

He continued in a mood — or rather in and out of a number of moods — which she did not find herself able to follow. In accordance with the best traditions of the poets, he lost his appetite, but only because he had developed in its place a worried indigestion that made him irritable rather than languishing or lackadaisical. He had decided that Miss McCarty had thrown him over because, after seeing his mother and his home, she had found them "beneath" her. And one night he would bring his mother home the gifts of a resentful pride in her, and the next night he would be querulous and sharp, and handle the furniture as if he could scarcely restrain himself from throwing it out the window. He would come to his breakfast with a melancholy lover's distaste for food; and after his eggs and coffee, he would be ready to boil over with ill-temper at a word. He was sick and despondent, hilly and had-natured, fiercely proud and for the most part quite impossible.

His mother did everything to tempt his appetite with rich dishes that only made him the more dyspeptic. She tried to please him by proposing that they move to a flat uptown and buy a "bran' new" set of furniture that she had seen; and this proposal found him in one of his proud moods and made him furious. She almost wept over his gifts — beginning to have a glimmering suspicion of why he bought them — and he was so indignant that he swore he would never bring her another. "Well, love o' heaven!" she cried, at last. "There's no livin' with y' at all! What is it?"