You have twice the wits and three times the presence of the men up here, and, and' Mrs. Hauksbee paused for breath; then continued 'and in any way you look at it, you ought to. You who could go so far!'

'I don't know,' said Yeere, rather taken aback by the unexpected eloquence. 'I haven't such a good opinion of myself.'

It was not strictly Platonic, but it was Policy. Mrs. Hauksbee laid her hand lightly upon the ungloved paw that rested on the turned-back 'rickshaw hood, and, looking the man full in the face, said tenderly, almost too tenderly, 'I believe in you if you mistrust yourself. Is that enough, my friend?'

'It is enough,' answered Otis very solemnly.

He was silent for a long time, redreaming the dreams that he had dreamed eight years ago, but through them all ran, as sheet-lightning through golden cloud, the light of Mrs. Hauksbee's violet eyes.

Curious and impenetrable are the mazes of Simla life the only existence in this desolate land worth the living. Gradually it went abroad among men and women, in the pauses between dance, play, and Gymkhana, that Otis Yeere, the man with the newly-lit light of self-confidence in his eyes, had 'done something decent' in the wilds whence he came. He had brought an erring Municipality to reason, appropriated the funds on his own responsibility, and saved the lives of hundreds. He knew more about the Gullals than any living man. Had a vast knowledge of the aboriginal tribes; was, in spite of his juniority, the greatest authority on the aboriginal Gullals. No one quite knew who or what the Gullals were till The Mussuck, who had been calling on Mrs. Hauksbee, and prided himself upon picking people's brains, explained they were a tribe of ferocious hillmen, somewhere near Sikkim, whose friendship even the Great Indian Empire would find it worth her while to secure. Now we know that Otis Yeere had showed Mrs. Hauksbee his MS. notes of six years' standing on these same Gullals. He had told her, too, how, sick and shaken with the fever their negligence had bred, crippled by the loss of his pet clerk, and savagely angry at the desolation in his charge, he had once damned the collective eyes of his 'intelligent local board' for a set of haramzadas. Which act of 'brutal and tyrannous oppression' won him a Reprimand Royal from the Bengal Government; but in the anecdote as amended for Northern consumption we find no record of this. Hence we are forced to conclude that Mrs. Hauksbee edited his reminiscences

before sowing them in idle ears, ready, as she well knew, to exaggerate good or evil. And Otis Yeere bore himself as befitted the hero of many tales.

‘You can talk to me when you don’t fall into a brown study. Talk now, and talk your brightest and best,’ said Mrs. Hauksbee.

Otis needed no spur. Look to a man who has the counsel of a woman of or above the world to back him. So long as he keeps his head, he can meet both sexes on equal ground an advantage never intended by Providence, who fashioned Man on one day and Woman on another, in sign that neither should know more than a very little of the other’s life. Such a man goes far, or, the counsel being withdrawn, collapses suddenly while his world seeks the reason.

Generalled by Mrs. Hauksbee, who, again, had all Mrs. Mallowe’s wisdom at her disposal, proud of himself and, in the end, believing in himself because he was believed in, Otis Yeere stood ready for any fortune that might befall, certain that it would be good. He would fight for his own hand, and intended that this second struggle should lead to better issue than the first helpless surrender of the bewildered ‘Stunt.

What might have happened it is impossible to say. This lamentable thing befell, bred directly by a statement of Mrs. Hauksbee that she would spend the next season in Darjiling.

‘Are you certain of that?’ said Otis Yeere.

‘Quite. We’re writing about a house now.’

Otis Yeere ‘stopped dead,’ as Mrs. Hauksbee put it in

discussing the relapse with Mrs. Mallowe.

‘He has behaved,’ she said angrily, ‘just like Captain Kerrington’s pony only Otis is a donkey at the last Gymkhana. Planted his forefeet and refused to go on another step. Polly, my man’s going to disappoint me. What shall I do?’

As a rule, Mrs. Mallowe does not approve of staring, but on this occasion she opened her eyes to the utmost.

‘You have managed cleverly so far,’ she said. ‘Speak to him, and ask him what he means.’

‘I will at to-night’s dance.’

‘No o, not at a dance,’ said Mrs. Mallowe cautiously. ‘Men are never themselves quite at dances. Better wait till to-morrow morning.’

‘Nonsense. If he’s going to ‘vert in this insane way there isn’t a day to lose. Are you going? No? Then sit up for me, there’s a dear. I shan’t stay longer than supper under any circumstances.’

