

wide sympathy, although at the same time few who came into contact with him escaped an occasional sense of repulsion. He was middle-aged, was almost absurdly tall, and had a bald head which rose like the huge egg of some extinct monster of the air from a tangle of sandy-red hair. His black eyes resembled two round marbles set prominently above his high cheekbones. He was clean-shaven, and had a weak, sensitive mouth, though by contrast a fairly pertinacious pointed chin.

Robin had first seen him on deck in the moonlight, on the evening on which they sailed. Mr. Blake was walking towards him bare-headed, his body sheathed in a tight-fitting, dark overcoat, which was closely buttoned from the neck to the ankles; and being very thin, he suggested to the imagination an animated cylinder, a piece of piping, surmounted by a large ostrich-egg. When he came closer, staring in front of him with hypnotic goggle-eyes, the simile had to be varied, and Robin found himself thinking of the illuminated turnip or pumpkin set upon a pole with which he used to terrify his friends in the days of his childhood. When the apparition had passed he found himself laughing inwardly in an hysterical sort of way; and, somehow, he felt inclined to shiver.

Later, when they met in the cabin, he observed that the face was by no means so awful as he had supposed in the semi-darkness on deck. The man had at times a whimsical and almost wistful smile lurking about the corners of his mouth; and, as he stood at the washing-basin, clad only in his underclothes, he gave the appearance of being an athlete, though one, perhaps, somewhat out of training. Robin soon discovered that he was extremely anxious that men should not think him a crank, and equally anxious that women should not think him a normal man. In other words, he seemed to like, and indeed to require, the sympathy and awe