

tion of pathos and tragedy robs the grave of its victory, and plucks Death of its sting, so that no man suffereth or travaileth without contributing to the raw stuff of life of which Art is woven by the souls dowered with the pangs and privileges of Over-Consciousness. Each man, it sometimes seemed to him, dimly, had to pay so much in sorrow and pain; and in return for that he drew from the common human fund the comprehension of life and the consolation of Art, new sympathies and new delights, music and books and pictures, that only lived through the rich variety of human destinies; mystic atmospheres and minor scales, meaningless to souls that had not suffered or inherited the capacity to suffer. Some—generally the stupid—paid little in pain and sorrow; and some—as in his own case—much. But so long as the account showed a balance to the general good, it was not for the soul that was sacrificed to complain. It was, perhaps, even a privilege to subserve the common good. Life was so arranged that virtue could not be sure of personal reward, and this uncertainty was just what made virtue possible. Under no other scheme of things could the soul enjoy the privilege of virtue. To have suffered, as he himself had done, by the institution of marriage, both as child and husband; to have been a victim to the general laws which safeguard human society; to have been cut in two by the flaming swords of the cherubim, which turn every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life—all this did not, he thought, give him the right to blaspheme existence. And the artist at least extracted a soul of good from all things evil.

Some such reflections—not clear, but all confused and blurred, for he was no syllogism-building philosopher, but an artist whose profoundest thought sprang always from the concrete image before him—came to him again when he was working at his famous picture "The Persecutors," inspired by an episode in Billy's life, though Billy does not know. It is simply children tormenting an old man. The old man is one of the world's wrecks; the children know not what they do. But the pathos of the picture is overwhelming; it purifies by pity and terror. This is the profit to the world of Billy's life.