Mrs. Mallowe waited through the evening, looking long and earnestly into the fire, and sometimes smiling to herself.

‘Oh! oh! oh! The man’s an idiot! A raving, positive idiot! I’m sorry I ever saw him!’

Mrs. Hauksbee burst into Mrs. Mallowe’s house, at midnight, almost in tears.

‘What in the world has happened?’ said Mrs. Mallowe, but her eyes showed that she had guessed an answer.

‘Happened! Everything has happened! He was there. I went to him and said, “Now, what does this nonsense mean?” Don’t

laugh, dear, I can't bear it. But you know what I mean I said. Then it was a square, and I sat it out with him and wanted an explanation, and he said Oh! I haven't patience with such idiots! You know what I said about going to Darjiling next year? It doesn't matter to me where I go. I'd have changed the Station and lost the rent to have saved this. He said, in so many words, that he wasn't going to try to work up any more, because because he would be shifted into a province away from Darjiling, and his own District, where these creatures are, is within a day's journey.'

'Ah hh!' said Mrs. Mallowe, in a tone of one who has successfully tracked an obscure word through a large dictionary.

'Did you ever hear of anything so mad so absurd? And he had the ball at his feet. He had only to kick it! I would have made him anything! Anything in the wide world. He could have gone to the world's end. I would have helped him. I made him, didn't I, Polly? Didn't I create that man? Doesn't he owe everything to me? And to reward me, just when everything was nicely arranged, by this lunacy that spoilt everything!'

'Very few men understand your devotion thoroughly.'

'Oh, Polly, don't laugh at me! I give men up from this hour. I could have killed him then and there. What right had this man this Thing I had picked out of his filthy paddy – fields to make love to me?'

'He did that, did he?'

'He did. I don't remember half he said, I was so angry. Oh, but such a funny thing happened! I can't help laughing at it now,

though I felt nearly ready to cry with rage. He raved and I stormed I'm afraid we must have made an awful noise in our kala juggah. Protect my character, dear, if it's all over Simla by to-morrow and then he bobbed forward in the middle of this insanity I firmly believe the man's demented and kissed me.'

'Morals above reproach,' purred Mrs. Mallowe.

'So they were so they are! It was the most absurd kiss. I don't believe he'd ever kissed a woman in his life before. I threw my head back, and it was a sort of slidy, pecking dab, just on the end of the chin here.' Mrs. Hauksbee tapped her masculine little chin with her fan. 'Then, of course, I was furiously angry, and told him that he was no gentleman, and I was sorry I'd ever met him, and so on. He was crushed so easily then I couldn't be very angry. Then I came away straight to you.'

'Was this before or after supper?'

'Oh! before oceans before. Isn't it perfectly disgusting?'

'Let me think. I withhold judgment till tomorrow. Morning brings counsel.'

But morning brought only a servant with a dainty bouquet of Annandale roses for Mrs. Hauksbee to wear at the dance at Viceregal Lodge that night.

'He doesn't seem to be very penitent,' said Mrs. Mallowe. 'What's the billet-doux in the centre?'

Mrs. Hauksbee opened the neatly-folded note, another accomplishment that she had taught Otis, read it, and groaned tragically.

‘Last wreck of a feeble intellect! Poetry! Is it his own, do you think? Oh, that I ever built my hopes on such a maudlin idiot!’

‘No. It’s a quotation from Mrs. Browning, and in view of the facts of the case, as Jack says, uncommonly well chosen. Listen

Sweet, thou hast trod on a heart,
Pass! There’s a world full of men;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.
Thou only hast stepped unaware
Malice not one can impute;
And why should a heart have been there,
In the way of a fair woman’s foot?

‘I didn’t I didn’t I didn’t!’ said Mrs. Hauksbee angrily, her eyes filling with tears; ‘there was no malice at all. Oh, it’s too vexatious!’

‘You’ve misunderstood the compliment,’ said Mrs. Mallowe. ‘He clears you completely and ahem I should think by this, that he has cleared completely too. My experience of men is that when they begin to quote poetry they are going to flit. Like swans singing before they die, you know.’

‘Polly, you take my sorrows in a most unfeeling way.’

‘Do I? Is it so terrible? If he’s hurt your vanity, I should say that you’ve done a certain amount of damage to his heart.’

‘Oh, you can never tell about a man!’ said Mrs. Hauksbee.

