

Benson Edward Frederic

# The Judgment Books



**Edward Benson**  
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*The Judgment Books / A Story:*

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# Edward Frederic Benson

## The Judgment Books / A Story

### CHAPTER I

The terrace to the south of Penalva Forest lay basking in the sunshine of an early September afternoon, and the very bees which kept passing in and out from the two hives beneath the laurel shrubbery to the right seemed going about their work with most unproverbial drowsiness. A flight of some eight steps led down from the centre of the terrace to the lawn below, where a tennis-court was marked out, and by the bottom of the steps ran a gravel-path which sloped up past the beehives to join the terrace at the far end. In the gutter by this path lay a tennis-ball, neglected and desolate. Below the lawn the ground sloped quickly away in a stretch of stubbly hay-field, just shorn of its aftermath, down to a fence, which lay straggling along a line of brown seaweed-covered rocks, over which the waveless water of the estuary of the Fal crept up silently at high tide.

A little iron staircase, the lower steps of which, and the clasp which fastened it to the wall, were fringed with oozy, amphibious growth, communicated with the beach on one side and the field on the other. Except for this clearing to the south of the house, the woods climbed up steeply from almost the water's edge to

the back of a broad Cornish moor, all purple and gold with gorse and heather, and resonant with bees. Irresponsible drowsiness seemed the key-note of the scene.

At a corner of the lawn, lying full length on a wicker sofa beneath the shade of the trees, lay Jack Armitage, also irresponsibly drowsy. He would have said he was meditating. Being an artist, he conceded to himself the right to meditate as often and as long as he pleased, but just now his meditations were entirely confined to vague thoughts that it was tea-time; and that, on the whole, he would not have another pipe; so he thrust his hands into his coat-pockets and only thought about tea. Perhaps the familiar and still warm bowl of his favorite brierwood was responsible for his change of intention; in any case, it is certain that he drew it out and began to fill it with the careful precision of those who know that the good gift of tobacco is squandered if it is bestowed aimlessly or carelessly into its censer.

He had been staying with Frank Trevor, the owner of this delightful place, for nearly a month, and he had sketched and talked art, in which he disagreed with his host on every question admitting two opinions – and these are legion – all day and a considerable part of the night. Frank, who was even more orthodox than himself on the subject of meditation, had finished, some two months before, the portrait at which he had been working; and, as his habit was, had worked much too hard while he was at it, had knocked himself up, and for the last eight weeks had spent his time in sitting in the sun serene and idle.

Jack was leaving next day, and had passed the morning in the woods finishing a charming sketch of the estuary seen through a foreground of trees. At lunch Frank had said he was going to sit in the garden till tea-time, after which they were going on the river; but he had not appeared, and Jack for the last hour or two had been intermittently wondering what he was doing.

At this moment Frank was sitting in a low chair in his studio doing nothing. But he had been having a rather emotional afternoon all by himself, seeing little private ghosts of his own, and he looked excited and troubled. In his idle intervals he always kept the door of his studio locked, and neither went in himself nor allowed any one else to. But this afternoon he had wanted a book which he thought might be there, and before he found it he had found something else which had raised all the ghosts of his Decameron, and had indirectly made him resolve to begin work again at once.

In his search he had taken down from the shelves a book he had not touched for some years, and out of its pages there slipped a torn yellow programme of a concert at one of the Café Chantants in Paris. It went on bowing and fluttering in its fall; and as he picked it up and looked at it for a moment idly the ghosts began to rise. There was one ghost in particular which, like Moses' rod, soon swallowed up all the other ghosts. She had been to that concert with him – she had been to other concerts with him; and in another moment he had crumpled up the momentous little yellow programme and flung it into the grate.

He walked up and down the room for a minute or two, for the ghost was still visible, and then, by a very natural effect of reaction, he picked up the programme again, smoothed it out, and put it back on the table.

What a hot, stifling night it had been! Paris lay gasping and choking as in a vapor-bath. They had soon left the concert, and walked about in the garden. Even the moonlight seemed hot, and every now and then a little peevish wind ruffled the tree-tops, and then grabbed at the earth below, raising a cloud of stinging dust – a horrible night!

