

must have depended on a personality that demanded from his pupils a stoic bearing, a sense of humor, a capacity for inquisitiveness, an idea of continuity. He could not remember that any of these qualities had been appreciated by himself until he had entered the Shell. Michael regretted very deeply that on the day before he left school he had not thanked Neech for his existence. How nebulous already most of his other masters seemed. Only Neech stood out clear-cut as the intagliation of a sardonyx.

Meditation upon Neech took Michael off to Thackeray. He had been reading *Pendennis* lately, and the book had given him much the same sensation of finality as his old form-master, and, as Michael thought of Thackeray, he began to speculate upon the difference between Michael Fane and the fourteenth Earl of Saxby. Yet he was rather glad that after all he was not the fourteenth Earl of Saxby. It would be interesting to see how his theories of good-breeding were carried out by himself as a nobody with old blood in his veins. He would like to test the common talk that rank was an accident, that old families, old faiths, old education, old customs, old manners, old thoughts, old books, were all so much moonshine. Michael wondered whether it were so, whether indeed all men if born with equal chances would not display equal qualities. He did not believe it—he hated the doctrine. Yet people in all their variety called to him still, and as he surveyed the audience he was aware from time to time of a great longing to involve himself in the web of humanity. He was glad that he had not removed himself from the world like Chator. Chator! He must go down to Clere and see how Chator was getting on as a monk. He had not even thought of Chator for a year. But after all Oxford had a monastic intention, and Michael believed that from Oxford he would gain as much austerity of attitude as Chator would acquire from the rule of St. Benedict. And