AT THE PIT'S MOUTH

Men say it was a stolen tide
The Lord that sent it He knows all,
But in mine ear will aye abide
The message that the bells let fall —
And awesome bells they were to me,
That in the dark rang, 'Enderby.'

— *Jean Ingelow*

Once upon a time there was a Man and his Wife and a Tertium Quid.

All three were unwise, but the Wife was the unwisest. The Man should have looked after his Wife, who should have avoided the Tertium Quid, who, again, should have married a wife of his own, after clean and open flirtations, to which nobody can possibly object, round Jakko or Observatory Hill. When you see a young man with his pony in a white lather and his hat on the back of his head, flying downhill at fifteen miles an hour to meet a girl who will be properly surprised to meet him, you naturally approve of that young man, and wish him Staff appointments, and take an interest in his welfare, and, as the proper time comes, give them sugar-tongs or side-saddles according to your means and generosity.

The Tertium Quid flew downhill on horseback, but it was to

meet the Man's Wife; and when he flew uphill it was for the same end. The Man was in the Plains, earning money for his Wife to spend on dresses and four-hundred-rupee bracelets, and inexpensive luxuries of that kind. He worked very hard, and sent her a letter or a post-card daily. She also wrote to him daily, and said that she was longing for him to come up to Simla. The Tertium Quid used to lean over her shoulder and laugh as she wrote the notes. Then the two would ride to the Post-office together.

Now, Simla is a strange place and its customs are peculiar; nor is any man who has not spent at least ten seasons there qualified to pass judgment on circumstantial evidence, which is the most untrustworthy in the Courts. For these reasons, and for others which need not appear, I decline to state positively whether there was anything irretrievably wrong in the relations between the Man's Wife and the Tertium Quid. If there was, and hereon you must form your own opinion, it was the Man's Wife's fault. She was kittenish in her manners, wearing generally an air of soft and fluffy innocence. But she was deadlily learned and evil-instructed; and, now and again, when the mask dropped, men saw this, shuddered and almost drew back. Men are occasionally particular, and the least particular men are always the most exacting.

Simla is eccentric in its fashion of treating friendships. Certain attachments which have set and crystallised through half-a-dozen seasons acquire almost the sanctity of the marriage bond, and

are revered as such. Again, certain attachments equally old, and, to all appearance, equally venerable, never seem to win any recognised official status; while a chance-sprung acquaintance, not two months born, steps into the place which by right belongs to the senior. There is no law reducible to print which regulates these affairs.

Some people have a gift which secures them infinite toleration, and others have not. The Man's Wife had not. If she looked over the garden wall, for instance, women taxed her with stealing their husbands. She complained pathetically that she was not allowed to choose her own friends. When she put up her big white muff to her lips, and gazed over it and under her eyebrows at you as she said this thing, you felt that she had been infamously misjudged, and that all the other women's instincts were all wrong; which was absurd. She was not allowed to own the Tertium Quid in peace; and was so strangely constructed that she would not have enjoyed peace had she been so permitted. She preferred some semblance of intrigue to cloak even her most commonplace actions.

After two months of riding, first round Jakko, then Elysium, then Summer Hill, then Observatory Hill, then under Jutogh, and lastly up and down the Cart Road as far as the Tara Devi gap in the dusk, she said to the Tertium Quid, 'Frank, people say we are too much together, and people are so horrid.'

The Tertium Quid pulled his moustache, and replied that horrid people were unworthy of the consideration of nice people.

‘But they have done more than talk they have written written to my hubby I’m sure of it,’ said the Man’s Wife, and she pulled a letter from her husband out of her saddle-pocket and gave it to the Tertium Quid.

It was an honest letter, written by an honest man, then stewing in the Plains on two hundred rupees a month (for he allowed his wife eight hundred and fifty), and in a silk banian and cotton trousers. It said that, perhaps, she had not thought of the unwisdom of allowing her name to be so generally coupled with the Tertium Quid’s; that she was too much of a child to understand the dangers of that sort of thing; that he, her husband, was the last man in the world to interfere jealously with her little amusements and interests, but that it would be better were she to drop the Tertium Quid quietly and for her husband’s sake. The letter was sweetened with many pretty little pet names, and it amused the Tertium Quid considerably. He and She laughed over it, so that you, fifty yards away, could see their shoulders shaking while the horses slouched along side by side.

Their conversation was not worth reporting. The upshot of it was that, next day, no one saw the Man’s Wife and the Tertium Quid together. They had both gone down to the Cemetery, which, as a rule, is only visited officially by the inhabitants of Simla.

