

## CHAPTER I

FIVE o'clock by the sundial on the lawn, and the man that had to fight the duel at seven was sound asleep and dreaming. He was dreaming about a place that must have been in existence, of course, when he was a boy, or how could it be there now? And there it was, sure enough, with the great marble fountain in the centre, and the yew-hedges clipped into the form of dancers all round. And there in the fountain-basin were the huge fish that must have been there then, human heads and all. And the six globes of solid gold on each angle of the hexagon parapet that skirted it and held the water in. None of these things had ever been brought to the Hall in his time—he was sure of it.

Then of a sudden it dawned upon him that this strange place was only Pan's Garden, familiar to his boyhood. But there was no such fountain in those days. That was all new. Nothing was there then but a shallow stone basin where the paths crossed, with a foursquare parapet just above the ground, a mere lip-rim of acanthus-leaf, with a bare relic of the God in the centre, washed for ever by the water-trickle that still kept a memory of the purpose of its youth. But how came he never to have noticed this new fountain? That was the oddity of it. He did not trouble about the human heads on the fish.

It was not as if the Box Walk, so called, that led to it was one that he had shunned in those days. On the contrary, the fact that he and his brothers were forbidden to play there, in order that the box-hedges it took its