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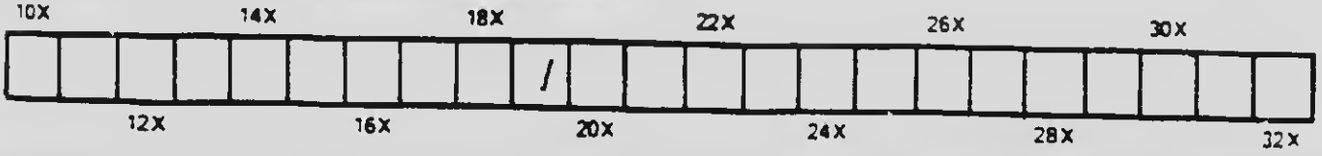

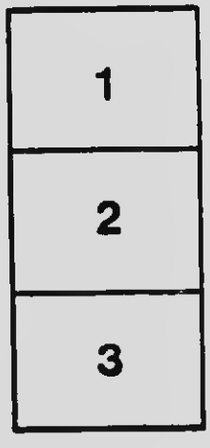

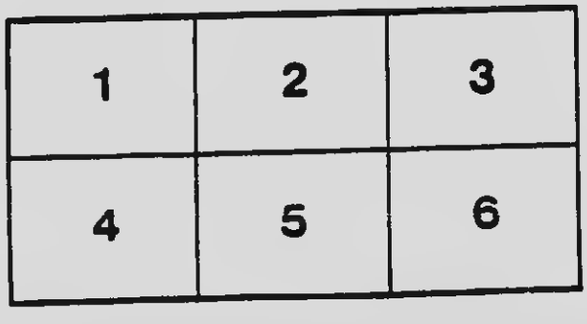

The Crow's-Nest

The Crow's-Nest

By

Mrs. Everard Cotes

(*Sara Jeannette Duncan*)

Author of "An American Girl in London"
"A Social Departure," etc.

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THE CROW'S-NEST

CHAPTER I

THERE is an attraction about carpets and curtains, chairs and sofas, and the mantelpiece which is hard to explain, and harder to resist. I feel it in all its insidious power this morning as I am bidding them farewell for a considerable time; I would not have believed that a venerable Axminster and an arm-chair on three casters could absorb and hold so much affection; verily I think, standing in the door, it was these things that made Lot's wife turn her unlucky head. Dear me, how they enter in, how they grow to be part of us, these objects of ordinary use and comfort that we place within the four walls of the little shelters we build for ourselves on the fickle round o' the world! I have gone back, I have sat down, I will not be deprived of them; they are necessary to the

courage with which every one must face life. I will consider nothing without a cushion, on the hither side of the window, braced by dear familiar book-shelves, and the fender. And Tiglath-Pileser has come, and has quoted certain documents, and has used gentle propulsive force, and behold, because I am a person whose contumacy cannot endure, the door is shut, and I am on the outside disconsolate.

I would not have more sympathy than I can afterwards sustain; I am only banished to the garden. But the banishment is so definite, so permanent! Its terms are plain to my unwilling glance, a long cane deck chair anchored under a tree. Overhead the sky, on the four sides the sky, without a pattern, full of wind and nothing. Abroad the landscape, consisting entirely of large mountains; about, the garden. I never regarded a garden with more disfavour. Here I am to remain — but to *remain!* The word expands, you will find, as you look into it. Man, and especially woman, is a restless being, made

to live in houses roaming from room to room, and always staying for the shortest time moreover, if you notice, in the one which is called the garden. The subtle and gratifying law of arrangement that makes the drawing-room the only proper place for afternoon tea operates all through. The convenience of one apartment, the quiet of another, the decoration of another regularly appeal in turn, and there is always one's beloved bed, for retirement when the world is too much with one. All this I am compelled to resign for a single fixed fact and condition, a cane chair set in the great monotony of out-of-doors. My eye, which is a captious organ, is to find its entertainment all day long in bushes — and grass. All day long. Except for meals it is absolutely laid down that I am not to "come in." They have not locked the doors, that might have been negotiated, they have gone and put me on my honour. From morning until night I am to sit for several months and breathe, with the grass and the bushes, the beautiful pure fresh air. I

don't know why they have not asked me to take root and be done with it. In vain I have represented that microbes will agree with them no better than with me; it seems the common or house microbe is one of the things that I particularly must n't have. Some people are compelled to deny themselves oysters, others strawberries or artichokes; my fate is not harder than another's. Yet it tastes of bitterness to sit out here in an April wind twenty paces from a door behind which they are enjoying, in customary warmth and comfort, all the microbes there are.

I have consented to this. I have been wrought upon certainly, but I have consented. For all that, it is not so simple as it looks. It is my occupation to write out with care and patience the trifles the world shows me, revolving as it does upon its axis before every intelligent eye; and I cannot be divorced from all that is upholstered and from my dear occupation by the same decree. And how, I ask you, how observe life from a cane chair under a tree in a garden! There is the beautiful pure fresh air

certainly, and there are the things coming up. But what, tell me, can you extract from air beside water; and though a purely vegetable romance would be a novelty, could I get it published? Tiglath-Pileser has contributed to my difficulty a book of reference, a volume upon the coleoptera of the neighbourhood, and I am to take care of it. I am taking the greatest care of it, but I do not like to hand it back to him with the sentiments I feel in case one fine day I should be reduced to coleoptera and thankful to get them.

Nevertheless I have no choice, I cannot go forth in the world's ways and see what people are doing there, I must just sit under my tree and think and consider upon the current facts of a garden, the bursting buds I suppose and the following flowers, the people who happen that way and the ideas the wind brings; the changes of the seasons — there 's fashion after all in that — the behaviour of the ants and earwigs; oh, I am encouraged, in the end it will be a novel of manners!

Besides, there ought to be certain virtues, if one could find them, in *plein air*, for scribbling as well as for painting. One's head always feels particularly empty in a garden, but that is no reason why one should not see what is going on there, and if one's impressions are a trifle incoherent — the wind does blow the leaves about — they will be on that account all the more impressionistic.

Yet it is *not* so simple as it looks. In such a project everything depends, it will be admitted, upon the garden; it must be a tolerably familiar, at least a conceivable spot. The garden of Paradise, for instance, who would choose it as a *point de repaire* from which to observe the breed of Adam at the beginning of the twentieth century? One would be interrupted everywhere by the necessity of describing the flora and fauna; it would be like writing a botany book with interpolations which would necessarily seem profane; and the whole thing would be rejected in the end because it was not a scientific treatise upon the origin of apples. Certainly, if one might select one's plot, the

first consideration should be the geographical, and I am depressed to think that my garden is only less remote than Eve's. It is not an English garden — ah, the thought! — nor a French one where they count the seeds and the windfalls, nor an Italian one sunning down past its statues to the blue Adriatic, nor even a garden in the neighbourhood of Poughkeepsie where they grow pumpkins. Elizabeth in her German garden was three thousand miles nearer to everybody than my cane chair is at this moment. How can I possibly expect people to come three thousand miles just to sit and talk under my pencil cedar? So "long" an invitation requires such confidence, such assurance!

Who indeed should care to hear about every day as it goes on under a conifer in a garden, when that garden — let me keep it back no longer — is a mere patch on a mountain top of the Himalayas? Not even India down below there, grilling in the sun which is not quite warm enough here — that would be easy with snakes and palm-trees

and mangoes and chutneys all growing round, ready and familiar; but Simla, what is Simla? An artificial little community which has climbed eight thousand feet out of the world to be cool. Who ever leaves Charing Cross for Simla? Who among the world's multitudes ever casts an eye across the Rajputana deserts to Simla? Does Thomas Cook know where Simla is? No; Simla is a geographical expression, to be verified upon the map and never to be thought of again, and a garden in Simla is a vague and formless fancy, a possibility, no more.

Yet people have to live there, I have to live there; and certainly for the next few months I have to make the best of it from the outside. If you ask yourself what you really think of a garden you will find that you consider it a charming place to go out into. So much I gladly admit if you add the retreat and background of the house. The house is such an individual; such a friend! Even in Simla the house offers corners where may lurk the imagination,

nails on which to hang a rag of fancy; but in this windy patch under the sky surrounded by Himalayas, one Himalaya behind another indefinitely, who could find two ideas to rub together?

Also my cane chair is becoming most pitiably weary; it aches in every limb. The sun was poor and pale enough; now it has gone altogether, a greyness has blown out of Thibet, my fingers are almost too numb to say how cold it is. The air is full of an apprehension of rain — if it rains do you suppose I am to come in? Indeed no, I am to have an umbrella. Uncomforted, uncomfortable fate! I wish it would rain; I could then pity myself so profoundly, so abjectly, I would lie heroic, still and stoic; and at the appointed time I would take my soaking, patient person into the house with a trail of drops, pursued by Thisbe with hot-water bottles, which I would reject, to her greater compassion and more contrition. And in the morning it would be a queer thing if I couldn't produce rheumatism somewhere. Short of rain, however, it will

be impossible to give a correct and adequate impression of the bald inhospitality of out-of-doors. They will think I want to be pitied and admired, and Thisbe will say, "But did n't you really enjoy it — just a little?"

Walls are necessary to human happiness — that I can asseverate. Tiglath-Pileser, in bringing me to this miserable point, argued that I should experience the joys of primitive man when he took all nature for his living-room; subtle, long-lost sensations would arise in me, he said, of such a persuasive character that in the end I should have to combat the temptation to take entirely to the woods. I expect nothing of the kind. My original nomad is too far away, I cannot sympathize with him in his embryotic preferences across so many wisest centuries. Moreover, if the poor barbarian had an intelligent idea it was to get under shelter, and that is the only one, doubtless, for which we have to thank him.

The windows are blank; they think it kindest, I suppose, not to appear to find

entertainment in my situation. It is certainly wisest; if Thisbe showed but the tip of her pretty nose I should throw it up. The windows are blank, the door is shut, but hold — there is smoke coming out of the drawing-room chimney! Thisbe has lighted unto herself a fire and is now drawn up around it awaiting the tea-things. The house as an ordinary substantive is hard enough to resist, but the-house-with-a-fire! No, I cannot. Besides it is already half-past four and I was to come in at five to tea. I will obey the spirit and scorn the letter of the law — I will go in now.

Chapter II

A ROAD winds round the hill above our heads; another winds round the hill below our feet; between is a shelf jutting out. The principal object on the shelf is the house, but it also supports the pencil cedar, and the garden sits on it, and at the back the servants' quarters and stables just don't slip off; so that when Tiglath-Pileser walks about it with his hands in his pockets it looks a little crowded. The land between the upper road and the shelf, and the land between the shelf and the lower road is equally ours, but it is placed at such an abrupt and uncompromising angle that we do not know any way of taking possession of it. By surface measurement we are doubtless large proprietors, but as the crow flies we are distinctly over-taxed. This slanting hill-side is called the khud; there

is no real property in a khud. One always thinks of town lots as flat and running from the front street to the back, with suitable exposure for the washing. It just depends. This one stands on end, you could easily send a stone rolling from the front street into the back, if you knew which was which; and there would be rather too much exposure for the washing. If you like you can lean up against the khud, but that is the only way of asserting your title-deed, and few people consider it worth doing. I may say that as soon as you tilt your property out of the horizontal you lose control over it. Things come up on it precisely as they like, in tufts, in suckers and in every vulgar manner, secure and defiant it rises above your head. Tiglath-Pileser and I have sought diligently, with ladders, for some way of bringing our khud into subjection, but in vain. As he says we might paper it, but as I say there are some things which persons who derive their income from current literature simply can *not* afford. So we are content perforce to look at it and "call it ours," as

ch'dren are sometimes allowed by their elders to do. The khud is God's property but we call it ours. Trees grow on it and it makes a more agreeable background, after all, than other people's kitchens.

Beyond the shelf the hill-side slopes clear from the upper road to the lower, a stretch of indefinite jungle which flourishes, no man aiding or forbidding. We have sometimes looked at it vaguely and thought of potatoes, but have always decided that it was useful enough and much less troublesome as part of the landscape. The other day the law threatened us if Tiglath-Pileser did not forthwith declare his boundaries in that direction, and he has since been going about with a measuring-chain and a great pretence of accuracy; but it is my private belief that neither he nor his neighbour will be equal to the demand. They had better agree quickly and hatch a friendly deposition together, and so escape whatever penalty the law awards for not knowing where your premises leave off. Meanwhile the wild cherry and the unkempt rhododendron grow in one accord

indifferent to these foolish claims. Such is ownership in a khud.

Our domain therefore is spread out about as much as it would hang from a clothes-line, but the only part we really inhabit is the shelf. All this by way of informing you honestly that the garden in which you are invited to lighten so many long hours for me is no great place. Here and now I abjure invention and idealization; you shall have just what happens, just what there is, and it won't be much. Pot-luck —you can't expect more from a garden on a shelf. I must admit that before I was turned out to grow in it myself I thought it well enough, but now I regard it critically, like the other plants. We might do better, all of us, under more favourable conditions. We complain unanimously, for one thing, of the lack of room. Cramped we are to such an extent that I often feel thankful for the paling that runs along the edge and keeps us all in. I suppose nobody ever believed that his lot gave him proper scope for his activities in this world, but I can

testify that the wisteria which twines over the paling is pushing a middle-aged hibiscus bush down the khud, while I, sitting here, elbow them both, and a honeysuckle, climbing up from below has to cling with both hands to hold on. If I invite a friend to take a walk in my garden I must go in front declaiming and he must come behind assenting; we cannot waste space on mere paths, and none of them are wide enough for two people to walk abreast, except the main one to the door, which had to be on account of the rickshaws. As it is, pansies, daisies and other small objects constantly slip over the edge and hang there precariously attached by the slenderest root of family affection for days. We are all convinced in this garden, that for expansion one would not choose a shelf, and that applies in quite a ridiculous way to Simla itself, though perhaps it is hardly worth while, out here in the sun, to write an essay to explain exactly how.

I would not show myself of a churlish mind; the day is certainly fine, as fine a day

as you could be compelled to sit out in. A week has passed since I lent myself to be a spectacle of domestic tyranny and modern science, and I hasten to announce that although I want to eat more and to go to bed earlier I am not at all better. I have let the week go by without taking any notice of it in this journal under the impression that it was not worth the pains, as they say in France. It was doubtless a wonderful week in nature, but which of the fifty-two is not? and being certain that my fountain pen would be anything but a source of amiability, I left it in the house. Moreover, there is something not quite proper, one finds, in confiding an experience of personal discomfort, undergone with the object of improving one's health, to the printed page; it is akin to lending one's maladies to an advertiser of patent medicines, and tends to give light literature too much the character of a human document. Also, to look back upon, the late week holds little but magnificent resolution and the sensation of cold feet. All that need be said about it is that I have at last arrived at the

end of it, full of fortitude and resignation. I am not at all better, but I am resigned and prepared to go on, if it is required of me, and it seems likely to he. In fact it appears to have occurred to nobody but myself that there was anything experimental about this period. The whole summer is to be the experiment, I am told, as often as if they were addressing the meanest intelligence, which is not the case.

My sensibilities no doubt are becoming slightly blunted. A whole week without a roof over one's head except at night would naturally have that tendency. I find that I am no longer a prey to the desire to go in and look at something in the last number of *The Studio*, and the more subtly tormented of modern novelties fails to hold my attention for more than half-an-hour at a time. The spirit in my feet that would carry me indoors has still to be bound down, but it has grown vague and purposeless and might lead me anywhere, even to the kitchen to see if the cook is keeping his saucepans clean, the most detestable responsibility of

my life. Now that I am a close prisoner outside the house, by the way, it shall be delegated to Thisbe. That is no more than right.

