

the country, I could only reply: "Because I want to. I want to see what it's like." I might have attributed my action to the dearness of season-tickets on the Underground, to the slowness of omnibuses or the danger of cabs: my friends would have been just as wise, and I just as foolish, in their esteem. I admit that their attitude of benevolent contempt, of far-seeing sagacity, gave me to think. And although I was obstinate, it was with a pang of misgiving that I posted the notice of quitting my suburban residence; and the pang was more acute when I signed the contract for the removal of my furniture. I called on my friends before the sinister day of exodus.

"Good-bye," I said.

"Au revoir," they replied, with calm vaticinatory assurance, "we shall see you back again in a year."

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Thus, outwardly braggart, inwardly quaking, I departed. The quaking had not ceased as I stood, in the autumn twilight, in my beautiful orchard, in front of my country-house. ~~T~~olling up the slope from the southward, I saw an enormous van with three horses: the last instalment of my chattels. As it turned lumberingly at right angles into my private road or breen, I said aloud:

"I've done it."

I had. I felt like a statesman who has handed an ultimatum to a king's messenger. No withdrawal was now possible. From the reverie natural to this melancholy occasion I was aroused by a disconcerting sound of collision, the rattle of