A Simla funeral with the clergyman riding, the mourners riding, and the coffin creaking as it swings between the bearers, is one of the most depressing things on this earth, particularly when the procession passes under the wet, dank dip beneath

the Rockcliffe Hotel, where the sun is shut out, and all the hill streams are wailing and weeping together as they go down the valleys.

Occasionally folk tend the graves, but we in India shift and are transferred so often that, at the end of the second year, the Dead have no friend only acquaintances who are far too busy amusing themselves up the hill to attend to old partners. The idea of using a Cemetery as a rendezvous is distinctly a feminine one. A man would have said simply, 'Let people talk. We'll go down the Mall.' A woman is made differently, especially if she be such a woman as the Man's Wife. She and the Tertium Quid enjoyed each other's society among the graves of men and women whom they had known and danced with aforetime.

They used to take a big horse-blanket and sit on the grass a little to the left of the lower end, where there is a dip in the ground, and where the occupied graves stop short and the ready-made ones are not ready. Each well-regulated Indian Cemetery keeps half-a-dozen graves permanently open for contingencies and incidental wear and tear. In the Hills these are more usually baby's size, because children who come up weakened and sick from the Plains often succumb to the effects of the Rains in the Hills or get pneumonia from their ayahs taking them through damp pine-woods after the sun has set. In Cantonments, of course, the man's size is more in request; these arrangements varying with the climate and population.

One day when the Man's Wife and the Tertium Quid had just

arrived in the Cemetery, they saw some coolies breaking ground. They had marked out a full-size grave, and the Tertium Quid asked them whether any Sahib was sick. They said that they did not know; but it was an order that they should dig a Sahib's grave.

'Work away,' said the Tertium Quid, 'and let's see how it's done.'

The coolies worked away, and the Man's Wife and the Tertium Quid watched and talked for a couple of hours while the grave was being deepened. Then a coolie, taking the earth in baskets as it was thrown up, jumped over the grave.

'That's queer,' said the Tertium Quid. 'Where's my ulster?'

'What's queer?' said the Man's Wife.

'I have got a chill down my back just as if a goose had walked over my grave.'

'Why do you look at the thing, then?' said the Man's Wife. 'Let us go.'

The Tertium Quid stood at the head of the grave, and stared without answering for a space. Then he said, dropping a pebble down, 'It is nasty and cold: horribly cold. I don't think I shall come to the Cemetery any more. I don't think grave-digging is cheerful.'

The two talked and agreed that the Cemetery was depressing. They also arranged for a ride next day out from the Cemetery through the Mashobra Tunnel up to Fagoo and back, because all the world was going to a garden-party at Viceregal Lodge, and all the people of Mashobra would go too.

Coming up the Cemetery road, the Tertium Quid's horse tried to bolt uphill, being tired with standing so long, and managed to strain a back sinew.

'I shall have to take the mare to-morrow,' said the Tertium Quid, 'and she will stand nothing heavier than a snaffle.'

They made their arrangements to meet in the Cemetery, after allowing all the Mashobra people time to pass into Simla. That night it rained heavily, and, next day, when the Tertium Quid came to the trysting-place, he saw that the new grave had a foot of water in it, the ground being a tough and sour clay.

'Jove! That looks beastly,' said the Tertium Quid. 'Fancy being boarded up and dropped into that well!'

They then started off to Fagoo, the mare playing with the snaffle and picking her way as though she were shod with satin, and the sun shining divinely. The road below Mashobra to Fagoo is officially styled the Himalayan-Thibet road; but in spite of its name it is not much more than six feet wide in most places, and the drop into the valley below may be anything between one and two thousand feet.

'Now we're going to Thibet,' said the Man's Wife merrily, as the horses drew near to Fagoo. She was riding on the cliff-side.

'Into Thibet,' said the Tertium Quid, 'ever so far from people who say horrid things, and hubbies who write stupid letters. With you to the end of the world!'

A coolie carrying a log of wood came round a corner, and the mare went wide to avoid him forefeet in and haunches out, as a

sensible mare should go.

‘To the world’s end,’ said the Man’s Wife, and looked unspeakable things over her near shoulder at the Tertium Quid.