It was not worse than I expected, and it was a little less bad, let me confess, than I described it to my family. I can now sympathize with the youthful knight of the middle ages at the end of his first night's ghostly vigil in the sanctuary, — if the rest are no worse than this they can be got through with. I am certainly on better terms with nature, as he was on better terms with the skeleton in the vault, apprehending with him in that neither of them was really calculated to do us any harm. He no doubt lost his superstitions as I am losing my finer feelings; whether one is sufficiently compensated for them by a vulgar appetite and a tendency to drowsiness immediately after dinner is a question I should like to discuss with him.

For one thing I am beginning to make acquaintance with the Days and to know them apart, not merely as sunny days, dull

days, windy days and wet days, as they are commonly unobserved and divided, but in the full and abundant personality which every one of the three hundred and sixty-five offers to the world that rolls under it. To me also, a very short time ago, the day was a convenient arrangement for making things visible outside the house, accompanied by agreeable or disagreeable temperatures; a mere condition monotonously recurrent and quite subordinated to engagements. To live out here enveloped by it, dependent on it, in a morning-to-night intimacy with it, is to know better. The Day is a great elemental creature left in charge of the world for as long, every twenty-four hours, as she can see it. No one day is the same as another; those of the same season have only a family likeness. They express character and temperament, like people, and if you elect to live with them, to throw yourself, as it were, upon their better nature with no other protection than an umbrella, it just makes all the difference. Some were tender and sweet-tempered, I remember, some were thoughtful, with a

touch of gloom, one was artist with a firm hand and a splendid palette. And among all the seven I did not dislike a single Day, which is remarkable when one thinks of the abuse one is so apt to let fall, from the inside of a window, about what our common little brains call "the weather." There is no weather, it is a poor and pointless term, there is only the mood of a day, and however badly it may serve our paltry ends it is bound at least to be interesting. When one reflects upon how little this great thing is regarded and how constantly from behind glass, by miserable men, one is touched with pity for the ingratitude of the race, and astonishment at the amount of personal superiority to be acquired in a week. Day unto day uttereth speech, swinging a lantern; it is the business of night to wait. Day after day, too spiritual to be pagan, too sensuous to be divine, speeds out of time into the eternity where planets are served in turn. Behold, in spite of all their science, I show you a mystery, high and strange whether the sun is in his tabernacle or the clouds are on

the hills. But it is there always, you can see it for yourself. Go out into the garden, not for a stroll, but for a day.

The week has brought me — and how can I be too grateful — a new and personal feeling about this exquisite thing that passes. Waking in the blackness of the very small hours I find a delicate gladness in the thought of the far sure wing of the day. Already while we lie in the dark it brushes the curve of the world in that far East which is so much farther, already on a thousand slopes and rice fields the grey dawn is beginning, beginning; and sleeping huts and silent palaces stand emergent, marvellously pathetic to the imagination. Even while I think, it is crisping the sullen waves of the Yellow Sea; presently some outlying reef of palms will find its dim picture drawn, and then we too, high in the middle of Hindostan, will swing under this vast and solemn operation. With that precision which reigns in heaven our turn will also come, and in my garden and over the hills will walk another day.

Chapter III

THERE is a right side and a wrong side to the mountain of Simla, for it was a mountain eight thousand feet high and equally important long before it became the summer headquarters of the Government of India, and a possible pin-point on the map. These mountains run across the tip of India, you will remember, due east and west, so that if you live on one of them you are very apt to live due north or south. On the south side you look down, on a clear day, quite to the plains, if that is any advantage; you see the Punjab lying there as flat as the palm of your hand and streaked with rivers, and the same sun that burns all India bakes down upon you. On the north side you have turned your back on Hindostan and sit upon the borders of Thibet, a world of mountains bars your horizon, a hermit Mahatma might

abide with you in his ashes and have his meditations disturbed by no thought of missionaries or income tax. Your prospect is all blue and purple with a wonderful edge sometimes of white; cool winds blow out of it and fan your roses on the hottest day. Out there is no-man's-land, where the coolies come from, or perhaps the country of a little king who wears his crown embroidered on his turban, and in India who recks of little kings? Out there are no Secretariats, no Army Headquarters, no precedence, probably very little pay, but the vast blue freedom of it! And all expanded, all extended just at your front door. * * * * *

The asterisks stand for the time I have spent in looking at it. Freely translated they should express an apology. I find it one of the pernicious tendencies of living on this shelf that my eyes constantly wander out there taking my mind with them, which at once becomes no more than a vacant mirror of blue abysses. I look, I know, immensely serious and thoughtful, and Thisbe, believing me on the tip of some

high imagination goes round the other way, whereas I am the merest reflecting puddle with exactly a puddle's enjoyment of the scene. There is neither virtue nor profit in this, but if I apologized every time I did it these chapters would be impassable with asterisks. Thisbe's method is much more reasonable; she takes her view immediately after she takes her breakfast. Coming out upon the verandah she looks at it intelligently, pronounces it perfectly lovely or rather hazy, returns to her employments, and there is an end to the matter. One cannot always, in Thisbe's opinion, be referring to views. I wish I could adopt this calm and governed attitude. I should get on faster in almost every way. It is my ignominious alternative to turn my back upon the prospect and look up the khud.

Into my field of vision comes Atma, doing something to a banksia rose-bush that climbs over a little arbour erected across a path apparently for the convenience of the banksia rose-bush. Atma would tell you, protector of the poor, that he is the gardener

of this place; as a matter of fact his relation to it is that of tutelary deity and real proprietor. I have talked in as large a way as if it belonged to Tiglath-Pileser because he pays for the repairs, but I should have had the politeness at least to mention Atma, whose claims are so much better. So far as we are concerned Atma is prehistoric; he was here when we came and when we have completed the tale of *one* years of exile and gone away he will also be here. His hut is at the very end of the shelf and I have never been in it, but if you asked him how long he has lived there he would say, "Always." It must make very little difference to Atma what temporary lords come and give orders in the house with the magnificent tin roof where they have table-cloths; some, of course, are more troublesome than others, but none of them stay. He and his bulbs and perennials are the permanent undisputed facts; it is unimaginable that any of them should be turned out.

I am more reconciled to my fate when Atma is in the garden, he is something

human to look at and to consider, and he moves with such calm wisdom among the plants. He has a short black curling beard that grows almost up to his high cheek-bones, and soft round brown eyes full of guileless cunning, and a wide and pleasant smile. He is just a gentle hill-man and by religion a gardener, but with his turban twisted low and flat over his ears he might be any of the Old Testament characters one remembers in the pictured Bible stories of one's childhood. Something primitive and natural about him binds him closely to Adam in my mind It was with this simplicity and patience, I am sure, that the original cultivator tied up his banksias and saved his portulaca and mignonette after the fall, when he had something to do beside come to his meals. I am not the only person; everybody to whom it is pointed out notices at once how remarkably Atma takes after the father of us all. I have often wished to call him Adam because of his so peculiarly deserving it; but Tiglath-Pileser says that profane persons, knowing that he could not

have received the name at his baptism, might laugh and thus hurt his feelings. So he is Atma still. It is near enough.

He is also patriarchal in his ideas. This morning he came to us upon the business of Sropo. Sropo, he said, wished for six days' leave in order to marry himself. "But," said I, "this is not at all proper. Sropo went away last year to marry himself. How shall Sropo have two wives?"

"Nā," replied Atma, with his kindly smile, "that was Masuddi. Masuddi has now a wife and a son has been,[1] and his wages are so much the less. Also without doubt this Sropo could not have two wives."

"Certainly not," said Tiglath-Pileser, virtuously.

"Sropo is of my village," Atma explained, genially, "and we folk are all poor men. More than one wife cannot be taken. But if we were rich like the Presence," he went on, gravely, "we would have five or six."

Tiglath-Pileser shook his head. "You would be sorry," said he. "It would be a

[1] Literally: "has been finished."

mistake," but only I saw the ambiguity in his eye.

"It is not your Honour's custom," returned Atma, simply. "Sropo, then, will go?"

"Call Masuddi," said Tiglath-Pileser. "It is a serious matter, this of wives."

Round the corner of the verandah came Masuddi, shy and broadly smiling, with an end of his cotton shirt in the corner of his mouth and pulling at it, as other kinds of children pull at their pinafores.

"Masuddi," said Tiglath-Pileser, "last year you made a marriage in your house, and now you have a son. Er — which young woman did you marry?"

Masuddi's smile broadened; he cast down his eyes and scrabbled the gravel about with his foot. "Tuktoo," he said shamefacedly.

"Well, there is no harm in that. What is the name of your son?"

Masuddi looked up intelligently. "How should he have a name?" he asked. "He has not yet four months. He came with the snow. When he has a year, then he will get a name. My padre-folk — *Brahmun* — will give it."

"But you will say what it is to be," I put in.

"Nā," said Masuddi, "the padre-folk will say — to their liking."

"Masuddi," said Tiglath-Pileser, "speak straight words — do you beat your wife?"

"Master," replied Masuddi, "how shall I utter false talk? When she will not hear orders I beat her."

"Masuddi," said I, "straight words — do you beat her with a stick?" Laughter rose up in him, and again he chewed the end of his garment. "According as my anger is," he said, half turning away to hide his face, "so I beat her."

"Then she obeys?"

"Then fear is and she listens. Thus it is," said Masuddi, his face clearing to an idea, "as we servant-folk are before your Honours, so they-folk are before us."

"You may go, worthy Masuddi," pronounced Tiglath-Pileser, "and Atma may say to Sropo, who is listening behind the water-barrel, that I have heard the words of Masuddi and they are just and reason-

able, and he may go also and marry himself, but it must be done in six days, and it must not occur again."

Masuddi and Sropo are two of the four who pull my rickshaw. When I am not taking carriage exercise they will do almost anything else, except sew or cook, but I have discovered that the thing they really love to be set at is to paint. In the spring the paling required a fresh brown coat, and in a moment of inspired economy I decided that Masuddi and his men should be entrusted with it. Never was task more willingly undertaken. With absorption they mixed the pigment and thewi-oil, squeezing it with their hands; with joy they laid it on, competing among themselves, like Tom Sawyer's schoolfellows. "Lo, it is beautiful!" Masuddi would exclaim after each brushful, drawing back to look at it. I think they were sorry when it was done.

Atma is of these people, and the two grooms, and Dumboo, the upper housemaid, a strapping treasure six feet in his stockings. I would like it better if all our

servants were, but it is impossible to conceive Sropo doing up muslin frills — at least it is impossible to conceive the frills — and I could not ask people to eat entrées sent up by any friend of Masuddi's. I admit they do not altogether adapt themselves, or even wash themselves. I have before now locked Masuddi and the others up with a tub and a bar of kitchen soap and instructions of the most general nature, demanding, on their release, to *see the soap*. It was the only reliable evidence. Besides if I had not required to see my soap, worn by honest service, they would have sold it and bought sweetmeats and gone none the cleaner. They have many such little ways, which few people I know consider as engaging as I do. But what I like best is their lightheartedness and their touch of fancy. Sropo will go to his nuptials with a rose behind his ear — where in my barbarous West does a young man choose to approach the altar thus? and when Masuddi courted Tuktoo upon the mountain paths in the twilight I think a shy idyll went

barefoot between them; though he, the male creature, would make shame of it now, preferring to speak of sticks and of obedience. They are the young of the world, these hill sons and daughters, and they still remember how the earth they are made of stirs in the spring. It is late evening in my garden now — there has seemed, somehow, no good reason to go in, though one new leaf in the borders has long been just like another — and far down the khud I hear a playing upon the flute. It is a fragmentary air but vigorous and sweet, and it brings me, dropping through the vast and purple spaces of the evening, the most charming sensation. For it is not a Secretary to the Government of India who performs, nor any member of the choir invisible that sings hosannas over there to the Commander-in-Chief, but a simple hill-man who would make a melody because it is spring, and he has perchance been given leave to go and marry himself.

Chapter IV

PEOPLE are often removed from their proper social spheres in this world and placed in others which they think lower and generally less worthy of them. Their distant and haughty behaviour under these circumstances is rather, I am afraid, like my own conduct at present, down in the world as I am and reduced to the society of a garden. I, too, have been looking about me with contemptuous indifference, returning no visits, though quantities of things have been coming up to see me, and perpetually referring to the superior circles I moved in when I knew better days and went out to dinner. You may notice, however, that such persons generally end by condescending to the simpler folk they come to live among; it is dull work subsisting upon the most glorious reminiscences and much wiser to become the

shining ornament of the more limited sphere to which one may be transferred. That is the course I am considering, for whom cards of invitation are dead letters, and to whom the gay world up here will soon refer I have no doubt, as the late Mrs. Tiglath-Pileser who chose so singularly to bestow her remains in a garden, though I am really alive and flourishing there. I can never be the shining ornament of my garden because nature intended otherwise and there is too much competition, but I may be able to exert an improving influence. It is not impossible, either, that I may find the horticultural class about me more interesting than I find myself. I have been accustomed to speak with quite the ordinary contempt of persons who have "no resources within themselves" — in future I shall have more sympathy and less ridicule for such. I should rather like to know what one is expected to possess in the way of "resources" tucked away in that vague interior which we are asked to believe regularly pigeon-holed and alphabetically classified. We do believe

it — by an effort of the imagination — but only try, on a fine day out-of-doors, to rummage there. Your boasted brain is a perfect rag-bag, a waste-paper basket, a bran pie from which you draw at hazard an article value a penny-ha'penny. This is disappointing and humiliating when both you and your family believe that you have only to think in order to be quite indifferent to the world and vastly entertained. "Resources" somehow suggests the things one has read, and I know I depended largely upon certain poets, not one of whom will come near me unless I go personally and bring him from the bookshelves in his covers. Pope for one — why Pope I cannot say, unless because he would blink and cough and be fundamentally miserable in a garden — great breadths of Pope I thought would visit me in quotation. Not a breadth. Immortals of earlier and later periods are equally shy; I catch at their fluttering garments and they are off, leaving a rag in my hand. Only that agreeable conceit of Marvell's comes and stays,

"Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade,"

and I am ashamed to look it in the face — I have positively worked it to death.

Apply within for lofty sentiments or profound conclusions, the result is the same: these things fly the ardent seeker and only appear when you are not looking for them. Instead you find shreds of likes and dislikes, the ghost of an opinion you held last week, a desire to know what time it is. My regrettable experience is that you can explore the recesses of your soul out-of-doors in much less than a week if you put your mind to it, with surprise and indignation that you should find so little there.

"You beat your pate and fancy wit will come;
Knock as you please, there's nobody at home."

Dear me, there's Mr. Pope, and very much, as usual, to the point! No, resources are things you can lay your hands upon, and I have come to believe that they are all in the house.

Everything is up and showing, the garden

is green with promise, but very few things are quite ready for my kind advances; very few things are out. What a pretty idea, by the way, in that common little word as the flowers use it! Out of the damp earth and the green sheath, out into the sun with the others, out to meet the bees and to snub the beetles, — oh, *out!* When young girls emerge into the world they too are "out" — the word was borrowed, of course, from the garden; its propriety is plain. Thisbe, I remember, is out this season; but I do not see anything in the borders exactly like Thisbe. Doubtless later on her prototype will come, in June I think, unfolding a pink petal-coat. There is no hurry; it is yet only the second week in April and these grey mountains are still delicate and dim under the ideal touch of the wild apricot and plum. The borders may be empty, but there is sweet vision to be had by looking up, and just a hint of nature's possible purposes with a khud. It now occurs to me that there ought to be clouds and clouds of this pink and white blossoming all about the house,

behind as well as before, on each of our several declivities, — there ought to be and there is not. I remember now why there is not. One crisp morning last autumn Tiglath-Pileser, who is a practical person, was struck by the fact, though it is not a new one, that wild fruit trees may be made to cultivate fruit by the process of grafting, and announced his intention to graft largely. "Think," said he, "of the satisfaction of being able to write home to England that you are gathering from your own trees quantities of the greengages which they pay tenpence a pound for and place carefully in tarts!"