He had left Paris next day for a holiday, and had spent a month at New Quay, on the north coast of Cornwall. How restful and delicious it was! It seemed the solution of all difficulties to pass quiet, uneventful days in that little backwater of life, away from towns and jostling crowds; above all, away from Paris – beautiful, terrible Paris! He lived a good deal with the artist set there, charming and intelligent folk, who prattled innocently of sunsets and foregrounds, and led a simple, healthy life. He had fallen in love with simple, healthy lives; he began to hate the thought of the streets and the gas and the glitter of Paris. He spent long days on the shore listening to the low murmur of the sound-quenched waves, and long nights with the fisher-folks on the sea, catching mackerel. In those long, still hours he could think that the sea was like some living thing, breathing slowly and steadily in sleep, and he a child leaning on her breast, safe in her care, alone with the great tender mother of mankind.

One morning – how well he remembered it! – after a night on the sea, he had landed a mile or so from the village, and had walked along the shore alone as the dawn was breaking, and, coming round a little jutting promontory of rock, he had found two or three fishermen who had just pulled their net to land, naked but for a cloth round the waist, gathered round a little fire they had made on the beach, where they had broiled a few of their haul; and as he paused and spoke to them, for they were old friends, one offered him a piece of broiled fish, and another, who had not been out, but had helped them to bring in the net, had brought down some bread and honey-comb, and he ate the fish and honey-comb on the shore of the sea as day broke...

And it was on that same morning he first met Margery his wife. She had come with some friends of his from London by the night train, and they were all going down to the bathing-machine, after their night's journey, when Frank arrived at the village. He had known at once that the world only held one woman for him.

Their days of courtship were few. Within three weeks of the time they had met Frank had proposed to her and been accepted. One afternoon, with the fine, bold honesty of love, he had told her that he had led such a life as other men lead, that his record was not stainless, and that she ought to know before she bound up her life with him. But Margery had stopped him. She had said she did not wish to know; that she loved him, and was not that enough? But Frank still felt that she had better know; if ghosts were to rise between them it was less startling if she knew what

ghosts to expect. But she had started as if in pain, and said:

"Ah, don't, Frank; you hurt me when you talk like that. It is dead and past. Ah, I knew that. Well, then, bury it – let us bury it together."

And he obeyed her, and buried it.

He thought over all this as he sat with the crumpled programme in his hand. Was it ever possible to bury a thing entirely? Had not everything which we thought dead a terrible faculty of raising itself at most unexpected moments? A scrap of paper – a few words in a printed book – these could be the last trump for a buried sin, and it would rise.

He got up off the sofa – these were ugly thoughts – and went on looking for the book he had come to find. Ah, there it was in its paper cover – *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. He had bought it on his way down from London, but had not yet looked at it.

He opened it and glanced at a few pages; and then, sitting down where he had been before, read the whole book straight through. He was strangely excited and wrought upon by it, and his mind was beginning to grope in the darkness after an idea. Yes, surely, this was the essence of portrait-painting: not to present a man as he was at a particular moment, in one particular part, with the emblem of one particular pursuit by him – an artist with his canvas, a sculptor with his clay – but the whole man, his Jekyll and his Hyde together in one picture.

Then in a moment his mind, as it were, found the handle of the door for which it had been groping in darkness, and flung it

open, letting in the full blaze of a complete idea. There is only one human being on earth whom any artist who ever lived could paint completely. It is only a man himself who wholly knows both the side he turns to the world and the side he would hide even from himself but cannot.

Frank's hands trembled nervously, and his breath came and went quickly. He would paint himself as no man yet had ever painted either himself or any one else. He would put his Jekyll and Hyde on the canvas for men to wonder at and to be silent before. He would do what no artist had ever yet done. He thought of that room in the Uffizi at Florence which holds the portrait of the Italian families, each painted by himself: Raphael, with his young, beardless face – Raphael, the painter, and no more; Andrea del Sarto, not the painter, but the liver. Each of them had painted marvellously outside themselves – one gift, one way of love. But he would do more: he would paint himself as the husband and lover of Margery, the Jekyll of himself, who had known and knew the best capabilities for loving in his nature; and he would paint his Hyde, the man who had lived as other men in Paris – a Bohemian, careless, worthless, finding this thing and that honey at the moment, but to the soul wormwood and bitterness. The wormwood should be there, and the honey; his love for his wife and his rejection and loathing of those earlier days which he had thought were dead, but which had risen and without their honey. His own face, painted by himself, should be the book out of which he should be judged; for love and

lust, happiness and misery, innocence and guilt – all unite their indelible marks there, and no one can ever efface the other.

