

notion visited him of trying to win her, thus rounding off his life and hers, despite the difference in their ages. But the notion vanished whence it came, even as he gazed at her placid features. Why trouble her career, why trouble what was left of his, letting loose again that force, terrific and ravaging, which through the agency of others had already embittered and poisoned their existence? Why awaken desire, which destroys calm — the most precious thing on earth, as it seemed to him? Why not be content with the fact that Annunciata lived, a beautiful activity on which all that was most pure in his soul might dwell?

He was sick of love. And she, he reflected, might have the good fortune never to know it. And so he allowed the notion of wooing her to vanish whence it came. And for him and for her it was best.

"You prefer Pirehill to a hospital in London?" he questioned.

"Yes, much," she replied. "You see mother can come to see me, and it's so easy for me to go and see her." Annunciata's eyes shone at the thought of her mother. "Not to mention the children," she said. Naturally she did not add that her visits to the house at Knype were carefully timed in order that she might avoid her father.