The proceeding had not my approval. It seemed to me that it would be a good deal of trouble and care and thought and anxiety to grow greengages on a khud, and we had none of these things to spare. Neither would there be any satisfaction in gathering quantities of them when one could buy a convenient number in the bazaar. We could not eat them all, and it was not our walk in life to sell such things; we might certainly

expect to be cheated. We should be reduced to making indiscriminate presents of them and receiving grateful notes from people we probably could n't bear. Or possibly I, like the enterprising heroine of improving modern fiction, would feel compelled to start a jam factory, and did I strike him, Tiglath-Pileser, as a person to bring a jam factory to a successful issue? At the moment, I remember, an accumulation of greengages seemed the one thing I precisely could n't and would n't tolerate, but I did n't say very much, hardly more than I have mentioned, as the supreme argument failed to occur to me at the time. The supreme argument, which only visits you after watching the pink and white petals drop among the deodars for hours together, is, of course, that if you can afford to grow fruit to look at it is utilitarian folly to turn it into fruit to eat. So I have no doubt he had his way. . . . I have been to see; it is the case. Where there should be masses of delicate bloom there are stumps, bare attenuated stumps, tied up in poultices with fingers sticking out of them, which I

suppose are the precious grafts. Well, the devil enters into each of us in his own guise; I shall warn Tiglath-Pileser particularly to beware of him in the form of a market gardener.

I cannot conscientiously pass over the rhododendrons, which are all aloft and ablaze just now. It would be unkind and ungrateful when they have come of their own accord to grow on my khud and make it in places really magnificent, though they arouse in me no sentiment at all and I had just as soon they went somewhere else. At home the rhododendron is a bush on a lawn; here it grows into a forest tree, and when you come upon it far out in the wilds with the sun shining through its red clusters against the vivid blue it stands like candelabra lighted to the glory of the Lord. I will consent to admire it in that office, but for common human garden uses I find it a little over-superb and very disconcerting to the apricots and plums. Also Thisbe will put it about in bowls, and will not see that its very fitness for sanctuary purposes makes it worse than

useless on the end of a piano. To begin with, its name is against it. Philologically speaking you might as well put a hippopotamus in a vase as a rhododendron. Apart from that it sulks in the house and huddles into bunches of red cotton. It misses the sun in its veins, I suppose, and its spiky cup of leaves, and its proper place in the world at the end of a branch. The peony, which it is a little like, is much better behaved in a drawing-room, but then it has a leg to stand on; we all want that. Besides, a peony is a peony, which reminds me that I have never seen one in Simla. It seems to have been left at home by design in the general emigration of English flowers, like an unattractive old maid whom it was not worth while to bring. But taste and fashion change, and I see a spot where a large bunch of peonies would be both comfortable and delectable. It is not, after all, only slim young things that are to be desired in society or in a garden. Firm, fine high-coloured madames with ample skirts and ripe experience are often much more worth cultivating.

Ah! they hold me, even in imagination, the dear old peonies! Always they were the first, in a certain garden of early colonial fashion that I used to know in Canada, after the long hard winter was past, to push their red-green beginnings up into the shabby welcome of the month of March. We used to look for them under the wet black fallen leaves before a sign had come upon the apple-trees, before anything else stirred or spoke at all; and how tender is one's grown-up affection for a thing which bound itself together like that with one's childish delight in the first happy vibration of the spring! Here, after all these many springs and half across the world, here on my remote and lofty shelf where no one lives but Aryans and officials, I want them to come up again that way, and if they have not forgotten the joy of it perhaps I too shall remember. Atma having no objection, I will send to England for some peonies.

Everything is green except the forget-me-nots, they are very blue indeed in thick borders along both sides of the drive; sweet

they look, like narrow streams reflecting the sky in the middle of the garden. Do not gather the forget-me-not, it is a foolish inert little nonentity in the hand, it has not even character enough for a button-hole, but in the bosom of its family it is delightful. Atma is very pleased with these borders; it is the first time he has had them so long and so gay. "How excellent this season," says he in his own tongue, "are the giftie-noughts of we people." I told you he was a man of parts; it is not easy to be a poet in another language.

Also, I perceive, there are periwinkles on the khud.

Chapter V

It was an event this morning when Thalia came whisking along the Mall in her rickshaw and turned in here. The Mall, I should mention, is the only road in Simla that has a name. It is a deplorably inappropriate name, it makes you think of sedan-chairs and elderly beaux and other things that have never appeared upon the Himlayas, and it was doubtless given in derision, but it [illegible] fast like many another poor old [illegible] 'ast people take it seriously and forget that it ever pretended to be humorous. I don't even know whether it is more fashionable to live upon the Mall than elsewhere, or whether one can claim to live upon it when it runs past one's attic windows like an elevated railway; but we have often remarked to one another that if we cannot be said to live upon the Mall we cannot be said to live anywhere and

taken what comfort may be had out of that. Our peculiar situation has at all events the advantage that I can always see Thalia coming, which adds the pleasure of anticipation to her most unexpected visit. Like most of us, Thalia arrives with the season, but it should be added that she brings the season with her. We amuse ourselves a good deal, for a serious community, with a toy theatre, in which we present Mr. Jones and Mr. Pinero so intelligently that I often wonder why neither of these playwrights has yet come out to ascertain what he is really capable of. Thalia is our leading comedienne; you would have guessed that by her name. She is never too soon anywhere, but I had begun to wonder when she was coming up. "Up," of course, means up from the plains, —up from the Pit, as its present temperature quite permits me to explain. April is the last month in which you can leave the Pit without being actually scorched.

"What *are* you doing here?" she exclaimed, half-way down the drive. She expected, I suppose, to find me in the house

trying to decide upon the shade of this year's cheese-cloth curtains. By the way, I have decided — that the old ones will do. Thisbe does n't mind, and I 've got the clouds.

"Oh, I 'm just here," I said with nonchalance. There is nothing like nonchalance to prove superiority to circumstances. "How are you?"

"Thank you," said Thalia. "Well, come along in. I 've got quantities of things to talk about."

"It is very good of you," I returned, "to press my hospitality upon me, but I don't go in. I stay out. If Tiglath-Pileser saw me entering the house at this hour," I continued with the vulgarity which we permit ourselves to the indulgent ear of a friend, "it would be as much as my place is worth. But you see I have a chair ready for emergencies — pray sit down. You are the first emergency that has arisen, I mean that has dropped in, this year."

When I had fully explained, as I was at once of course compelled to do, with a wealth of detail and much abuse of Tiglath-

Pileser, I was not gratified with the effect upon Thalia. "You have simply been spending your time out-of-doors," said she, "a very ordinary thing to do."

"Try it," said I.

"And are you better?"

"I think," I replied, "that I have possibly gained a little weight. But I might as well admit it cheerfully, they won't take my word against any pair of scales."

"That was an excellent prescription I sent you in October," Thalia continued reproachfully. "You have n't given it up?"

"It has given me up," I responded promptly, "after the first three weeks it declined to have anything whatever to say to me. And besides, it had to be taken in decreasing doses. Now if a thing is really calculated to do you good it should be taken in *in*creasing doses. That is why I begin to have some little confidence in this out-of-doors business. Every day I feel equal to a little more of it."

"Well," said Thalia, "Mrs. Lyric told me that it had made another woman of her.

And Colonel Lyric commands the 10th Pink Hussars."

Thalia knows it annoys me to be told about a woman, with any sort of significance, what position her husband occupies in the world, and that is the reason she does it. I do not say that it has no weight as a contributory fact in a general description, but I do say that an improper amount of importance is usually attached to it. You ask what kind of a person Mrs. Thom is, and you are told, "Oh, Mr. Thom is Chief Secretary in the Department of Thuggi and Dacoity," being expected without further ado to dispose yourself to love her if she will let you. One is always inclined to say "But she may be very nice in spite of that," and one only refrains because one knows how scandal grows in Simla. And there are people in these parts, I assure you, who would run to take a prescription because it had made another woman of the wife of the colonel commanding the 10th Pink Hussars, no matter what kind of a woman she had been before; but I was not going

to gratify Thalia by letting her see that I knew it.

"At all events," I said calmly, "it had to be taken in decreasing doses and naturally it came to an end. Are you settled in?"

"I have a roof to cover me," said Thalia sententiously, "and for that," she added looking round, "I didn't know how thankful I was. But I am undergoing repairs. They are putting mud into the cracks of my dwelling, paperhangers are impending, and this morning arrived three whitewashers. I wanted to be done with it at once, so I sent for three. I told them I was in a hurry. In one breath, they said, it should be done, and sat down in the verandah *to make their brushes.* It's a fact. Of split bamboo. You can *not* hustle the East But I found I had to come away."

"How foolish it all seems!" I sighed with an eye upon the farther hills. "Should n't you like to see my pansies?"

"Yes," she replied resignedly, "I suppose I must see your pansies," and where I led she followed me, still babbling of paperhangers.

It is no exaggeration to say that during the months of April, May, and June, there are more pansies than people in this town. (Upon second thoughts why should it be an exaggeration, since in every garden inhabited by two or three persons there are hundreds of pansies.) They seem to like the official atmosphere, doubtless in being so high and dry it suits them; at all events they adapt themselves to it with less fuss than almost any other flower. And certainly they could teach individuality to most of our worthy bureaucrats, who have a way of coming up, they, exactly like each other. Pansies from the same parent root naturally look alike, but if you really scan their features there is not the least resemblance between families. I have been living principally in their fellowship for several days and I quite feel that my knowledge of human nature is extended. There never was such variety of temperament in any community; to describe it would be to write a list of all the adjectives yet invented to bear upon character, a tedious task. It is positively a relief after

the slight monotony of a society in which everybody is paid by the Queen, to meet persons like pansies, who are n't paid by anybody, and who express themselves, in consequence, with the utmost facility and freedom. (Thalia, who is the wife of the Head of a Department, here interrupted me to ask what I could possibly mean.) Oh there is no charm like spontaneity, in idea, behaviour, or looks. The Dodos of London society triumph by it, while self-conscious people of vast intellectual resources are considered frumps.

I imparted all this to Thalia, and she agreed with me.

You see these things in a pansy, and a great deal more — station in life, religious convictions almost — but try to focus your impression, try to analyze the blooming countenance that looks up into yours, and the result is fugitive and annoying. Not a feature will bear inspection; instantly they vanish, magically, as if ashamed of the likeness you look for, and leave you contemplating just a flower, with petals. You have

noticed that in a pansy. It is better, if you wish to enjoy yourself among them, to take them with a light and passing regard, and privately add them to the agreeable things of life that will not bear looking into.

I here asked Thalia if she thought they did better from seeds or from roots, and she said she did n't know.

One often hears the German language complimented on its pretty name for pansies, *Stiefmütterchen*, but it is very indiscriminating. They are by no means all little stepmothers; some of them wear beards and I wish they would n't, for a beard is a loathly thing in nature or on men. Also the personation that goes on among them is really reprehensible; one can find pansy photographs of any number of people. One irascible and impossible old retired colonel in England is always appearing, to my great satisfaction and delight. The original would be so vastly annoyed to know how often he comes out to see me here, and how amiable and interesting I find him, for we are not good friends, and I am

sure he would not dream of calling in the flesh. It is an old story among us, but I was surprised to find Atma, too, impressed with this likeness to the human family. I asked him the other day why some pansies were so big and others so little. He considered for a moment and then he said with the smiling benevolence which we extend to the intelligence of the young, "Like people they come—some are born to be large and some to be small. As Sropo and Masuddi." Atma is really the interpreter of this garden.

Thalia again interrupted me to ask why it was not possible this season, when purple was so popular, to find in the shops anything as royal as the colour a certain pansy was wearing. I said the reason was probably lost in science, but she immediately supplied it herself, as I have noticed my sex is prone to do in searching for general explanations. "Of course," she said, "one must remember that they grow their own clothes. If we could only do that! The repose of being quite certain that nobody else had your pattern!"

"They would take too long," I objected. "This poor thing has spent three-quarters of her life making her frock, and now she can only wear it for about three days."

But Thalia seemed pleased with the idea. "Think how original I could make my gowns in *Lady Thermidore*," she said pensively.

"And you would perish with your design!" I exclaimed.

"No," she cried luminously, "I should reappear in another character!"

I have often noticed how radical is the effect of play-acting upon the human mind. Your play-actress throws herself naturally into every character she meets. I could see that it was giving Thalia hardly any trouble to transform herself into a pansy.

We went back to the chairs and sat down, but not for long. Consulting her watch, my friend announced that she must be off, she was going to lunch at Delia's. "At Delia's!" I remarked. "How people are swallowed up in their houses, to be sure!

You would be more polite to say 'at Delia.' It 's bad habit, this living in houses."

"I think," she responded, "that you are losing your social graces. I had quantities of things to tell you, and I am taking them away untold. The garden is too vague a place to receive in. However, never mind, I will try to come again. Your flowers are charming, but it has not been what I call a satisfactory visit. I hope I have n't bored you."

"How can you say so!" I cried; "I have enjoyed it immensely," and I tucked her affectionately into her rickshaw and sped her on her way. When she had well started I remembered something, and ran after her.

"Well?" she demanded, all interest and curiosity.

"It was only to ask you," I said breathlessly, "if you had noticed what a large number of pansies look like Mr. Asquith?"

Chapter VI

IT is a dull and serious day. As my family declare that I have become a mere barometer of my former self, this will perhaps be, but I am not certain, a dull and serious chapter. There are no clouds, there is only a prevailing opaqueness, which shuts down just beyond the nearest ranges, letting through an unpleasant general light that makes the place look like a bad, hard, lumpish study in oils. The stocks, which have come out very elegantly since last week, have a disappointed air and the pansies are positively lugubrious. Only the tall field-daisies and the snapdragons seem not to mind. They plainly preach and as plainly practise the philosophy of flowers taking what they can get in the hope of better things. Like most philosophers in a small way, however, they are not over-distressed with sensibility on their own

part, and I cannot see why they should take it upon themselves to cheer up any of the rest of us.

I have asked Sropo whether it is going to rain. "Mistress," he replied, "how should I know?" "Worthy one," said I, "you have lived in these parts for twenty years. What manner of owl are you that to you it does not appear whether or not it will rain?" "Mistress," quoth he, with his throaty chuckle, "the rajah-folk themselves do not know this thing."

I do not think, myself, that we shall have anything so pleasant as rain. The day is too dispirited for weeping; it will perform its appointed task and go to bed. I have not in months encountered a circumstance, an associate or a prescription so lowering as the present morning. Coming out as usual, quite prepared to be agreeable, it has given me the cold shoulder and the sulky nod. For two pins I would go back into the house and take every flower I could gather with me.

Cometh the postman, advancing down the

drive. Always an interest attaches to the postman; he is like to-morrow, you never know what he may bring, but he loses half his charm and all his dignity when deprived of his rat-tat-tat. Government makes up for it to some extent by dressing him in a red flannel coat with a leather belt and bare legs, but he can never acquire his proper and legitimate warning for the simple reason that the houses of this country have neither knockers nor bells. How sharply different are the ways in which people account for themselves in this world! It is one of the poignancies of life. This Punjabi postman earns his living by putting one foot before another — it comes to that — in the diverse interests of the community, and you never saw anybody look more profoundly bored with other people's affairs. I earn mine — or would if it were not for Tiglath-Pileser — by looking carefully in the back of my head for foolish things to write about a garden. It is a method so much pleasanter that my compassion for the postman has a twinge of scruple in it for my lighter lot. That I had

nothing in the world to do with the arrangement does not somehow make me quite happy about it — the fact is that to be logical is not always to be happy. I can only hope that if the postman and I meet again in the progress of eternity I shall find him composing poems.