Then, because he felt he was on the threshold of something new, and because all men, the strongest and weakest alike, are afraid, desperately afraid, of everything which they know nothing of, he became suddenly frightened.

What would this thing be? he asked himself. What would happen to himself when he had done it? Would he have raised his dead permanently? Would they refuse to be buried again now that he had of his own will perpetuated them in his art? And Margery, what would she have to say to the ghosts she would not allow him to tell her about?

But he was not a coward, and he did not mean to turn back because of this sudden spasm of fright. He would begin tomorrow; he could not help beginning at once, for, as he often told Margery, when the idea was ready he had to record it; the artist's inexorable need for expression could not be gainsaid or trifled with. It must come out.

Frank Trevor had a very mobile face, a face which his feelings played on freely as a breeze ruffling a moorland pool of water. His dark-gray eyes, set deep under their black eyebrows, were kindled and glowing with excitement. In such moments he looked strikingly handsome, though his features, taken singly, were not faultless. His mouth was too short and too full-lipped for actual beauty; but now, as he sat there, the very eagerness and vitality that came and went, as now one aspect of his idea and now

another struck him, gave a fineness to every feature that made it worthy of an admiration which a more perfectly moulded face might well have failed to deserve.

But there was another fear as well, a fear so fantastic that he was almost ashamed of it; but, as he thought of it, it grew upon him. He had always felt when he painted a portrait that virtue went out of him; that he put actually a part of his personality into his picture. What, then, would happen if he painted his own portrait completely? He knew his idea was fantastic and unreasonable; but the fear – a fear again of something that was new – was there, lurking in a shaded corner of his mind. But of this he could speak to Margery, and Margery's cool, smiling way of dealing with phantasms always had a most evaporating effect on them. Of the other fear he had wished to speak to her once, but she did not wish to hear, and he wished to speak to her of it no longer.

He looked at his watch and found it was nearly tea-time; he had been there over two hours, and he wondered to himself whether it had seemed more like two years or two minutes. He rose to go, but before leaving the room he took a long look round it, feeling that he was looking at it for perhaps the last time; at any rate, that it could never look the same again.

"We only register a change in ourselves," he thought, "by the impression that other things make on us. If our taste changes we say that a thing we used to think beautiful is ugly. It is not so – it is the same as it always was. I cannot paint this picture without

changing myself. What will the change be?"

The yellow, crumpled programme and the copy of *Jekyll and Hyde* lay together unregarded on the table. When we have drunk our medicine we do not concern ourselves with the medicine-bottle – unless, like the immortal Mrs. Pullet, we take a vague, melancholy pleasure in recalling how much medicine we have taken. But that dear lady's worst enemies could not have found a single point in common between her and Frank Trevor.

## CHAPTER II

Jack Armitage, as we know, though he was aware it was tea-time, was filling his pipe. He had accomplished this to his satisfaction, and had just got it comfortably under way when Mrs. Trevor, also with tea in her mind, came down the steps leading from the terrace and strolled towards him.

"Where's Frank?" she asked. "I thought he said he was going to sit about with you till tea?"

"He said so," said Jack; "but he went into his studio to get a book, and he has not appeared since."

"Well, I suppose he's in the house," she said. "In any case it's five, and we sha'n't get more than two hours on the river. So come in."

Jack often caught himself regretting he was not a portrait-painter when he looked at Mrs. Trevor. She was, he told himself, one of the beauties of all time, and her black hair, black eyes, and delicately chiselled nose had caused many young men on the slightest acquaintance to wish that she had not decided to change her maiden name to Trevor. It was also noticeable that as their acquaintance became less slight their regret became proportionately keener. Frank had done a portrait of her, the first that brought him prominently into notice, and, as Jack thought, his best. By one of those daring experiments which in his hands seemed always to succeed, he had represented her a

tall, stately figure, dressed in white, standing in front of a great Chinese screen covered with writhing dragons in blue and gold, a nightmare of hideous forms in wonderful colors. It was a bold experiment, but certainly, to Jack's mind, he had managed with miraculous success to bring out what was almost as characteristic of his wife's mind as her beauty was of her body, and which, for want of a better word, he called her wholesomeness. The contrast between that and the exquisite deformities behind her hid eyes, so to speak, straight in the face. But it hit fair, and it was triumphant.

