

Of course you do. . . . So here we are, back again at the beginning. . . . You do really see, don't you ? ”

“ Yes ; I see perfectly,” said Aunt Anna.

(ii)

Jim went upstairs all alone, very sedate and quiet, as soon as he had had breakfast. He looked back from the top of the stairs, to see if his mother was still looking up at him from the hall. She was ; and she nodded reassuringly. He hastily turned away again. He felt a little ashamed of having needed that reassurance.

Then he tapped cautiously on the door of the West Bedroom,

It had been an agitating morning for Jim. So long as Cousin Nevill was really properly ill, nothing much interrupted life. He had, of course, to go very quietly always along the gallery ; and the piano was not to be touched at all—not even *God Save the King* with one finger, in E, was to be rendered upon it. Neither were the colliers to be brought indoors at all, on any pretext whatever, for fear that Jill might bark. Otherwise, however, matters proceeded as usual, or, at least, as they did when Cousin Nevill was away from home. There had been one rather disconcerting morning when Jim had heard curious sounds issuing from the bedroom door ; but he had been commanded to use the back staircase for the rest of that day ; in the evening a baize door arrived in a cart and was taken upstairs ; and thenceforward life was normal. He was aware, of course, that Cousin Nevill was very ill indeed ; but after a week or so this did not greatly affect his imagination.

This morning, however, at breakfast his mother had “ looked funny,” as he would have expressed it ; and she presently told him that he was to go and see Cousin Nevill and say good-bye to him. Jim had inquired whether Cousin Nevill was going to go to Rome again ; and his