He has brought nothing to speak of, only the daily newspaper published at Lahore. That in itself is sufficiently curious, to live in a place where the morning paper is published at Lahore. Still stranger, to the western mind, may be the thought — of a journal produced in Allahabad. Allahabad, as a centre of journalistic enterprise, has the glamour of comic opera. Yet Allahabad has its newspaper, and they print it very nicely too. However, it would be ridiculous to write an essay upon Indian journalism merely because a Punjabi postman has brought in a newspaper.

That a day like this should sound another minor note is almost a thing to cry out against, yet it is on such days that they rise and swell in a perfect diapason of misery.

When the sun withdraws itself from the human consciousness things come up, I suppose, from underneath. In the gayety of yesterday perhaps I should not have seen the coolie with the charcoal; he would have passed naturally among the leaf-shadows, a thing to be taken for granted. To-day he hurts. His bag of charcoal is deplorably heavy; he bends forward under it so far that he has to lift his head to see beyond him, and every muscle strains and glistens to carry it. His gait under his load is slow and uncertain and tentative, and I know it has brought him to the wrong house; we are supplied for months with charcoal.

He has stopped to ask, and I find that he has come quite a mile out of his way to this mistake. With patience and submission when I explained, he shifted his load and turned from me toward the deferred relief, the further limit. The human beast of burden is surely the summing up of pathos —free and enviable are all others compared with him. So heavy a toil fills one with righteous anger against the inventor, so

primitive a task humiliates one for the race. Niggardly, niggardly is the heritage of Adam's sons. I must see that man straighten his back. . . . There is no harm done ; you cannot have too much charcoal.

One questions, on such a day, whether it is quite worth while, this attempt by the assistance of nature to live a little longer. I myself am almost convinced that persons afflicted with the gift of sympathy would be wise to perish easily and soon, and should be willing to do so, instead of throwing themselves in the lap of the mother of us all beseeching a few more years and promising to be very, very good and try to deserve them. Why protract, at the expense of upsetting all your habits and customs, an acute sense of undeserved superiority to coolies and postmen; why by taking infinite pains and indefinite air prolong existence based on such a distressing perception, when by going on with almost any good prescription you are pretty certain reasonably soon to take your comfortable place in the only democracy which, so far as we know, is a practical

working success? For there is neither class nor competition nor capital, nor any kind of advantage in the grave whither thou goest, but one indisputable dead level of condition and experience, with peace and freedom from the curse of evolution; not even the fittest survive.

Comfortable persons like, oh several I could mention, who have no way of walking with another postman's legs or bending with another coolie's back and who cannot understand why this should be called a distressful world which provides them regularly with tea and muffins, should go on naturally, to the end. They have their indifferent prototypes among the vegetables; though I have noticed that most flowers look with the eye of compassion upon life. They follow the simple lines upon which they were created, by which to live and not to observe is the chief end of man; there are a great many of them, thousands, in their protective skins all over the world; and they are only interesting of course to each other. Nevertheless no one should speak slight-

ingly of them, for we all number them among our friends and relations, and constantly go and stay with them. Besides, I did not set out to be disagreeable at anybody's expense. It was only borne in upon me that for us, the unhappy minority who have two sets of nerves, one for our own use and one at the disposal of every human failure by the wayside, the world is not likely to become a pleasanter place the longer one stays in it. If continual dropping will wear away a stone, continual rubbing will wear away a skin, and happy is he or she, after sixty or seventy years' contact with the misery of life, who arrives at the grave with a whole one.

I do not deny that there are poultices. One of them is a thing Tiglath-Pileser sometimes says — that it is stupid to talk about the aggregate of human woe, since all the pain as well as all the pleasure of the world is summed up in the individual and limited by him. A battle is really no more than the killing of a soldier, a famine is comprised in a death by starvation. The

unit of experience refuses to merge in the mass; you cannot multiply beyond one. I do not think much of this emollient, but such as it is I will apply it if another coolie comes in with charcoal.

Seriously speaking, when your time comes — I hope this makes nobody uncomfortable, but I never can understand why one should shirk the subject instead of regarding it with the interest and curiosity it naturally inspires — when your time goes, rather, and leaves you confronted with that vast eternity so full of unimaginably agreeable possibilities, which of all the parts and members that make up you, shall you be most sorry to relinquish? I do not refer to obscure organs such as the heart and lungs, which you never notice except when they are giving trouble, but the willing agents by which you keep in touch with the world. I am very fond of them all, I am so accustomed to their ways and they know so exactly what I like; I could not dismiss any of them without regret, but I find degrees in the distressful anticipation. One's eyes, for

instance, have given one more and keener pleasure certainly, than any other organ; but I could close my eyes. One's ears have registered all the voices one loves, and the sound of rain and the wind among the pines, but there is such a din in this world besides that very gladly I could close my ears. One's feet have been most willing servitors, but one sees so little of them — would you recognize a photograph of your own foot? For me it is the most grievous thing to think that one will be obliged to abandon one's hands. One's hands are more than servants, they are friends. One holds them in respect and admiration and personal affection, and in the end is not what we write upon them the very summing-up of ourselves? And from the first spoon they carry to our infant lips to the adult irritation they work off by tapping on the table how much they have done for one! Above all things I shall miss my hands if I have to do without them, and I shall be profoundly resentful, though I may not show it, when somebody else takes the liberty of folding them for me.

Thisbe, coming out to say that she has neuralgia, and will I ever come in to tea, demands to know what I have written there. I shall not tell Thisbe; it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples. Moreover, she would report it to Tiglath-Pileser, and they would take measures; I should be lucky to get off with an iron tonic.

"Nothing about you, Thisbe."

But in order to ascertain what I really have said about her, — she has a hatred of publicity and I have to be very careful, — she goes privily when I am immersed in tea, and possesses herself of the whole.

"But you are not going to die," she exclaimed with dismay and disapproval. "We have made quite other arrangements. You can't possibly die, now."

"Not immediately, in so far as I am aware," I respond. "But there is no harm in looking forward to it a little, — on a day like this."

Chapter VII

THERE are many methods of gardening. I have known people who were not content with anything but actually digging and weeding, grubbing up the curly wet worms and the tough roots, and bending their own backs over bulbs and seedlings. That is the thorough method, and though it is a little like sweeping and scrubbing out yourself the rooms your guests are to occupy, — and I suppose that would be a pleasure to some people, — it is the method that commands the most respect. Compared with it I feel that I cannot ask respect for mine; I must be content with admiration. My gardening is done entirely with scissors, scissors and discretion, both easy to use. With scissors and discretion I walk about my garden, snipping off the flowers that are over. Masuddi comes behind, holding my

umbrella, Sropo with a basket picks up the devoted heads. I thus ignore causes and deal directly with results, much the simplest and quickest way when life is complicated by its manifold presentations and the cares of a family. And the results are wonderful, — I can heartily recommend this method of gardening to any one who wants to compass the most charming effect with the least exertion. A plant is only a big bouquet, and what bouquet does not instantly redouble its beauty when you take away the one or two flowers that have withered in it? A faded flower is too sad a comment upon life to be allowed to remain even on its parent stem, besides being detrimental and untidy like a torn petticoat. There should be nothing but joy in the garden, joy and freshness and coquetry, and the subtlest, loveliest suggestion of art; anon by the diligent application of scissors and discretion I leave a flood of these things behind me every day. No doubt it is regrettable that the withered rags in Sropo's basket represent the joy and coquetry of yesterday; this is the lesson of

life, however, and one cannot take account of everything. Also you lay yourself open to the charge of being a mere lady's-maid to your garden; but worse things than that are said about nearly everybody.

Among the pansies I confess I feel rather an executioner with my scissors, though there a rigorous policy most rewards me. Nothing is so slatternly as a pansy bed where some of the family are just coming out into the world, and others are beginning to weary of it and others are going shamelessly to seed. My pansies must all be properly coiffured and fit to appear in society; when they begin to pull shawls over their heads and take despondent views I remove them. Moreover, under this unremitting discipline, they will go on and on, I shall have four months of pansies; it is in every way the right thing to do.

And yet it is a remorseless business, turning up the little faces to see if they have lived long enough to be ready for the guillotine. They look straight *at* you, and some of them shrink and some beseech, and some

are mutely resigned. I am no stern Atropos, I am weak before the fate I bring and often let it go; and if by mistake I snip off a bud I hurry on and try to forget it. Has the divinity who lays us low also, I wonder, his moments of compunction — does he ever hold his hand and say "One more day"? Or does he snip here and there at random "just choosing so"? Oh Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos, I do not like your rôle, I am glad I am not an omnipotent Whim; I hope my garden thinks better of me than that. The prevailing expression among pansies, by the way, is that of apprehension; I hope this is a botanical fact and not confined to my pansies.

Nothing is more annoying in a small way in this world than to see your tastes reflected in those whom you consider inferior to yourself. You would rather not share anything with such persons, even a preference. I have to submit to this vexation. There are others hereabouts, whom I have got into the habit of looking down upon, who have exactly my idea of gardening. I hasten to say

that they are not people in the ordinary sense of the term. Bold, indeed, would be the non-official worm, in this bureaucratic stronghold, who should point to any gazetted creature about him and say "That is a lesser thing than I." Society would smile and decline to be deceived. For this is an ordered Olympus, the gods go in to dinner by Regulation, their rank and pay is published in Kalends which anybody may buy, and the senior among them are diligently worshipped by the junior as "brass hats." No, it would certainly not be for the Tiglath-Pilesers who never sent back a parcel to the draper's tied up in red tape in their lives, not having a yard of it in the house for any purpose, to give themselves airs over persons who use it every day. But even a non-official may look down upon a monkey. My offensive imitators are monkeys.

I would not object if they followed my example in their own jungle garden, but they come and do it in mine. Be sure I never catch them at it. When I am operating there myself they often leap crashing into

the rhododendrons on the khud and sit among the branches watching me, whole troops of them, but at a stone or a compliment they are off, bounding with childish unintelligible curses down the khud. It is in the early dawn before any one is awake or about, that they come with freedom and familiarity to walk where I walk and do as I do. I can perfectly fancy them mincing along in impertinent caricature — I do not mince — holding up their tails with one hand and with the other catching and clawing haphazard at the flowers as they imagine I do. Two hours later, when I come out to mourn and storm over the withering fragments on the drive not a monkey vexes the horizon. And they do what some people think worse than this. They come and tear Tiglath-Pileser's carefully bound grafts from their adopted stems, and the young shoots from his little new apple-trees which have travelled all the way from England to live here with us and share our limitations and our shelf. These were only planted in February, and one of them, a beginner not three feet

high, had six of its very own apples on it yesterday. It is not a thing that happens often, apples as soon as that, and six; and Simla is a place where there is so little going on that we were more excited about them, perhaps, than you would be at home. They were small apples but they had to grow, and they were growing yesterday. This morning while we still dreamed of our apples, a grey langur with a black face ate the whole crop at a sitting. So now we can neither bake them nor boil them nor measure them for publication. They have disappeared in a grey langur with a black face, and though I heartily hope they will inconvenience him I have very little expectation of it; the punitive laws of nature matter little to monkeys.

The jungle is full of wild fruit trees newly burgeoned, but the monkeys prefer the cultivated varieties, they have found out the improved flavour even in the young leaves. They find out everything, not merely for the purposes of honest burglary, but for the cynical satisfaction of tearing it to pieces.

Thus, for one graft that a monkey devours, he pulls three out of their bandages and casts them on the ground, where they are of no further use to either men or monkeys. What you plant with infinite pains they pull up by the roots. "These people have done something; let us undo it," is the one thought they ever think, — which shows, I suppose, that if there are politics among them they govern strictly on party lines. It makes one very ill-disposed toward them. A monkey has entered the pantry and bolted with a jam-pot even while my back was turned giving out the sugar to make more jam. A monkey has come in at the verandah door and abstracted *all* the bread and butter for afternoon tea, while his accomplice sat upon the paling to gibber "Cave!" This was legitimate larceny, and we put up with it. Thisbe said the poor monkey looked hungry, and she would be content with Madeira cake, adding, out of the depths of her experience, that it was a pity the monkey that took the jam had n't taken the bread and butter too, — they went so well together. We can be

indulgent to an entirely empty monkey; we have enough in common with him to understand his behaviour, and his villainous pirate's descent upon us is always good comedy. But when he picks the slates off the roof of your dwelling, when he privily enters your husband's dressing-room and abstracts the razor and strop—Tiglath-Pileser, who would not lend his to a seraph!—what kind of patience is there which would be equal to the demand? Monkeys do not throw stones and break windows; one wishes they would, since that would bring them within the cognizance of the police and it might then be possible to deal with them. A monkey would hate solitary confinement above all things. Often in a troupe bounding from tree to tree overhead across the Mall there will be one with a collar and a bit of rope or chain hanging to it, escaped from capture and free again to range with his fellows the limitless lunatic asylum the good God has endowed for him in the jungle. Once he became amenable to that sort of punishment he would forsake for ever, I am sure, the haunts

of men; but he is not intelligent enough, or perhaps he is too intelligent.

There are so many of them. A monkey census is obviously impossible, but I believe if it could be taken it would show that every resident official had at least one simian counterpart, — a statement which I hope will not give offence on either side. An old fakir on the top of Jakko keeps a kind of retreat for monkeys, a monastery with the most elastic rules, where indeed the domestic relations are rather encouraged than forbidden. He is their ghostly father, though responsibility for their morals seems to sit upon him lightly; he will call them out of the jungle for you in hundreds to be fed. Then you give him four annas and come away. A pious Hindoo, with sins to expiate, would doubtless give more, and the fakir would profess to spend it in grain for the monkeys. Here, by the way, we have an explanation of the incorrigibility of monkeys which has not hitherto occurred to ethnographers: they consume all the sins of the pious Hindoos. So they thrive and multiply and gambol all

over this town of Simla, its house-tops and shop-fronts, its gardens and its public places, with none to make them afraid. There are two small brown ones sitting on the paling looking at me at this moment, knowing perfectly well that I will never interrupt the flow of my ideas to get up and chase them away.

Of course we try to make Atma responsible, and he declares that he persecutes them without ceasing, but we know better. He claps his hands at them and shouts, "Go, brother!" and that is all he does. And brother goes, to the next convenient branch. We have given Atma catapults and he tells us that he uses them every morning before our honours are awake, but we are certain that he hangs them on a nail. And indeed I do not think monkeys would be very shy of a house defended by mere catapults. Atma, however, has taken this business of Tiglath-Pileser's fruit-trees seriously. He had carefully protected every tree and graft with thorns, but the monkeys slid their hands in underneath, and reached up, and tore

down the young shoots with great strips of the tender bark as well. He was angry at last, was Atma, and he asked for a gun.

"You would kill a monkey?" we exclaimed, "you would break your one commandment?" and Atma cast down his eyes.

"They are *budmash*," said he (a wicked and perverse generation), "and they eat the work of we people. Why should they not be killed?"

"No," said the sahib, "you are a good churchman" — or words to that effect — "I know that you will not kill a monkey." And we both looked at him piercingly.

"Nevertheless," said Atma, cheerfully and shamelessly recanting, "it would be well that a gun should be. A gun is a noise-making thing. These *bundar*-people have no shame, but it will appear to them that here a gun is, and they will not come. Also," he added ferociously, "for that long-tail apple-eating wallah, I will put a stone in the gun."

