

CHAPTER II

CAN anyone among us whose life is full of action, with Hope in his heart and Achievement on his horizon; whose pillow whispers at night afterthoughts of a fruitful day, and on the day that follows can, without affectation, reproach the head that lies too long on it with having lost something precious that cannot be regained—can such a one conceive the meaning of blind or crippled life, that left Hope dead by the roadside long ago, and dares not look ahead to see the barren land; whose pillow speaks no word about the past, but only welcome hints about oblivion, and a question with the daylight—why rise? Why rise, indeed, and maybe miss a dream of a bygone day? Better lie still, and thank God for the dream-world!

"I wonder what that poor devil feels like," said one first-class traveller outside the railway-station to another, who, like himself, gave the impression that he had plenty of luggage somewhere else, which was being well looked after by a servant whose wages were too high. Both were young men, well under twenty-five at a guess; and though one was fair and the other was dark, and they were not the same height, and their features were not alike, still, the predominant force of their class-identity was so strong that individuality was lost in it, and most folk, seeing them *en passant* would have spoken of them thenceforth as "those two young swells," and dismissed them with an impression that either might be at any time substituted for the other without any great violence to contemporary history. They appeared to be sauntering to the train, and the poor devil was Jim Coupland, at his usual post by the long blank wall he used to feel his way down, after leaving Lizarann at the corner she might not pass. The wonderer had bought matches of Jim that he didn't want