

climbing about its walls ; " but otherwise with no more resemblance to the exquisite and secluded *cottage orné* I had in my mind, and that the house-agent had portrayed in his letters, than a landscape by Matisse to one by Ruysdael.

I was too tired then to be greatly disappointed. Two servants had been sent in by my instructions, and the one who opened the door to me proved to be a cheerful-looking young person of the gollywog type, and with a corresponding cap, who relieved me of my hand-luggage and preceded me to the drawing-room, where wide windows and a bright fire made me oblivious for the moment of the shabby furniture, worn carpet, and mildewed wall-paper. Tea was brought to me in a cracked pot on a veneered tray. The literary supplement of the *Times* and a monthly magazine were all I had with which to occupy myself. And they proved insufficient. I began to look about me, and became curiously and almost immediately conscious that my new abode must have been inhabited by a sister or brother of the pen. The feeling was not entirely psychic. The immense writing-table stood sideways in the bow-window as only "we" know how to place it. The writing-chair looked sufficiently luxurious to tempt me to an immediate trial ; there was a footstool and a big waste-paper basket—all incongruous with the cheap and shabby drawing-room furniture. Had only my MS. paper been to hand, ink in the substantial glass pot and my twin enamel pens available, I think I should then and there have abjured all my vows of rest and called upon inspiration to guide me to a fresh start.