He had definite proposals to make about the gun; it had plainly been weighed

and considered, not being a matter to be lightly undertaken. It would not be wise for the sahib to buy it in Simla, where the price would be great and the article probably inferior. By our honours' favour he, Atma, would go to his own village, where apparently they knew a thing or two about guns, and where, since they were all poor men, guns were also cheap, and there select one for our approbation. If our honours' liking was not, he added, the gun could be sent back, but our honours' liking would be.

"Where is your village, worthy one?" asked Tiglath-Pileser.

Atma waved his arm across the purple masses on the western horizon. "I will come to it in three days," he said, and Tiglath-Pileser consented.

"He wants leave," said the master. "The gun is only a pretext, but it's as good as a dead grandmother any day. Let him go."

But punctually on the evening of the tenth day Atma returned from his village shouldering a gun. Pride was in his port and pleasure in his countenance. It was an

ancient muzzle-loader, respectable, useful, strong, in no way to be compared to a dead grandmother. The sahib gave it the honourable attention which all sahibs have for weapons of character, while Atma stood by and spoke of it as it had been indeed a relative.

"Behold it is a beautiful gun, and it shall bring fear. Now I am but a gardener and know nothing; but my father is a man with understanding of all things, and though there were five guns to be bought in the village, he forbade the other four. My father showed me how the ribs of this were thick and its stomach was clean — is it so, sahib? — and how it would speak well and loudly. But the price is also great. Though my father spoke for three hours, till he was in anger, the price is also great."

"How much?" asked Tiglath-Pileser.

"It could not be lessened," said Atma anxiously, "thirteen rupees."

About seventeen and sixpence!

The gun speaks well and loudly, and the monkeys are much entertained by it. They

make off at a report with a great jabber of concern, but they have already discovered that it is a mere expression of opinion, with nothing in it to hurt, and they come back when their nerves are soothed to hear it again. They know that you cannot shoot your own relations; they rest with confidence upon the prehistoric tie, and oh, they presume upon it! Too far, perhaps. There is a broad-faced Thibetan in the bazaar, behind whose cheerful grin I am sure no conscience resides at all. Every year he sells me pheasants and partridges which I know he poaches from the Kingdom of Patiala — I am sure he would pot a fellow-poacher for a suitable consideration. When I suggest this, however, Tiglath-Pileser asks me if I like the idea of a hired assassin. I do not like the idea. I would rather do it myself, although even justifiable homicide has never been a favourite amusement of mine.

Shoot a monkey? If it is a mother-monkey, and the baby that clings between her shoulders is a little one, you cannot even throw a stone at her.

I wonder if it is good for us to live among them like this. I wonder whether the constant spectacle of his original, glorious freedom may not produce a tendency to revert to his original habits even in a brass hat. It is a futile speculation, but there is a thrill in it. One would know him of course, by the hat, and the bit of red tape hanging to his collar. . . .

What would you do about it — about this plague, if it plagued you? And does it not mark, like a picture in a book of travels, the distance that lies between us, that I should thus complain to you, not of sparrows or foxes or rats or rabbits or any of the ordinary pests of civilization, but of being overrun — simply overrun — by monkeys!

Chapter VIII

THIS is going to be a day of roses, a grand opening day. They have been getting ready for weeks; every morning there has been a show of pink promises, half kept, white hints and creamy suggestions, and here and there a sweet full-blown advertisement; but so much has been suddenly done that I think the bushes must have sat up all night to enable the garden definitely to make this morning its chief summer announcement — the roses are out. The shelf holds a great many roses, its widest part indeed, where the house stands, is quite taken up by a large bed of them which was meant to be oval, and only is not because no design in this country can ever be described by even an approximately exact term. That is at the side of the house; the drive runs past it. There is another bed, an attempted oblong,

between the front door and the precipice by way of being devoted to them, and beside that they have made room for themselves in all the borders where there may or may not be accommodation for other people; and they climb, as well, over every window that looks out into the garden.

It is our privilege to entertain largely among roses; I don't believe there is another shelf in Simla that holds so many. And I will hasten to say this for them, that in all my social experience they offer the best example of hospitality being its own reward, which, of course, goes without saying; but it is difficult to sit down for the first time in the year before the glory of the roses, and refrain from offering them a politeness of some sort, even one that might be taken for granted. I will add a compliment which is not perhaps quite so lamentably obvious. There are people — moderns, decadents — who will not subscribe to the paramountcy of the rose. They produce other flowers — hyacinths, violets, daffodils — to which they attach the label of their poor

preference. I will not dispute any taste in theory, but I will say this broad, general thing which is evident and plain: once the roses are in bloom, nothing else in the garden matters. The rose may or may not be queen, but when she appears the other flowers dwindle into pretty little creatures of no great pretension who may come out or not at their convenience. You will admit that if there is a rose in sight you do not look at anything else. As to the daffodils, they came up a month ago, and I cut them and put them in the drawing-room and thought no more about it.

So the garden for me this morning means roses (dear me, yes, those Gloire de Dijons alone command it for yards in every direction), and the excitement of it, the pure keen delicious excitement of it, makes me wonder whether a simple life led in a cane chair under a pencil-cedar is not a better background for the minor sensations than the most elaborate existence indoors. But that is another truism; elaboration is always bad, it prevents one's seeing things. An

existence obscured by curtains and frescoed with invitations from the Princess would never, I am surely convinced, afford me the exquisite joy and wonder, the sense of expanded miracle, that reigns in me at this moment. I must be allowed to say so, though nothing, I know, is so dull as the detailing of another person's sensations. It will be admitted that I do not often gush, that is a claim I make with a good conscience; and if I were forbidden to write emotionally about roses this morning I should simply not write at all, which would be a breach of good manners and a loss of time. If the truth were confessed, I have wasted hours already congratulating them upon their happy advent, I have been much led away among them from my fountain pen; idleness is so perfect with a rose. After putting down that stupidity about our hospitality being its own reward, I fell into unnumbered asterisks, raptures in the manner of M. Pierre Loti, and only refrained from making them because one would not gasp too obviously after the

master. And now that I have pulled my chair into the thickest shade of the pencil-cedar — it is little better after all than a spoke to sit under, wheeling with the sun — and am once more prepared to offer you my best attention, down upon me descends Delia, waving a parasol from afar. I must introduce Delia; she is a vagabond and an interruption, but I shall be extremely glad to see her.

I wonder whether anybody has ever felt the temptation of dealing quite honestly with the thousand eyes that listen to him, and putting in the interruptions as well as the other full-stops that occur in the course of a morning's work in manuscript, saying in brackets exactly where he was compelled to leave off on account of a rose or a Delia. One would then see precisely how far such a one's flight carried him, and how long, after he had been brought to earth, it took his beating pinions to regain the ether. One might share his irritation at being interrupted, or one might wish him interrupted oftener; it it would all depend. At all events it would

give the impression of engaging candour, and would evoke — in me, certainly — the deepest sympathy, especially if the interruption were domestic. "Here I was compelled to give orders for dinner." "At this point a man brought a bill with a cash discount on first presentation — and never again after." "Just then Thisbe wished to know whether or not she should send my love to Aunt Sophia. I said *not*." I could weep with an author who put such things in. But instead, for the sake of dignity and smoothness, most of them try to ignore these calamities, like painters who rub a little oil into the edges of yesterday's work; and go on, stifling their emotions. There is probably a great deal of simple heroism concealed with care in the pages of even a third-class novel.

"Are you writing something clever?" asks Delia. What a demand she makes upon one's reticence! "Finish it quickly and pick me some roses." So I finished it quickly, as you see. "I have passed this way several times lately," she explains, "and

have always resisted the temptation of running in. But this morning something drew me down."

"They have n't been properly out before," I remark. There is no use, after all, in being too obtuse. But I can't go on juggling with the present tense. Delia is gone now. I shall treat her as a historical fact.

"I hope you remember what a lot you used to send me last year," she continued, "and how grateful I always was." I said I remembered. "Yes," she sighed. "You set yourself a very good example," and at that I got up and sacrificed to her, with gladness; because if Delia ever suffers cremation the last whiff of her to float sadly away will be her passion for a rose. There are people who might dissolve in suggestion before I would offer up a single petal, which is deplorable in me, for if you want a thing badly enough to hint for it, you must want it very badly indeed. Nevertheless, I think it a detestable habit, worse than punning; and nothing rouses in me a spirit of fiercer, more implacable opposition than a polite, gentle,

well-considered hint. Delia, of course, does n't hint, she prods, and you accept her elbow with delight, sharing the broad and conscious humour of it.

I am glad Delia dropped in, I want to talk about her; she holds to me so much of the charm of this irresponsible impious little Paradise that we have made for ourselves up here above the clouds and connected by wire with Westminster. A wire is not a very substantial thing, and that, if you leave out Mr. Kipling, is all that attaches us to the rest of the world. If an ill-disposed person, the Mullah Powindah or another, should one day cut it, we might float off anywhere, and be hardly more unrelated to the planet we should lodge upon than we are to our own. The founders of Simla — may they dwell in beatitude forever — saw their golden chance and took it. Far in and far up they climbed to build it, and not being gods, but only men, they thought well to leave the more obvious forms of misery out of their survey plans. They brought with them many desirable

things, not quite enough, but many; poverty and sorrow and age they left at the bottom of the hill. They barred out greed and ruin by forbidding speculation; they warned off the spectre of decrepitude by the "age limit" which sends you after fifty-five to whiten and perish elsewhere. This is an ordinance that many call divine, for want of a better word, but there ought to be a better word. They made it so expensive that the widow in her black takes the first ship to Balham, and so attractive that the widower promptly marries again. But they also arranged with Death that he should seldom show himself upon the Mall, so nobody has rue to wear, even with a difference. From ten to five we compose Blue Books, at least our husbands do; the rest of the time we gallop about on little country-bred ponies, and vigorously dance, even to fifty-four years, eleven months, and thirty days; and with full hearts and empty heads — and this is the consummation of bliss — congratulate ourselves. There are houses where they play games after dinner. I myself before I be-

came the dryadess of a pencil-cedar, have played games after dinner, and felt as innocent and expansive as I did at nine.

Delia draws her breath in all this, and opens a wicked Irish eye upon it — ah, what Delia does n't see! — and is to me the gay flower of it, delicately exhaling an essence of Paris. I approve myself of just a suspicion of essence of Paris. We are none of us beasts of the field. I regret to say that she misquotes. Her gloves fit perfectly, and she carries herself like a lily of the field, but she misquotes. It is the single defect upon what she would be annoyed to hear me call a lovely character. I mention it because it is the only one. If there were others, I should allow them to be taken for granted, and protect myself from the suspicion of exaggerated language. That does not look like an absolutely serious statement, but if I am writing nonsense it is entirely the fault of Delia. She is packed with nonsense like a siphon, and if you sit much out-of-doors you become very absorbent. She had been paying calls, and I was

obliged to restore her with vermouth and a biscuit. She was bored and fatigued, and she buried her nose in her roses and closed her eyes expressively. "The ladies of India," she remarked, "are curiously alike. Is it our mode of thought? Is it because we have the same kind of husbands?"

"Some are much better than others," I interrupted.

"I saw eleven of us," she went on with depression, "one after the other, this morning. I could n't help thinking of articles on a counter marked 'all this size five and elevenpence-ha'penny.'"

"Never mind, Delia," said I, "you are not at all alike."

"Oh, and nobody," she hastened to apologize, "could be less alike than *you*."

"And yet we are quite different," I replied; and Delia, with a glance of reproach and scorn and laughter said, "You jackass!"

Now in anybody else's mouth this term would be almost opprobrious, but from Delia's it drops affectionately. It is an

acknowledgment, a compliment, it helps to lighten the morning. It is not everybody who could call one a jackass with impunity, but it is not everybody who would think of doing it. I should not wish the epithet to become the fashion, but when Delia offers it I roll it under my tongue.

"I am convinced," said I, "that there is nothing in the world so valuable as personality. I mean, of course, to other people. As you justly remark, Delia, we are round pebbles on this coral strand, worn smooth by rubbing against nothing but each other. It is an obscure and little regarded form of the great Imperial sacrifice, but I wish somebody would call attention to it in the *Daily Mail* and wring a tear from the British public. You have still a slight unevenness of surface, my Delia, and that is why I love you. If you had a good sharp corner or two, I should never let you out of my sight."

"And to think," said Delia, finely, "how little, in England, they prize and value their precious angular old maids!"

"Oh, in England," I replied, "I think they are almost too much blessed. There is such a thing as tranquillity and repose. You don't want the personal equation at every meal. In England, especially in the academic parts, you can't see the wood for the trees."

"And in America," observed Delia, "I suppose it must be worse."

"Not at all," I said out of my experience, "in America there is as yet great uniformity of peculiarity," but this was going very far afield on a warm day, and we left the matter there.

"I don't think I like individuality in young men," remarked Delia, thoughtfully, "In young men it seems a liberty, almost an impertinence."

I can imagine the normal attitude of young men toward Delia being quite satisfying, but I let her go on.

"I have just met an A.D.C. riding up the Mall smoking a pipe," she continued. "He took off his hat to me like a bandit." Now Simla's traditions of behaviour are very strict and the choicest of them are

locked up in the *tenue* of an aide-de-camp.

"It was quite a shock," said Delia.

"All things are possible in nature, but some are rare," I told her. "It is doubtless a remote effect of all this Irregular Horse in South Africa. You may live to boast that you have seen an aide-de-camp ride up the Mall at Simla smoking a common clay."

"It wasn't a common clay," she corrected me.

"But it will be when you boast of it," I assured her. "Come and see my home for decayed gentlewomen."

"What *do* you mean?" she cried, and would have buffeted me; but I led her with circumstance to the edge of the shelf, over which appeared lower down on the khud side, another small projection which tried to be a shelf and couldn't, but was still flat enough for purposes. There were sitting, in respectable retirement, all the venerable roses that had outlived delight, the common kinds and those that had grown little worth in the service of the summer.

"They had to come out," I explained, "and I could n't find it in my heart to throw them on the ash-heap."

"With all their modest roots exposed," put in Delia. "Cruel it would have been."

"So I planted them down there, and I see that they 're not altogether neglected. They get an allowance of four buckets of water a day and a weeding once a fortnight," I explained further, "but what I fancy they must feel most is that nobody ever picks them. I can't get down to do that."

"I 'm sure they look most comfortable," Delia assured me. "What do they care about being picked? You lose that vanity very early" — oh, Delia! — "What they really enjoy is to sit in the sun and talk about their gout. But I know what you mean about throwing away a flower" — and Delia's eyes grew more charming with the sentiment behind them. "Somebody gave me a sweet-pea yesterday and the poor little thing faded on me, as we say in Ireland, and of course I ought to have thrown it away,

but I could n't. What do you think I did with it?" She looked half ashamed.

"What?"

"*I put it in my pocket!*" said this dear Delia.

Chapter IX

I AM not getting on at all; it is days since Delia was here and I wrote about her. There is certainly this advantage in the walls of a house, they make a fold for your mind, which must browse inside, picking up what it can. But existence in a garden was not meant to be interfered with by a pen; we have the best reason for believing that Adam never wrote for publication, much less Eve, who of course, when one thinks of it, was absorbed at that time in the first principles of dress-making. I envy her that original seam; sewing is an ideal occupation in a garden. You can be for ever looking up and the hand goes on of itself; everything rhymes with your needle, and your mind seems stimulated by its perfunctory superintendence to spin and weave other things, often lovely and interesting things which it is a pain to have

forgotten by dinner-time. I should very much prefer fine stitching to composition out here if I could choose. One might then look at the sun on the leaves without the itch and necessity to explain just what it is like. Moreover, there is always this worry: you cannot make a whole chapter out of the sun on the leaves, even at different angles, and yet before that happy circumstance what else is there to say? But how little use there is in crying for what one was not meant to have. The fairy godmother who put this unwilling instrument into my hand and denied me a needle will have something to answer for if ever I meet her. Meanwhile I might as well confess that my finest stitching only makes mirth for Thisbe, and "lay a violence," as Stevenson advises, upon my will to other ends.