Mrs. Trevor paused on the edge of the gravel-path and picked up the lonely tennis-ball.

"To think that it should have been there all the time!" she said. "How blind you are, Mr. Armitage!"

Jack rose and knocked out his pipe. "The Fates are unkind," he said. "You call me in to tea just when I've lit my pipe, and then go and blame me for not finding the tennis-ball, which you told me was not worth while looking for."

"I didn't know it was in the gutter," she said. "I thought it had gone into the flower-beds."

"Nor did I know it was in the gutter, or I should have looked for it there."

Margery laughed.

"I wish you were stopping on longer," she said, "and not going to-morrow. Surely you needn't go?"

"You are too kind, but the Fates are still unkind," he said. "I have already put it off a week, during which time my brother has

been languishing alone at New Quay."

"To New Quay? I didn't know you were going there. Frank and I know New Quay very well."

Frank was in the drawing-room when they went in, giving orders that the studio should be thoroughly swept out and dusted that evening.

"I'm going to begin painting to-morrow," he announced, abruptly, to the others as they came in.

Margery turned to Jack.

"No more tennis for me unless you stop," she said. "Have you ever been with us when Frank is painting? I see nothing of him all day, and he gobbles his meals and scowls at the butler."

The footman came in again with the tea-things.

"And take that big looking-glass out of the spare bedroom," said Frank to him, "and put it in the studio."

"What do you want a looking-glass for?" asked his wife, as the man left the room.

Frank got up, and walked restlessly up and down. "I begin to-morrow," he said; "I've got the idea ready. I can see it. Until then it is no use trying to paint; but when that comes, it is no use not trying."

"But what's the looking-glass for?" repeated Margery.

"Ah, yes, I haven't told you. I'm going to paint a portrait of myself."

"That's my advice," observed Margery. "I've often suggested that to you, haven't I, Frank?"

"You have. I wonder if you did wisely? This afternoon, however, other things suggested it to me."

"Have you been meditating?" asked Jack, sympathetically. "I've been meditating all afternoon. Why didn't you come out, as you said you would, and meditate with me?"

"I had a little private meditation of my own," said Frank. "It demanded solitude."

"Is it bills?" asked Margery. "You know, dear, I told you that you'd be sorry for paying a hundred guineas for that horse."

Frank laughed.

"No, it's not bills – at least, not bills that make demands of cash. Give me some tea, Margy."

The evening was warm and fine, but cloudless, and after dinner the three sat out on the terrace listening to the footfalls of night stealing on tiptoe in the woods round them. The full moon, shining through white skeins of drifting cloud, cast a strange, diffused light, and the air, alert with the coming rain, seemed full of those delicate scents which are imperceptible during the day. Once a hare ran out from the cover across the lawn, where it sat up for a few moments, with ears cocked forward, until it heard the rustle of Margery's dress, as she moved to look in the direction of Frank's finger pointing at it, and then scuttled noiselessly off.

They had been silent for some little time, but at last Frank spoke. He wanted to tell Margery of his fantastic fear, that fear which she might hear about; or, rather, to let her find it out, and pour cool common-sense on it.

"I feel just as I did on my last night at home, before I went to school for the first time," he said. "I feel as if I had never painted a portrait before. I have had a long holiday, I know; but still it is not as if I had never been to school before. I wonder why I feel like that?"

"Most of one's fears are for very harmless things," observed Jack. "One sees a bogie and runs away, but it is probably only a turnip and a candle. Naturally one is nervous about a new thing. One doesn't quite know what it may turn out to be. But, as a rule, if it isn't a turnip and a candle, it is a sheet and a mask. Equally inoffensive really, but unexpected."

"Ah, but I don't usually feel like that," said Frank. "In fact, I never have before. One is like a plant. When one has flowered once, it is fairly certain that the next flowers will be like the last, if one puts anything of one's self into it. Of course if one faces one's self one may put out a monstrosity, but I am not facing myself. Yet, somehow, I am as afraid as if I were going to produce something horrible and unnatural. But I can't face myself; I can't blossom under glass."

"That's such a nice theory for you, dear," said Margery, "especially if you are inclined to be lazy."

Frank made a little hopeless gesture of impatience.

