

For the first time it had occurred to the child that day that there must be a strange contradiction—a fundamental injustice in the universal scheme of nature. He had always been what his father had called impatiently "a boy with ideas," and it had seemed to him then that this last "idea" of his was far the most wonderful of them all—more wonderful than any he had found in books or in his own head at night. At the moment he had felt it swell so large in his heart that a glow of happiness had spread through his body to his trembling hands. Slipping from his aunt's hold he had crossed the room to where the convict sat sullenly beside his guard.

"I'll give you all my money," he had cried out joyously, "because I am so much happier than you."

The convict had started and looked up with an angry flash in his eyes; the guard had burst into a loud laugh while he spat tobacco juice through the window; the silver had scattered and rolled under the benches on the plank floor; and the child's aunt, rustling over in her stiff brocade, had seized his arm and dragged him, weeping loudly, into the train. So his first mission had failed, yet at this day he could remember the joy with which he had stretched out his little hand and the humiliation in which he had drawn it back. That was thirty years ago, but he wondered now if the child's way had been God's way, after all?

For there had come an hour in his life when the convict of his boyhood had stood in closer relationship