It is the very height of the season in the garden. The roses have held several drawing-rooms and practically everybody is here. Sweet-peas flutter up two of the verandah pillars, the rest are dark with honeysuckle and heavy with Maréchal Niels. The

pansies are thicker than ever, and a very elegant double wisteria, a lady from Japan, trails her purple skirts over the trellis under which the rickshaws go to their abode. The corn-bottles have come up exactly where I asked them to, scattered thick among the leaves of the chrysanthemums which are already tall and bushy. They are exactly the right blue in exactly the right green and they give a little air, not at all a disagreeable little air, of discernment and sophistication to their corner of the garden. I would like to venture to say that they resemble blue stars in a green sky, if I were sure of offending nobody's sense of humour. It is natural enough to observe this and pass on, but why should one find a subtle pleasure in the comparison, and linger over it? It must be the same throb of joyful activity with which the evolved human intelligence first detected a likeness between any two of the phenomena about it, and triumphed in the perception, attracted to wisdom and stirred to art. Those indeed were days to live in, when everything was mysteriously to copy

and inherit and nothing was exploited, explained, laid bare, when the great sweet thoughts were all to think and heroism had not yet received its molecular analysis, and babies equipped with an instinctive perception of the fundamental weakness of socialistic communism were neither born nor thought of. These seem violent reflections to make in a garden, and they may well be obscured behind the long bed of poppies and field-daisies and more bluets that runs along the side of the house under the windows that support the roses. If you can tell me for what primitive reason poppies and field-daisies and corn-flowers go well together I had rather you did n't.

I have clumps and clumps of hollyhocks, and a balustrade of them, pink and white ones, on each side of the steps that run down from the verandah in front of the drawing-room door. It is an unsophisticated thing, the single hollyhock, like a bashful school-child in a sun-bonnet. Do what you will you cannot make it feel at home among the beaux and belles of high

life in the garden; it never looks really happy except just inside a cottage paling with a bunch of rhubarb on one side and a tangle of "old man" on the other. Still it is a good and grateful flower in whatever station it pleases the sun to call it. It gets along on the merest necessities of life when times are bad and water scarce, and flowers, with anything like a chance, twice in the season. One cannot, after all, encourage class feeling in the garden; there every one must stand on his own roots, and take his share of salts and carbon dioxide without precedence, and the hollyhocks in my garden receive as much consideration as anybody.

Petunias are up all over the place, purple and white and striped. I knew by experience that we could have too many petunias on this shelf, so whenever a vague, young pushing thing disclosed itself to be a petunia, as it nearly always did, I requested Atma to pull it up. Nevertheless they survive surprisingly everywhere, looking out among the feet of the roses, flaunting over the forget-me-nots, unexpected in a box of seedling

asters. Now if I were going to recognize social distinctions in the garden, which I am not, I should call the good petunia a person unmistakably middle-class. Whether it is this incapacity of hers to see a snub, or her very full skirt, or her very high colour, the petunia always seems to me a bourgeoise little lady in her Sunday best, with her hair smooth and her temper well kept under for the occasion. I think she leads her family a nagging life, and goes to church regularly. One should always mass them; a single petunia here and there among the community of flowers is more desolate and ineffective than most maiden ladies. Rather late this spring we discovered a corner of the bed in front of the dining-room window to be quite empty, and what to put in we could n't think, and were considering, when Atma told us that he knew of a thousand petunias homeless and roaming the shelf. I quite believed him, and bade him gather them in, with such a resultant blaze of purple as I shall never in future be without. The border just beyond them is simply shouting with yellow

coreopsis, and behind that rise the dark branches of the firs on the khud side, and between these, very often in broken pictures sharp against the blue, the jagged points and peaks of the far snows. All this every morning the person has with her eggs and bacon who sits opposite the dining-room window. I am glad to say that the other members of my family object to the glare.

Atma has a liberal and progressive mind toward the garden; he is always trying to smuggle some new thing into it. In out-of-the-way corners I constantly come upon perfect strangers, well-rooted and entirely at home, and when I ask him by whose order they were admitted, he smiles apologetically and says that without doubt they will be very beautiful, and that his brother gave them to him. He can never tell me the name. "It will be so high," he shows me with his hand, stooping, "and the flower will be red, simply red it will arrive." I look at it without enthusiasm, and weakly let it stay. Generally it "arrives" a common little disappointment, but once a great

leggy thing turned out an evening primrose, and I knew, before it was too late, that I had been entertaining an angel unawares.

"To grow a little catholic," writes Stevenson, "is the compensation of years." Dear shade, is it so? In the spiritual outlook, perhaps, in the moral retrospect, — but in matters of taste, in likes and dislikes? You who wrote nothing lightly must have proved this dispensation, poorer spirits can only wish it more general. I remember youth as curious and enterprising, hospitable to everything, and I begin to find the middle years jealously content with what they have. Who, when he has reached the age of all the world, looks with instinctive favour upon anything new? An acquaintance, who may create the common debt of friendship; you are long since heavily involved. An author, who may insist upon intimately engaging your intelligence, — a thing you feel, after a time, to be a liberty in a new-comer. Or even a flower, offering another sentiment to the little store that holds some pain already. Now this godetia. I suppose it argues a

depth of ignorance, but until Mr. Johnson recommended it to me in the spring, I had never heard of godetia. Mr. Johnson is the source of seeds and bulbs for Simla, we all go to him; but I, for one, always come away a little ruffled by his habit of referring to everything by its Latin name, and plainly showing that his respect for you depends upon your understanding him. I have wished to preserve Mr. Johnson's respect, and things have come up afterward that I did not think I had ordered. However, this is by the way. Mr. Johnson assured me that godetia had a fine fleshy flower of variegated colours, would be an abundant bloomer, and with reasonable care should make a good appearance. I planted it with misgivings, and watched its advent with aloofness, I knew I should n't recognize it, and I did n't. I had never seen it before, I very nearly said so; and at my time of life, with so many old claims pressing, I could not attempt a new affection. And I have taken the present opportunity, when Atma's back is turned, and pulled it all up. Besides

it may have been fleshy, but it was n't pretty, and the slugs ate it till its appearance was disgraceful.

I suppose our love of flowers is impregnated with our love of life and our immense appreciation of each other. We hand our characteristics up to God to figure in; we look for them in animals with delight and laughter, and it is even our pleasure to find them out here in the garden. Who cares much for lupins, for example; they are dull fellows, they have no faces; yet who does not care for every flower with a heart and eyes, that gives back your glance to you and holds up its head bravely to any day's luck, as you would like to do.

But it is growing late. I can still see a splendid crimson cactus glooming at me from his tub in the verandah; the rest of the garden has drawn away into the twilight. Only the honeysuckle, that nobody notices when the sun is bright and the flowers all talk at once, sends out a timid sweetness to the night and murmurs, "I am here." If I might have had a seam to do, it would have

been finished; but instead there has been this vexatious chapter, which only announces, when all is said and done, that another human being has spent a day in the garden. I intended to write about the applied affections.

But it is too late even for the misapplied affections, generally thought, I believe, the more interesting presentment. Happy Thisbe on the verandah, conscious of another bud to her tapestry, glances at the fading west and makes ready to put all away. I will lay down my pen, as she does her needle, and gather up my sheets and scraps, as she does her silks and wools; and humbly, if I can get no one else to do it for me, carry my poor pattern into the house.

Chapter X

THE Princess has a hill almost entirely to herself. She lives there in a castle almost entirely made of stone, with turrets and battlements. Her affectionate subjects cluster about her feet in domiciles walled with mud and principally roofed with kerosene tins, but they cheerfully acknowledge this to be right and proper, and all they can pay for. One of the many advantages of being a princess is that you never have to put down anything for house-rent; there is always a castle waiting for you and a tax-payer happy to paper it. The world will not allow that it is responsible to a beggar for a crust; but it is delighted to admit that it owes every princess a castle. It is a curious world; but it is quite right, for princesses are to be encouraged and beggars are n't.

The Princess is married to the Roy-Regent, who puts his initial upon Resolutions and writes every week to the Secretary of State; but it is the Princess who is generally "at home," and certainly the Princess who matters. The Roy-Regent may induce his Government to make Resolutions; the Princess could persuade it, I am sure, to break them — if she wanted to. Unfortunately we are not permitted to see that comedy, which would be adorable. She does not want to. She is not what you would call a political princess; I have no doubt she has too much else to do. To begin with, only to begin with, she has to go on being beautiful and kind and unruffled; she has to keep the laughter in her eyes and the gentleness in her heart; she has to be witty without being cynical, and initiated without being hard. She has to see through all our little dodges to win her favour and not entirely despise us, and to accept our rather dull and very daily homage without getting sick and tired of us. To say nothing of the Roy-Regent and the babies who have some claims,

I suppose, though we are apt to talk about the Princess as if she were here solely to hold her Majesty's vice-Drawing-rooms and live up to a public ideal. All the virtues, in short, which the rest of us put on of a Sunday, the Princess must wear every day; and that is why it is so difficult and often so tiresome to be a real princess.

Fortunately the Simla Princess is not expected to hold her commission for life. Her Majesty knew, I suppose, from her own royal experience, how it got on the nerves, and realized that if she required anything like that it would be impossible to get the right kind of people. So at the end of every four or five years the Roy-Regent goes home to his ordinary place in the Red Book burdened for life with a frontier policy, but never again compelled to drive out in the evenings attended by four cantering Sikhs, each Sikh much larger than himself and shaking a lance. He may go on to greater things, or he may simply return to the family estates; but in any case the Princess can put her crown away in a drawer and

do things, if she likes, in the kitchen, which must be a great relief. Of course she can never quite forget that she has been a princess, in commission, once. The thought must have an ennobling effect ever after, and often interpose, as it were, between the word and the blow in domestic differences. For this reason alone, many of us would gladly undertake to find the necessary fortitude for the task; but it is not a thing you can get by merely applying for it.

To the state of the Princess belongs that quaint old-fashioned demonstration, the curtsey. The Princess curtseys to the Queen-Empress — how I should like to see her do it! — and we all curtsey to the Princess. This alone would make Simla a school for manners, now that you have to travel so far, unless you are by way of running in and out of Windsor Castle, to find the charming form in ordinary use. How admirable a point of personal contact lies in the curtsey — what deference rendered, what dignity due! "You are a Princess," it says, "therefore I bend my

knee. I am a Person, therefore I straighten it again," and many things more graceful, more agreeable, more impertinent than that. Indeed, there is a very little that cannot be said in the lines and the sweep of a curtsey. To think there was a time when conversation was an art, and curtseying an accomplishment, is to hate our day of monosyllables and short cuts, of sentiments condensed, and opinions taken for granted. One wonders how we came to lose the curtsey, and how much more went with it, how we could ever let it go, to stand instead squarely on our two feet and nod our uncompromising heads, and say what we have to say. I suppose it is one of the things that are quite gone; we can never reaffect it, indeed our behaviour, considered *as* behaviour, is growing steadily worse. Already you may be asked, by a person whom you have never seen before, whether you prefer Ecclesiastics or Omar Khayyám, or how you would define the ego, or what you think of Mr. Le Gallienne — matters which require confidence, almost a curtain. We have lost the art of the gradual

approach; presently we shall hustle each other like kinetic atoms. A kinetic atom, I understand, goes straight to the point.

We all love curtseying to the Princess therefore, partly because it is a lost art, and partly because it is a way in which we can say, without being fulsome or troublesome, how happy we are to see her. There is only one circumstance under which it is not entirely a privilege. That is when, dismounted, one meets her in one's habit. Whether it is the long boots or the short skirt, or the uncompromising cut, I cannot say, but I always feel, performing a curtsey to the Princess in my habit, that I am in a false position. Every true woman loves to stalk about in her habit, and tap her heels with her riding crop; there is a shadow of the privileges of the other sex about it which is alluring, and which, as the costume is sanctioned, one can enjoy comfortably; but it is not arranged for curtseying, and there ought to be a dispensation permitting ladies wearing it to bow from the waist.

Then the Princess passes on, leaving you

smiling. I have seen people continue to smile in a lower key for twenty minutes after the Princess has gone by, as water will go on reflecting a glow long after the sunlight has left it. The effect is quite involuntary, and of course it looks a little foolish, but it is agreeable to feel, and nobody, positively nobody, can produce it but the Princess. Indeed the power to produce it would be a capital test for princesses.

If I were in any way in a position to submit princesses to tests, I should offer that of the single pea and the twenty feather beds with confidence to ours. Which is a pride and a pleasure to be able to say in these days, when ladies thus entitled are so apt to disguise themselves in strong minds or blunt noses or irritating clothes. It is delightful to be assured that, in spite of this tendency, the Princess has not yet vanished, the Princess of the fairy tales, the real Princess, from among us, that such a one is sitting at the moment in her castle, not ten minutes' walk from here, eating marmalade with a golden spoon, or whatever she likes better than mar-

malade, and bringing to life day after day that delight in living which you must have, or there's no use in being a princess. It is possible that she may not put on her diadem every morning; there is no necessity for that, since you could not imagine her without it; and if she prefers reading her Browning to watching her gold-fish, it is not in any way my affair. Indeed, although she occupies a public position, there is no one who more readily accedes her right to a private life than I, though, of course, with the rest of her subjects, I would prefer that she had as little of it as possible. It is said that the Roy-Regent, knowing what would be expected of her, was not content until he had found the most beautiful and agreeable Princess there was; and I can well believe that he sailed over seas and seas to find her, though it is probably only a tradition that they met at George Washington's country seat where the Princess was looking for trailing arbutus, — another lovely thing whose habitat is the banks of the Potomac. And an improbable tradition, as George Washington never encouraged princesses.

Last night there was an entertainment at the castle and among the guests a chief of one of those smaller Indias that cluster about the great one. He wore his own splendid trappings, and he was a handsome fellow, well set up; and above his keen dark face, in front of the turban, set round with big irregular pearls, was fastened a miniature of the Queen-Empress who holds his fealty in her hand. To him the Princess, all in filmy lace with her diadem flashing, spoke kindly. They sat upon gold-backed chairs a little way apart, and as she leaned to confer her smile and he to receive it, I longed to frame the picture and make perpetual the dramatic moment, the exquisite odd chance. "Surely," thought I, "the world has never been so graciously bridged before." Talking of George Washington, if the good man could have seen that, I think he might have melted toward princesses; I do not think, from all we know of him, that he would have had the heart to turn coldly away and disclaim responsibility for this one. I wish he could have seen it; yes, and Martha too, though

if anybody thought necessary to make trouble and talk about sacred principles of democracy, it would have been Martha. Martha, she would have been the one. Her great and susceptible husband would have taken a philosophic pinch of snuff and toasted posterity.

I see that I have already admitted it, I have slipped in the path of virtuous resolution and lofty indifference; I have gone back, just for a minute, into the world. The reason I have neglected every flower in the garden this morning to write about the Princess is that I have been dining with her. It is so difficult to be unmoved and firm when you know the band will play and there will be silver soup-plates, to say nothing of the Roy-Regent smiling and pleased to see you, and the Roman punch in the middle of the menu. At home, one so seldom has Roman punch in the middle of the menu. Besides, now that I think of it, it was a "command" invitation, and I did not go for any of these reasons, or even to see the Princess, but because I had to; a lofty compulsion of State

was upon me, and nobody would place her loyalty in question on account of a possible draught. If there had been a draught and I had taken cold I should have felt an added nobility to-day; somewhat the virtue, I suppose, of the elderly statesman who contracts a fatal influenza at a distinguished interment, and so creates a vicious circle of funerals; but there was no draught.

