

I am glad — so glad — if it wakens these thoughts in you!”

“And if I do —”

Her dear hand rested like warm velvet upon my lips. “Not another word, Sir! You should have been at the office for evening duty half an hour ago, only I hadn’t the heart to remind you. Some day, perhaps, when you have won your place in the world, we shall talk it over again.”

AND so it was that I found myself that foggy November evening pursuing the Camberwell tram with my heart glowing within me, and with the eager determination that not another day should elapse before I should find some deed which was worthy of my lady. But who — who in all this wide world could ever have imagined the incredible shape which that deed was to take, or the strange steps by which I was led to the doing of it?

And, after all, this opening chapter will seem to the reader to have nothing to do with my narrative; and yet there would have been no narrative without it, for it is only when a man goes out into the world with the thought that there are heroisms all round him, and with the desire all alive in his heart to follow any which may come within sight of him, that he breaks away as I did from the life he knows, and ventures forth into the wonderful mystic twilight land where lie the great adventures and the great rewards. Behold me, then, at the office of the *Daily Gazette*,