

shook off or blew away of themselves. We put this in the language of our informant.

However, the story has no business on the other side of this wall. What concerns it is the row of houses on the left.

If ever a row of houses bore upon them the stamp of having been overtaken and surrounded by an unexpected city, these did. The wooden palings that still skirted the breathing-room in front of them almost said aloud to every newcomer:—"Where is the strip of land gone that we could see beyond, day by day; that belonged to God-knows-who; whose further boundary was the road the haycarts brought their loads on, drawn by deliberate horses that had bells?" The persistent sunflowers that still struggled into being behind them told tales of how big they were in youth, years ago, when they could turn to the sun and hope to catch his eye. The stray wallflowers murmured to all who had ears to hear:—"This is how we smelt in days gone by—but oh!—so much stronger!" The wooden shutters, outside the ground-floors that really stood upon the ground, told, if you chose to listen, of how they kept the houses safe from thieves in moonlit nights a century ago; and the doors between them—for each house was three windows wide—opened straight into the kitchen. So they were, or had been, cottages. But the miscreant in possession twenty years ago, instigated by a jerry-builder, had added a storey and removed the tiled roofs whose garrets were every bit as good as the jerry-built rooms that took their place. Sapp himself may have done it—one knows nothing of his principles—and at the same time in a burst of overweening vanity called his cottages his Court. But one rather likes to think that Sapp was with his forbears when this came about, when the wall was built up opposite, and the cottages could no longer throw their dust everywhere, but had to resort to a common dustbin at the end of the Court, which smelt so you could smell it quite plain across the wall when the lid was off. That dustbin was the outward and visible sign of the decadence of Sapp.