The Princess lives in splendid isolation. If it were not for the Roy-Regent and the babies, and the Commander-in-Chief and *his* family, she would die of loneliness. And of course the Bishop, though I can't understand in what way one would depend much upon a bishop, except to ask a blessing when he came to dinner. Kind and human as the Princess is she lives in another world, with an A.D.C. always going in front to tell people to get up, "Their Excellencies are coming." You cannot ask after the Princess's babies as you would ask after the babies of a person like yourself; you must say, "How are Your Excellency's babies?" and this at once removes them far

beyond the operation of your affectionate criticism. When it is impossible even to take babies for granted the difficulties of the situation may be imagined. The situation is glorious but troubling, your ideas often will not flow freely in it, and is there anything more dreadful at a supreme moment than to have your ideas stick? You find yourself saying the same thing you said the last time you had the honour, which is the most mortifying thing that can happen in any conversation.

I often wonder whether the Princess does not look at our little mud houses and wish sometimes that she could come in. The thought is a reckless one but I do entertain it. If you take a kind and friendly interest in people as the Princess does in us all, you cannot be entirely satisfied merely to add them up as population and set them a good example. Nor can it be very interesting to look at the little mud houses and observe only that they have chimneys, and not to know how the mantelpieces are done or whether there is a piano, or if anybody else's

sweet-peas are earlier than yours. In my dreams I sometimes invite the Princess to tea. An A.D.C. always comes behind her carrying the diadem on a red silk cushion, but at my earnest prayer he is made to stay outside on the verandah. We have the best china; and in one dream the Princess broke a cup and we wept together. On another occasion she gave me a recipe for pickled blackberries and told me of a way — I always forget the way — of getting rid of frowns. There is generally something to spoil a dream, and the thing that spoils this one is the A.D.C., who will look in at the window. All the same we have a lovely time, the Princess ignoring all her prerogatives, unless I say something about the state of the country, when she instantly, royally, changes the subject. . . .

Chapter XI

If you choose to live on the top of one of the Himalayas there are some things you must particularly pay for. One of them is earth. Your mountain, if it is to be depended upon, is mostly made of rock and I have already mentioned how radically it slopes. So a garden is not at all a thing to be taken for granted. Sometimes you have a garden and sometimes only a shaly ledge, or you may have a garden to-day which to-morrow has slid down the hill and superimposed itself upon your neighbour below. That occurs in the rains; it is called a "slip." It has never been our experience because the shelf is fairly flat; but it has happened to plenty of people. I suppose such a garden is recoverable, if you are willing to take the trouble, but it could never be quite the same thing. The most permanent plot, however, requires all

kinds of attention, and one of the difficulties is to keep it up to its own level. Queer sinkings and fallings away are always taking place in the borders. Atma professes to find them quite reasonable; he says the flowers eat the earth and of course it disappears. The more scientific explanation appears to me to be that the gnomes of the mountain who live inside, have been effecting repairs, and naturally the top falls in. It may be said that gnomes are not as a rule so provident; but very little has yet been established about the Himalayan kind; they might be anything; they probably are.

This whole morning Atma and I have been patching the garden. At home when you buy a piece of land you expect that enough earth will go with it for ordinary purposes, but here you buy the land first and the earth afterwards, as you want it, in basketfuls. There is plenty in the jungle, beautiful leaf-mould, but it is against the law to collect it there for various reasons, all of them excellent and tiresome; you must buy it instead from the Town Council, and

it costs fourpence a basket. Tiglath-Pileser says it is the smallest investment in land he ever heard of, but it takes a great many baskets, and when the bill comes in I shall be glad to know if he is still of that opinion. Meanwhile coolie after coolie dumps his load and I have heard of no process that more literally improves the property. You will imagine whether, when anything is pulled up, we do not shake the roots.

How far a sharp contrast will carry the mind! I never shake a root in these our limited conditions without thinking of the long loamy stretches of the Canadian woods where there was leaf-mould enough for a continent of gardens, and of the plank "sidewalk" that half-heartedly wandered out to them from the centre of what was a country town in my day, adorned perhaps at some remote and unfenced corner by a small grocery shop where hickory nuts in a half-pint measure were exposed for sale in the window. I am no longer passionately addicted to hickory nuts — you got the meat out with infinite difficulty and a pin,

and if it was obstinate you sucked it — but nothing else, except perhaps the smell in the cars of the train-boy's oranges, will ever typify to me so completely the liberal and stimulating opportunities of a new country. The town when I was there last had grown into a prosperous city, and there were no hickory nuts in its principal stores, but at the furthest point of a suburban sidewalk I found the little grocery still tempting the school children of the neighbourhood with this unsophisticated product and the half-pint measure in the window. I resisted the temptation to buy any, but I stood and looked so long that the proprietress came curious to the door. And along that sidewalk you might have taken a ton of leaf-mould before anybody made it his business to stop you.

We must acknowledge our compensations. Over there they certainly get their leaf-mould cheaper than fourpence a basket, but they have nobody to make things grow in it under a dollar a day. Here Atma, the invaluable Atma, labours for ten rupees a month — about fourteen shillings — and

cooks his own meal cakes. The man who works for a dollar a day does it in the earnest hope, if we are to believe his later biographer, of a place in ward politics and the easier situation of a local boss. It would be hard to infect Atma with such vulgar ambitions. He is so lately from the hands of his Creator that he has not even yet conceived the idea of accumulation. The other day I told him that he might take a quantity of seed and surplus plants, and sell them, and he would not. "I, how shall I sell?" he said, "I am a gardener. This thing is done by Johnson-sahib," and he looked at me with amusement. I called him by a foolish name and told him that he should surely sell, and get money; but he shook his head still smiling. "By your honour's favour," he said, "month by month I find ten rupees. From this there is food twice a day and clothes, and two or three rupees to go by the hand of an old man who comes from my people. It is enough. What more?" I mentioned the future. "Old?" he cried, "God knows if I will be

old. At this time I am a work-doing wallah. When I am old and your honours are gone to *Belaat*,[1] I also will go, and live with my people."

"And they will, without doubt, give you food and clothes?" I asked.

"According as there is," he said, "without doubt they will give it," and went on with his work.

Here, if you like, was a person of short views and unvexed philosophy. A lecture upon the importance of copper coins trembled on my lips, but I held it back. A base aim is a poor exchange for a lesson in content, and I held it back, wondering whether my servant might not be better off than I, in all that he could do without.

Alas for the poor people who have to pay at the rate of a dollar a day and mind their own business into the bargain! Never can they know one of the greatest pleasures of life, to be served by a serving people. There is a spark of patriarchal joy, long extinct west of Suez, in the simple old interpretation

[1] England.

which still holds here, of the relation of master and servant, scolding and praise, favour and wrath; a lifelong wage and occasionally a little medicine are still the portion of the servant-folk, accepted as a matter of course, and "Thou wilt not hear orders?" ever a serious reproach. To all of us Outlanders of the East, it is one of the consolations of exile, and to some of us a keen and constant pleasure to be the centre and source of prosperity for these others, a simple, graphic, pressing opportunity to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with their God. I, personally, like them for themselves — who could help liking Atma? — and of persons to whom they do not at all appeal I have my own opinion. It is the difference of race, no doubt, which makes this relation possible and enjoyable, the difference, and what we are accustomed to consider the superiority, of ours. At home all generous minds are somewhat tormented by a sense of the unfairness of the menial brand, and in the attitude of the menial mind there is nothing to modify that impression.

Servants in this place are regarded as luxuries, and taxed. So much you pay per capita, and whether the capita belongs to a body entirely in your employment, or to one which only serves you in common with several other people, it does n't matter; all the same you pay. Delia and I share a dhurjee, or sewing man, for example, and we are both chargeable for him. This I never could reconcile with my sense of justice and of arithmetic, — that the poll-tax of a whole man should be paid on half a tailor; but there is no satisfaction to be got out of Tiglath-Pileser. Some people have more respect for the law than it really deserves. I had the pleasure, however, of bringing him to a sense of his responsibilities when the tax-paper came in, from which he learned that no less than fifteen heads of families looked to him to be their providence. Under the weight of this communication he turned quite pale, and sat down hastily upon the nearest self-sustaining object, which happened to be the fender. But as a matter of fact he liked the idea. Every Englishman

does, and this is why a certain measure of success attends not only his domestic but his general experiments in governing the East. He loves the service of an idea, and nothing flatters him so truly as his conception of all that he has to do.

The ear sharpens if its owner lives in the garden. It is no longer muffled by the four walls of a house, and remote sounds visit it, bringing with them a meaning which somehow they never have indoors, even when they penetrate there. Up here they principally make one aware of the silence, which is such a valuable function of sounds. I should like to write a chapter about the quiet of Simla, but of course if one began like that one would never finish. It is our vast solace, our great advantage; we live without noise. The great ranges forbid it; the only thing they will listen to is a salute from the big gun, and they pass that from one to another, uncertain that is not an insult. And the quenching comment in the silence that follows!

It is tremendous, invincible, taken up and

rewritten in the lines of all the hills. It stands always before our little colony, with a solemn finger up, so that a cheer from the cricket ground is a pathetic thing, and the sound of the Roy-Regent's carriage wheels awakens memories of Piccadilly. We are far withdrawn and very high up, fifty-six miles down to the level, and then it is only empty India — and the stillness lies upon us and about us and up and down the khuds, almost palpable and so morne, but with the sweetest melancholy. Consider, you of London and New York, what it must be to live on one mountain-side and hear a crow caw across the valley, on the other. Of course we are a Secretariat people; we have no factory whistles.

This afternoon, however, I hear an unlicensed sound. It is the sound of an infant giving tongue, and it comes from the quarters. Now there ought not to be a baby in the quarters; it is against all orders. No form of domestic ménage is permitted there; the place is supposed to be a monastery, and the servants to house their women-folk else-

where. The sound is as persistent as it is unwarrantable; it is not only a breach of custom, but displeasing. How am I to reckon with it? I may send for Dumboo and complain. In that case the noise will cease at once; they will give opium to the child, which will injure its digestion, and in the future, as a grown-up person, it will enjoy life less because I could not put up with its crying as an infant. I can report the matter to Tiglath-Pileser, which would mean an end to the baby, not illegally, by banishment. But is it so easy? One approves, of course, of all measures to discourage them about the premises, but when in spite of rules and regulations a baby has found its way in, and is already lamenting its worldly prospects at the top of its voice, in honest confidence that at least the roof over its head will be permanent, a complication arises. I cannot dislodge such a one. Better deafness and complicity.

Far down the khud side an Imperial bugle. Abroad the spaces the mountains stand in, and purple valleys deepening.

Among the deodars a whisper, not of scandal, believe me. A mere announcement that the day is done. On the other side of the hill a pony trotting, farther and fainter receding, but at the farthest and faintest it is plain that he goes short in front. From the bazaar a temple bell, with the tongue of an alien religion. . . .

Chapter XII

TO-DAY I think India, down below there on the other side of the hill, must be at its hottest. A white dust haze hangs over the plains, but we know what is going on under it; nearly all of us have gasped through June more than once in those regions. It is the time when you take medical advice before committing yourself to a railway journey, even with the provision of a cracked-ice pillow, — the favourite time to step out of the train and die of cholera in the waiting room. It is also the very special time for the British private soldier to go out in anger and kick with his foot the punkah-wallah who has fallen asleep with the slack rope in his hand, so that the punkah-wallah, in whom is concealed unknown to the private soldier an enlarged spleen, immediately dies. There is then trouble and

high-talking, because of the people who consider that the death of a punkah-wallah demands the life of a private soldier who only meant to admonish him, a contention which cannot be judged without a knowledge of the relative values concerned, and an experience of the temperature in which the rash and negligent act was committed. There is reason in the superstition which associates great heat with the devil. Operating alone, it can do almost as much as he can.

The dust haze from the plains hangs all about us, obscuring even the near ranges, impalpable but curiously solid. It has a flavour which it is impossible not to taste if ever one breathes through the mouth, and hour by hour it silently gathers upon the furniture. It has been like this for a week, pressing round us at a measured distance, which just enables us to see our own houses and gardens. Within that space, the sunlight and every circumstance as usual. It is a little like living under a ground-glass bell. Do not choose the present time of year to come to see Simla. You would have to

make a house-to-house visitation, and piece it together from memory.

Even here, in the garden, much too hot the eye of heaven shines. I have abandoned the pencil-cedar, and taken refuge under a trellis covered with a banksia rose, which is thicker, and I have added to my defences a pith hat and an umbrella. Notwithstanding these precautions, we all gasp together to-day in the garden; and I am inclined to agree with the mignonette, which is not as a rule talkative, that this is no longer the summer — exquisite word — that we expect in Simla, but the odious "hot weather" which comes instead in the country down below. The mignonette, by the way, stands to my discernment, immediately under the pencil-cedar. When I sowed it there in the spring, Tiglath-Pileser said, "It will never do anything under a conifer." When it began to show, he said again, "It may come up, but it will never do anything. Nothing ever does anything under a conifer." Atma was not of this advice. "Come up?" he said, looking at it sternly, "wherefore should it

not come up, if your honour wishes it?" Atma always takes this view; he seems to suppose that the flowers, like himself, are above all things anxious to please, and if any of them fail in their duty, he implies, with indignation, that he will know the reason why. But his opinion is too constant, and I did not trust it about the mignonette. I insisted, instead, that every morning the fallen cedar spines should be picked out of it, and the earth freshly stirred about the roots; and I have a better patch of mignonette under my conifer than can be produced anywhere else in the garden. I am sure that the shade of a conifer is no less beneficial than any other kind of shade, except that [illegible]er enough of it; nor can I a[illegible]y that there is anything poisonous in the spines. They only pack and only lie very closely together, never blown about like leaves, and so keep away the air and light, and if you happen to have the use of twenty or thirty brown fingers to pick them out, there is no reason why you cannot produce quantities of things

beside mignonette under a conifer. Do anything? I do not know a more able-bodied or hard-working flower on the shelf.

A thing like that offers one for some time afterwards a valuable handle in arguments.

However you do it, there is no more delicious experience in life than to put something beautiful where nothing was before, I mean in any suitable empty space. I have done it; I have had the consummation of this pleasure for a fortnight. There was no goldenrod in Simla till I went to America and got it. I make the lofty statement with confidence, but subject to correction. Some one may have thought of it long ago, and may be able to confront me with finer plumes than mine. If this should be so, I shall accept it with reluctance and mortification, and hereby promise to go and admire the other person's, which is the most anybody can do; but my pride does not expect such a fall.

It is the Queen's goldenrod, not the President's, though he has a great deal of it and makes, I think, rather more fuss

about it. A field flower of generous mind, it ignores the political line, and I gathered the seed one splendid autumn afternoon in Canada; so here on the shelf it may claim its humble part in the Imperial idea. A friend of my youth lent herself to the project; she took me in her father's buggy, and as we went along the country roads I saw again in the light of a long absence, the quiet of the fields and the broad pebbled stretches of the river, and the bronze and purple of the untrimmed woods that had always been for me the margin of the thought of home. The quiet of after-harvest held it all, nothing was about but a chipmunk that ran along the top of a fence; you could count the apples in the orchards among their scanty leaves; it was time to talk and to remember. And so, not by anything unusual that we did or said, but by the rare and beautiful correspondence that is sometimes to be felt between the sentiment of the hour and the hour itself, this afternoon took its place in the dateless calendar of the heart which is so much more

valuable a reference than any other. What a delight it is when old forgotten things construct themselves again and the years gather into an afternoon! And is there any such curious instance of real usefulness for hidden treasure in the attic?

