

trous than those of an evil one. But if a man is going to die, he can do good with impunity. He can simply wallow in practical virtue. When the boomerang of his beneficence comes back to hit him on the head—he *won't be there to feel it*. He can thus hoist Destiny with its own petard, and, besides being eumoirous, can spend a month or two in a peculiarly diverting manner. The more I think of the idea the more am I in love with it. I am going to have a seraph of a time. I am going to play the archangel.

I shail always have pleasant memories of Murglebed. Such an idea could not have germinated in any other atmosphere. In the scented groves of sunny lands there would have been sown Seeds of Regret, which would have blossomed eventually into Flowers of Despair. I should have gone about the world, a modern Admetus, snivelling at my accursed luck, without even the chance of persuading a soft-hearted Alcestis to die for me. I should have been a dismal nuisance to society.

"Bless you," I cried that afternoon, waving, as I leaned against a post, my hand to the ambient mud, "Renniker was wrong! You are not a God-forsaken place. You are impregnated with divine inspiration."

A muddy man in a blue jersey and filthy beard who occupied the next post looked at me and spat contemptuously. I laughed.

"If you were Marcus Aurelius," said I, "I would make a joke—a short life and an eumoiry one—and he would have looked as pained as you."

"What?" he bawled. He was to windward of me.

I knew that if I repeated my observation he would offer to fight me. I approached him suavely.

"I was wondering," I said, "as it's impossible to strike a match in this wind, whether you would let me light my pipe from yours."

"It's empty," he growled.