

Crowded Out.



AM nobody. I am living in a London lodging-house. My room is up three pair of stairs. I have come to London to sell or to part with in some manner an opera, a comedy, a volume of verse, songs, sketches, stories. I compose as well as write. I am ambitious. For the sake of another, one other, I am ambitious. For myself it does not matter. If nobody will discover me I must discover myself. I must demand recognition, I must wrest attention, they are my due. I look from my window over the smoky roofs of London, What will it do for me, this great cold city? It shall hear me, it shall pause for a moment, for a day, for a year. I will make it to listen to me, to look at me. I have left a continent behind, I have crossed a great water; I have incurred dangers, trials of all kinds; I have grown pale and thin with labor and the midnight oil; I have starved, and watched the dawn break starving; I have prayed on my stubborn knees for death and I have prayed on my stubborn knees for life—all that I might reach London, London that has killed so many of my brothers, London the cold, London the blind, London the cruel! I am here at last. I am here to be tested, to be proved, to be worn proudly, as a favorite and costly jewel is worn, or to be flung aside scornfully or dropped stealthily to—the devil! And I love it so this great London! I am ready to swear no one ever loved it so before! The smokier it is, the dirtier, the dingier, the better. The oftener it rains the better. The more whimsical it is, the more fickle, the more credulous, the more self-sufficient, the more self-existent, the better. Nothing that it can do, nothing that it can be, can change my love for it, great cruel London!