

wrenched himself about, faced the window, and steadied himself by leaning upon the sill.

"Look here, Mackintosh . . . I shall be obliged if you'll stay here for a little. . . . The fact is, I'm not at all well. If you could make it convenient . . . I should be grateful. . . ."

"Very good, my lord," said Mackintosh, and remained, quiet but hovering, in the room.

It had really come to that.

On a farmhouse parlour window, one summer afternoon, I was witness of a little paraphrase of our world's doings, done by microcosmic actors. One dusty pane of it was the stage of observation; but no doubt the others would have furnished as many more. In a corner some maggot or other, metamorphosis of a moth, had built herself a tent of silvery floss in which to spend the days of her separation; across another a spider had cast her filmy triangles, and even now was cording a midge into a bale with invisible threads. A humble-bee drowsily climbed the heights by means of the leading; in mid-field two house-flies made love, or paused between the orgasms to clean their legs. A ladybird rested from her flight, a little bubble of dry blood; a woodlouse coursed the lower slopes seeking dirt to add unto dirt. All was as peaceful as a Claude landscape, where happy toil and love and rest after labour merge and interchange in the mellow haze.

Then, as I looked and considered, there was a violent shock of commotion. A bluebottle fly