"Lazy, industrious – industrious, lazy; what have those to do with it? You don't understand me a bit. When the time has come that I should paint, I do so inevitably; if the time has not come, it is impossible for me to paint. I know that you think artists are

idle, desultory, Bohemian, irregular. That is part of their nature as artists. A man who grinds out so much a day is not and cannot be an artist. The sap flows, and we bud; the sap recedes, and for us it is winter-time. You do not call a tree lazy in winter because it does not put out leaves?"

"But a tree, at any rate, is regular," said Margery; "besides, evergreens."

"Yes, and everlasting flowers," said Frank, impatiently. "The tree is only a simile. But we are not dead when we don't produce any more than the tree is dead in December."

Margery frowned. This theory of Frank's was her pet aversion, but she could not get him to give it up.

"Then do you mean to say that all effort is valueless?"

"No, no!" cried Frank; "the whole process of production is frantic, passionate effort to realize what one sees. But no amount of effort will make one see anything. I could do you a picture, which you would probably think very pretty, every day, if you liked, of 'Love in a Cottage,' or some such inanity."

Jack crossed his legs, thoughtfully.

"The great objection of love in a cottage," he said, "is that it is so hard to find a really suitable cottage."

Frank laughed. "A courageous attempt to change the subject," he said. "But I'm not going to talk nonsense to-night."

"I think you're talking awful nonsense, dear," said Margery, candidly.

"You will see I am serious in a minute," said Frank. "I was

saying I could paint that sort of thing at any time, but it would not be part of me. And the only pictures worth doing are those which are part of one's self. Every real picture tells you, of course, something about what it represents; but it tells you a great deal about the man who painted it, and that is the most important of the two. And I cannot – and, what is more, I don't choose to – paint anything into which I do not put part of myself."

"Mind you look about the woods after I've gone," said Jack, "and if you see a leg or an arm of mine lying about, send it to me, Beach Hotel, New Quay."

Frank threw himself back in his chair with a laugh.

"My dear Jack," he said, "for a clever man you are a confounded idiot. No one ever accused you of putting a nail-paring of your own into any of your pictures. Of course you are a landscape-painter – that makes a certain difference. A landscape-painter paints what he sees, and only some of that; a portrait-painter – a real portrait-painter – paints what he knows and feels, and when he paints the virtue goes out of him."

"And the more he knows, the more virtue goes out of him, I suppose," said Jack. "You know yourself pretty well – what will happen when you paint yourself?"

Frank grew suddenly grave.

"That's exactly what I want to know myself. That was what I meant when I said I felt like a little boy going to school for the first time – it will be something new. I have only painted four portraits in my life, and each of them definitely took something

out of me – changed me; and from each – I am telling you sober truth – I absorbed something of the sitter. And when I paint myself – "

"I suppose you will go out like a candle," interrupted Jack. "Total disappearance of a rising English artist; and of the portrait, what? Shall we think it is you? Will it walk about and talk? Will it get your vitality?"

Frank got quickly out of his chair and stood before them. His thin, tall figure looked almost ghostly in the strange half-light, and he spoke rapidly and excitedly.

"That is exactly what I am afraid of," he said. "I am afraid – I confess it – I am afraid of many things about this portrait, and that is one of them. I began to paint myself once before – I have never told even Margery this – but I had to stop. But this afternoon several things made themselves irresistible, and I must try again. I was in bad health when I tried before, and one evening when I went into the studio and saw it – it was more than half finished – I had a sudden giddy feeling that I did not know which was me – the portrait or myself. I knew I was on the verge of something new and unknown, that if I went on with it I should go mad or go to heaven; and when I moved towards it I saw it – I *did* see it – take a step towards me."

"Looking-glass," said Margery. "Go on, dear."

"Then I was frightened. I ran away. Next day I came back and tore the picture into shreds. But now I am braver. Besides, brave or not, I must do it. I lost a great deal, I know, by not going on with

it, but I could not. Oh yes, you may laugh if you like, but it is true. You may even say that what I lost was exactly what one always does lose when one is afraid of doing something. One loses self-command. One is less able to do the thing next time one tries. I lost all that, but I lost a great deal more: I lost the chance of knowing what happens to a man if he parts with himself."

"Don't be silly, Frank," said Margery, suddenly. "How can a man part with himself?"

"In two ways at least. He may go mad or he may die. I dare say it doesn't matter much, if one only has produced something worth producing; but it frightened me."

Despite herself, perhaps because fear is the most contagious of diseases, Margery felt a little frightened, too, about this new portrait. But she rallied.

