

morning that I said good-bye and started for my home-bound ship. In the last days the thought of the parting scene with Annabel haunted me like a nightmare. I felt that when our eyes should meet for the last time I could not fail to read her inmost soul, and, like a veritable coward, I feared to know the truth, lest I should see that I had betrayed her heart. Oddly enough, I nearly started without saying good-bye to her at all, for she and Ernest did not return to breakfast. I had taken leave of Mrs. Thorold, and the trap was at the door with my portmanteau upon it before they came from the river. I stood upon the threshold talking to a young gardener who was working among the flowers, when they came racing over the lawn, Ernest with his gun, and Annabel in her loose boating-frock.

"You have missed your breakfast," I said.

"Never mind," said Annabel, "you only had duck. We are so tired of eating duck." And this, indeed, I felt to be the sentiment of us all.