He was smiling, but, while she looked, the smile froze stiff as it were on his face, and changed to a nervous grin the sort of grin men wear when they are not quite easy in their saddles. The mare seemed to be sinking by the stern, and her nostrils cracked while she was trying to realise what was happening. The rain of the night before had rotted the drop-side of the Himalayan-Thibet Road, and it was giving way under her. ‘What are you doing?’ said the Man’s Wife. The Tertium Quid gave no answer. He grinned nervously and set his spurs into the mare, who rapped with her forefeet on the road, and the struggle began. The Man’s Wife screamed, ‘Oh, Frank, get off!’

But the Tertium Quid was glued to the saddle his face blue and white and he looked into the Man’s Wife’s eyes. Then the Man’s Wife clutched at the mare’s head and caught her by the nose instead of the bridle. The brute threw up her head and went down with a scream, the Tertium Quid upon her, and the nervous grin still set on his face.

The Man’s Wife heard the tinkle-tinkle of little stones and loose earth falling off the roadway, and the sliding roar of the man and horse going down. Then everything was quiet, and she called on Frank to leave his mare and walk up. But Frank did not answer. He was underneath the mare, nine hundred feet below, spoiling a patch of Indian corn.

As the revellers came back from Viceregal Lodge in the mists of the evening, they met a temporarily insane woman, on a temporarily mad horse, swinging round the corners, with her eyes and her mouth open, and her head like the head of a Medusa. She was stopped by a man at the risk of his life, and taken out of the saddle, a limp heap, and put on the bank to explain herself. This wasted twenty minutes, and then she was sent home in a lady's 'rickshaw, still with her mouth open and her hands picking at her riding-gloves.

She was in bed through the following three days, which were rainy; so she missed attending the funeral of the Tertium Quid, who was lowered into eighteen inches of water, instead of the twelve to which he had first objected.

A WAYSIDE COMEDY

*Because to every purpose there is time and judgment,
therefore the misery of man is great upon him.
— Eccles. viii. 6.*

Fate and the Government of India have turned the Station of Kashima into a prison; and, because there is no help for the poor souls who are now lying there in torment, I write this story, praying that the Government of India may be moved to scatter the European population to the four winds.

Kashima is bounded on all sides by the rocktipped circle of the Dosehri hills. In Spring, it is ablaze with roses; in Summer, the roses die and the hot winds blow from the hills; in Autumn, the white mists from the jhils cover the place as with water, and in Winter the frosts nip everything young and tender to earth-level. There is but one view in Kashima a stretch of perfectly flat pasture and plough-land, running up to the gray-blue scrub of the Dosehri hills.

There are no amusements, except snipe and tiger shooting; but the tigers have been long since hunted from their lairs in the rock-caves, and the snipe only come once a year. Narkarra one hundred and forty-three miles by road is the nearest station to Kashima. But Kashima never goes to Narkarra, where there are at least twelve English people. It stays within the circle of the

Dosehri hills.

All Kashima acquits Mrs. Vansuythen of any intention to do harm; but all Kashima knows that she, and she alone, brought about their pain.

Boulte, the Engineer, Mrs. Boulte, and Captain Kurrell know this. They are the English population of Kashima, if we except Major Vansuythen, who is of no importance whatever, and Mrs. Vansuythen, who is the most important of all.

You must remember, though you will not understand, that all laws weaken in a small and hidden community where there is no public opinion. When a man is absolutely alone in a Station he runs a certain risk of falling into evil ways. This risk is multiplied by every addition to the population up to twelve the Jury-number. After that, fear and consequent restraint begin, and human action becomes less grotesquely jerky.

There was deep peace in Kashima till Mrs. Vansuythen arrived. She was a charming woman, every one said so everywhere; and she charmed every one. In spite of this, or, perhaps, because of this, since Fate is so perverse, she cared only for one man, and he was Major Vansuythen. Had she been plain or stupid, this matter would have been intelligible to Kashima. But she was a fair woman, with very still gray eyes, the colour of a lake just before the light of the sun touches it. No man who had seen those eyes could, later on, explain what fashion of woman she was to look upon. The eyes dazzled him. Her own sex said that she was 'not bad-looking, but spoilt by pretending

to be so grave.' And yet her gravity was natural. It was not her habit to smile. She merely went through life, looking at those who passed; and the women objected while the men fell down and worshipped.

She knows and is deeply sorry for the evil she has done to Kashima; but Major Vansuythen cannot understand why Mrs. Boulte does not drop in to afternoon tea at least three times a week. 'When there are only two women in one Station, they ought to see a great deal of each other,' says Major Vansuythen.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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