"When the time comes for us to die we die," she said, "and we can't help it. But we can all avoid being very silly while we live – at least, you can, and you are the case in point."

Frank resumed his seat, and spoke less quickly and excitedly.

"I know it all sounds ridiculous and absurd," he said; "but if I paint my portrait as I think I am going to, I shall put all myself into it. It will be a wonderful thing – there will be no picture like it. But I tell you, plainly and soberly – I am not feverish, you may feel my pulse if you like – that if I paint it as I believe I can, something will happen to me. It will be my soul as well as my body you will see there. Ah, there are a hundred dangers in the way. What will happen to me I don't pretend to guess. Moreover,

I am frightened about it."

Once again, for a moment, Margery was frightened too. Frank's fear and earnestness were very catching. But she summoned her common-sense to her aid. Such things did not happen; it was impossible in a civilized country towards the end of the nineteenth century.

"Oh, my dear boy," she said, "it is so like you to tell us that it will be a wonderful thing, and that there will be no picture like it. It will be even more like you, if, after you have made an admirable beginning, you say it is a horror and put your foot through it, vowing you will never set brush to canvas again. I suppose it is all part of the artistic temperament."

Frank thought of his other fear, of which he could not tell Margery, which she had refused to hear of before. He laid his hand on her arm.

"Margery, tell me not to do it," he said, earnestly. "If you will tell me not to do it, I won't."

"My dear Frank, you told us just now that it was inevitable you should. But why should I tell you not to do it? I think it would be the best thing in the world for you."

"Well, we shall see. Jack, why should you go away to-morrow? Why not stop and be a witness?"

"No, I must go," said Jack, "but if Mrs. Trevor will send me a post-card, or wire, if you show any grave symptoms of going to Heaven or Bedlam, I will come back at once – I promise that. Dear me, how anxious I shall feel! Just these words, you know:

'Mr. Trevor going to Bedlam' or 'going to Heaven,' and I'll come at once. But I must go to-morrow. I've been expected at New Quay for a week. Besides, I've painted so many beech-trees here that they will say I am going to paint all the trees in England, just as Moore has painted all the English Channel. I hear he's begun on the Atlantic."

Frank laughed.

"I fear he certainly has painted a great many square miles of sea. However, supposing they lost all the Admiralty charts, how useful it would be! They would soon be able to reproduce them from his pictures, for they certainly are exactly like the sea."

"But they are all like the Bellman's chart in the 'Hunting of the Shark,'" said Margery, "without the least vestige of land."

"What would be the effect on you, Frank," asked the other, "if you painted a few hundred miles of sea? I suppose you would be found drowned in your studio some morning, and they would be able to fix the place where you were drowned by seeing what you were painting last. But there are difficulties in the way."

"He must be very careful only to paint shallow places," said Margery, "where he can't be drowned. Oh, Frank, perhaps it's your astral body that goes hopping about from picture to picture!"

"Astral fiddlesticks!" said Frank. "Come, let's go in."

He paused for a moment on the threshold of the long French window opening into the drawing-room.

"But if any one, particularly you, Margery," he said, "ever mistakes my portrait for myself, I shall know that the particular

fear I have been telling you about is likely to be realized. And then, if you wish, we will discuss the advisability of my going on with it. But I begin to-morrow."

## CHAPTER III

Armitage had to leave at half-past eight the next morning, for it was a ten-mile drive to Truro, the nearest station, and he breakfasted alone. Rain had fallen heavily during the night, but it had cleared up before morning, and everything looked deliciously fresh and clean. Ten minutes before his carriage came round Margery appeared, and they walked together up and down the terrace until it was time for him to be off. Margery was looking a little tired and worried, as if she had not slept well.

"I shall have breakfast with Frank in his studio after you have gone," she said, "so until your carriage comes we'll take a turn out-of-doors. There is something so extraordinarily sweet about the open air."

"Frank didn't seem to me to profit by it much last night."

Margery frowned. "I don't know what's the matter with me," she said. "All that nonsense which Frank talked last night must have got on my nerves. Don't you know those long, half-waking dreams one has sometimes when one is not quite certain whether what one hears or sees is real or not? Once last night I woke like that. I thought at first it was part of my dream, and heard Frank talking in his sleep. 'Margery,' he said, 'that isn't me at all. This is me. Surely you know me. Do I look so terrible?'"

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