

ours." Then in a little while: "What book is that you read from?" asked John.

"Ssh!" said the old man, raising his great hand. "It is best you should not know, for so there will be for you a great joy in after years, when you come on it again unawares, and open it, and the sentences murmur to you again like voices of old friends. Then you will remember these sad hours of your youth as far off, perhaps even remember them as happy in their own way. You will remember the sound of the bees in this garden, the far hum of your youth. You will remember that sunlight floating there on the floor, cut clean by the door-post; and the dusty motes there: and you will see yourself sitting here disconsolate and smile to yourself; read again these words, and you will be happy in a way no man can prevent, with a happiness of which no man may rob you. I would not now rob you of that future accidental joy."

Upcott frowned and thought the old man odd; but, owing so much to him, he humoured him, sought not to persuade him from what he thought a foible.

Strange things would his Socrates say too, that Upcott had some inner warning it were better not to repeat to Ravenning, held silent as it were by some modesty of soul. Such a thing was said one memorable night.

Upcott, come over on that night of full moon, when the very stars were blinded in the blue summer heaven, had found the old man with radiant eyes sitting before his house and been bidden gently

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