

The Coign of Vantage

while often intensely dissatisfied with surroundings, they are by no means dissatisfied with themselves. Their conceit breeds pessimism, and earth seems too tiresome an arena for the hearty display of their fastidious energies. Its spell is broken, its tasks devoid of interest, its music out of tune.

Thoughtful and earnest minds, on the contrary, instead of being bored by the pettiness of life, are captivated and at the same time appalled by its grandeur. The domain is so rich and vast that none can be said to have gleaned in all its fields, nor even set foot in them. Few of us are as much alive as we might be, nor do we always make the best of what life we have already. Partial attainment runs through everything, and the most sanguine and intrepid do not quite escape the vexation of monotonous experiences that bring despondent hours when it seems futile to hope that the "patchy and scrappy" bits