We found masses of goldenrod, all dry and scattering, principally along the railway embankment, which we took for a good omen that it would be a travelling flower; and in the fulness of time it was given to Atma with instructions. His excitement was even greater than mine, he nursed it tenderly, but it needed no nursing. It came up in thousands delighted with itself and the new climate, overrunning its boxes so that Atma pointed to it like a proud father. Then we planted it out along the paling behind the coreopsis, and it immediately — that is to say in three months' time — grew to be five feet high, with the most thick and lovely yellow sprays, which have been waving there against the fir-trees, as I said before, for the last fortnight. It has quite lost the way to its proper season; at

home it blossoms in September and this is only June, — but it appears to be rather the better than the worse for that, though it does seem to look about, as the Princess said when I sent her some, for the red sumach which is its friend and companion at home. It is itself like a little fir-tree with flat spreading branches of blossom, especially when it stands in groups as they do, and the sun slants upon it giving the sprays an edge of brighter gold so that it is the most luminous thing in the garden. And the warm scent of it, holding something so far beyond itself and India, something essential, impregnated with the solace that one's youth and its affections are not lost, but only on the other side of the world!

Another delightful thing about the goldenrod is the way the bees and butterflies instantly found it out. The sprays are dotted with them all day long, swaying and dipping with the weight of the little greedy bodies; their hum of content stands in the air with the warm and comfortable scent. "This is good fare" they seem to

say. "There are some things they make better in America." I had never before done anything for a bee or a butterfly, it is not really so easy, and I would not have believed there was such pleasure in it. "*Le fleur qui vole*" — is not that charming of M. Bourget?

I suppose it argues a very empty plane of life, but these little creatures have an immense power of entertaining a person who spends day after day in the theatre of their activities. I am reminded that here in India one ought to have marvellous tales to tell of them, only Simla is not really India, but a little bit of England with an Adirondack climate and the "insect belt" of Central Asia; and things are not so wonderful here as you would think to look at us on the map. Scorpions and centipedes do come up from the plains and live in the cracks of the wall whence they crawl out to be despatched when the first fires are lighted, but they have not the venom of those below. Scorpions Atma will take hold of by the poison bags at the end of their tails, and

hold up in the air dangling and waving their arms; and nobody even screams at a centipede. Millipedes which look much more ferocious but are really quite harmless often run like little express trains across your bath-room walls, and very large, black, garden spiders also come there to enjoy the damp. They enjoy the damp, but what they really like is to get into the muslin curtain over the window and curl up and die. The first time I saw one of them in the folds of the curtain I thought it would be more comfortable in the garden and approached it with caution and a towel, to put it out. Then I perceived from its behaviour — it did not try to run away, but just drew its legs a little closer under it, as you or I would do if we absolutely did n't care what happened so long as we were left in peace — that it had come there on purpose, being aware of its approaching end. I decided that the last moments of even a spider should be respected, but every day I shook the curtain and he drew his legs together a little more feebly than the day before,

until at last he dropped out, the shell of a spider, comfortably and completely dead. I admired his expiring, it was business-like and methodical, the thing he had next to do, and he was so intent upon it, not in any way to be disturbed or distracted, asking no question of the purposes of nature, simply carrying them out. One might moralize.

Talking of spiders I have just seen a fly catch one. It was, of course, an ichneumon fly. One has many times heard of his habit of pouncing upon his racial enemy, puncturing and paralyzing him and finally carrying him off, walling him up and laying an egg in him, out of which comes a young ichneumon to feed upon his helpless vitals; but one does not often see the tragedy in the air. He held his fat prey quite firmly in his merciless jaws and he went with *entrain*, the villain! The victim spider and the assassin fly! One might moralize again.

It is hotter than ever, and the sunlight under the ground-glass bell has a factitious look, as if we had here a comedy with a scene of summer. A hawk-moth darts like

a hummingbird in and out of the honeysuckle, and a very fine rose-chafer all in green and gold paces across this paragraph. I believe there are more rose-chafers this year than there ought to be, and Atma has a heavy bill against them in every stage of their existence, but they are such attractive depredators. When I find one making himself comfortable in the heart of a La France, I know very well that on account of the white grub he was once and the many white grubs he will be again I ought to kill him and think no more about it; but one hesitates to send a creature out of the world who exercises such good taste when he is in it. I know it is quite too foolish to write, but the extent of my vengeance upon such a one is only to put him into a common rose.

The birds are silent; the butterflies bask on the gravel like little ships with big sails. Even the lizards have sought temporary retirement between the flower-pots. I am the only person who is denied her natural shelter and compelled to resort to an

umbrella. Tiglath-Pileser said the other day that he thought it was quite time I made some acknowledgment of the good it was doing me. It *is* doing me good — of course. But what strikes me most about it is the wonderful patience and fortitude people can display in having good done to them.

Chapter XIII

I HAVE had a morning of domestic details with the Average Woman. I don't quite know whether one ought to write about such things, or whether one ought to draw a veil; I have not yet formed a precise opinion as to the function of the commonplace in matter intended for publication. But surely no one should scorn domestic details, which make our universal background and mainstay of existence. Theories and abstractions serve to adorn it and to give us a notion of ourselves: but we keep them mostly for lectures and sermons, the monthly reviews, the original young man who comes to tea. All would be glad to shine at odd times, but the most luminous demonstration may very probably be based upon a hatred of cold potatoes and a preference for cotton sheets. And of course no one would dare to scorn the average woman; she is the backbone of society.

Personally I admire her very humbly, and respect her very truly. For many of us, to become an average woman is an ambition. I think I will go on.

Besides, Thalia interrupted us, and Thalia will always lend herself to a chapter.

The Average Woman is not affectionate but she is solicitous, and there was the consideration of my original situation and my tiresome health. Then she perceived that I had a garden and that it was a pretty garden. I said, indifferently, that people thought so; I knew it was a subject she would not pursue unless she were very much encouraged, and there was no reason at all why she should pursue it; she would always be a visitor in such a place, whereas there were many matters which she could treat with familiar intelligence. I was quite right; she wandered at once into tins of white enamel, where it seemed she had already spent several industrious hours. We sympathized deeply over the extent to which domestic India was necessarily enamelled, though I saw a look of criticism cross her face when

I announced that I hoped one day to be rich enough not to possess a single article painted in that way — not a chair, not a table. I think she considered my declaration too impassioned, but she did not dissent from it. That is a circumstance one notes about the Average Woman: she never dissents from anything. She never will be drawn into an argument. One could make the most wild and whirling statement to her, if one felt inclined, and it is as likely as not that she would say "Yes indeed," or "I think so too," and after a little pause of politeness go on to talk about something else. I can't imagine why one never does feel inclined.

We continued to discuss interior decoration, and I learned that she was preparing a hearth seat for her drawing-room, one of those low square arrangements projecting into the room before the fire, upon which two ladies may sit before dinner and imagine they look picturesque, while the rest of the assembled guests, from whom they quite cut off the cheerful blaze, wonder whether

they do. The Average Woman declared that she could no longer live without one.

"As time goes on one notices that fewer and fewer average women can," I observed absently, and hastily added, "I mean, you know, that of course very portly ladies —"

"Oh, I *see*," said she. "No, of course not."

"So long," I went on, pursuing the same train of thought, "as one can sit down readily upon a hearth seat, and especially so long as one can clasp one's knees upon it, one is not even middle-aged. To clasp one's knees is really to hug one's youth."

"I had *such* a pretty one in Calcutta," said the Average Woman. "So cosy it looked. Everybody admired it."

"But in Calcutta," I exclaimed with astonishment, "it is always so hot — and there are no fireplaces."

"Oh, that did n't matter," replied she triumphantly, "I draped the mantelpiece. It looked just as well." And yet there are people who say that the Average Woman has no imagination.

"Talking of age," she continued, "how old do you suppose Mrs. ——— is? Somebody at tiffin yesterday *who knew the family* declared that she could not be a day under thirty-seven. I should not give her more than thirty-five myself. My husband says thirty-two."

"About a person's age," I said, "what can another person's husband know?"

"What *should* you say?" she insisted. I am sorry to have to underline so much, but you know how the average woman talks in italics. It is as if she wished to make up in emphasis — but I will not finish that good-natured sentence.

"Oh," said I, "you cannot measure Mrs. ———'s age in years! She is as old as Queen Elizabeth and as young as the day before yesterday. Parts of her date from the Restoration and parts from the advent of M. Max Nordau — " At that moment Thalia arrived. "And that is the age of all the world," I finished.

"We were wondering," said the Average Woman, "how old Mrs. ——— is."

"*You* were wondering," I corrected her.

"What does it matter?" said Thalia, which was precisely what I should have expected her to say. What *does* it matter? Why should the average woman excite herself so greatly about this particularly small thing? How does it bear upon the interest or the attractiveness or the value of any woman to know precisely how many years she counts between thirty and forty, at all events to another of her sex? Yet to the average woman it seems to be the all-important fact, the first thing she must know. She is *enragée* to find it out, she will make the most cunning enquiries and take the most subtle means. Much as I appreciate the average woman, I have in this respect no patience with her. It is as if she would measure the pretensions of all others by recognized rule of thumb with a view to discovering the surplus claim and properly scoring it down. It is surely a survival from days when we were much more feminine than we are now; but it is still very general, even among married ladies, for whom,

really, the question might have an exhausted interest.

"What does it matter?" said Thalia. "I see your fuchsias, like me, have taken advantage of a fine day to come out. What a lot you 've got!"

"Yes," I said, without enthusiasm, "they were here when we came."

"Oh, don't you like them?" exclaimed the Average Woman, "I think the fuchsia such a graceful, pretty flower."

"It is graceful and it is pretty," I assented. There are any number of fuchsias, as Thalia said, standing in rows along the paling under the potato-creeper; the last occupant must have adored them. They remain precisely in the pots in which they were originally cherished. Knowing that the first thing I do for a flower I like is to put it in the ground where it has room to move its feet and stir about at night, and take its share in the joys of the community, Tiglath-Pileser says compassionately of the fuchsia, "It is permitted to occupy a pot;" but I notice that he does not select it for his button-hole notwithstanding.

Thalia looked at me suspiciously. "What have you got against it?" she demanded, and the Average Woman chorussed, "Now tell us."

I fixed a fuchsia sternly with my eye. "It 's an affected thing," I said. "Always looking down. I think modesty can be an overrated virtue in a flower. It is also like a ballet-dancer, flaunting short petticoats, which does n't go with modesty at all. I like a flower to be sincere; there is no heart, no affection, no sentiment abou. . fuchsia."

Thalia listened to this diatribe with her head a little on one side.

"You are *full* of prejudices," said she, "but there is something in this one. Nobody could say 'My love is like a fuchsia.'"

"It depends," I said; "there are ladies not a hundred miles from here who thrill when they are told that they walk like the partridge and shine like the moon. I should n't care about it myself."

"No, indeed," said the Average Woman. "That bit beyond the mignonette seems rather empty. What are you going to put in there?"

"Oh, nothing," I said.

"I don't know," remarked Thalia combatively, "when there are so many beautiful things in the world, why you should discriminate in favour of nothing."

"Yes, why?" said the Average Woman.

"Well," I replied defiantly, "that's my spare bedroom. You've got to have *somewhere* to put people. I don't like the feeling that every border is fully occupied and not a square inch available for any one coming up late in the season."

You can see that Thalia considers that while we are respected for our virtues our weaknesses enable us to enjoy ourselves. She accepts them as an integral and intentional part of us and from some of them she even extracts a contemplative pleasure. The Average Woman looks down upon such things and I did not dare to encounter her glance of reserved misunderstanding.

Thalia smiled. I felt warmed and approved. "Alas!" said she, "my garden is all spare bedrooms." She lives, poor dear, on the other side of the Jakko and has to

wait till September for her summer. "I see you keep it aired and ready."

As a matter of fact Atma had freshly turned the earth. I hold to that in the garden; it seems to me a parallel to good housekeeping. The new-dug mould makes a most enhancing background; and an empty bed, if it is only freshly made, offers the mind as much pleasure as a gay parterre. It is the sense, I suppose, of effort expended and care taken, and above all it is a stretch of the possible, a vista beyond the realized present which is as valuable in a garden as it is in life. Oh no, not as valuable. In life it is the most precious thing, and it is sparingly accorded. Thalia has it, I know, but I looked at the Average Woman in doubt. Thalia, whatever else she does, will have high comedy always for her portion, and who can tell in what scenes she will play or at what premières she will assist? But the Average Woman, — can one not guess at the end of ten years what she will be talking about, what she will have experienced, what she will have done? I looked

at the Average Woman and wondered. She was explaining to Thalia the qualities of milk tea. I decided that she was probably happier than Thalia, and that there was no need whatever to be sorry for her. She stayed a long time; I think she enjoyed herself; and when she went away of course we talked about her.

We spoke in a vein of criticism, and I was surprised to learn that the thing about the Average Woman to which Thalia took most exception was her husband. I had always found the poor patient creatures entirely supportable, and I said so. "Oh, yes," replied Thalia impatiently, "in themselves they 're well enough. But did n't you hear her? '*George adores you in "Lady Thermidore."*' Now that annoys me."

"Does it?" said I. "Why should n't George adore you in *Lady Thermidore* if he wants to, especially if he tells his wife?"

"That 's exactly it," said Thalia. "If he really did he would n't tell her. But he does n't. She just says so in order to give herself the pleasure of imagining that I am

charmed to believe that George — her George — "

"I see," I said, sympathetically.

"They are always offering their husbands up to me like that," continued Thalia, gloomily. "They expect me, I suppose, to blush and simper. As if I had n't a very much better one of my own!"

"They think it the highest compliment they can pay you."

"Precisely. That 's what is so objectionable. And besides it 's a mistake."

"I shall never tell you that Tiglath-Pileser adores you," I stated.

"My dear, I have known it for ages!" said Thalia, *en se sauvant*, as they do in French novels.

Perhaps the Average Woman is a little tiresome about her husband. She is generally charged with quoting him overmuch. I don't think that; his opinions are often useful and nearly always sensible, but she certainly assumes a far too general interest for him as a subject upon which to dwell for long periods. Average wives of officials are

much more distressingly affected in this way than other ladies are; it is quite a local peculiarity of bureaucratic centres. They cherish the delusion, I suppose, that in some degree they advance the interests of these unfortunate men by a perpetual public attitude of adoration, but I cannot believe it is altogether the case. On the contrary, I am convinced that the average official husband himself would find too much zeal in the recounting of his following remarkable traits. His obstinate and absurd devotion to duty. "In *my* husband the Queen has a good bargain!" His remarkable youth for the post he holds, — I remember a case where my budding affection for the wife of an Assistant Secretary was entirely checked by this circumstance. The compliments paid him by his official superiors, those endless compliments. And more than anything perhaps, his extraordinary and deplorable indifference to society. "I simply can*not* get my husband out; I am positively ashamed of making excuses for him." When her husband is served up to me in this guise I feel

my indignation rising out of all proportion to its subject, always an annoying experience. Why should I be expected to accept his foolish idea that he is superior to society, and admire it? Why should I be assumed to observe with interest whether he comes out; why indeed, so far as I am concerned, should he not eternally stay in?

It comes to this that one positively admires the woman who has the reticence to let her husband make his own reputation.

What offends one, I suppose, is the lack of sincerity. A very different case is that of the simple soul who says, "Tom will not allow me to have it in the house," or "Jim absolutely refuses to let me know her." One hears that with the warm thrill of mutual bondage; one has one's parallel ready — the tyranny I could relate of Tiglath-Pileser! The note of grievance is primitive and natural; but the woman who butters her husband in friendly council, what excuse has she?

Chapter XIV

THE rains have come. They were due on the fifteenth of June and they are late; this is the twentieth. The whole of yesterday afternoon we could see them beating up the valleys, and punctually at midnight they arrived, firing their own salute with a great clap of thunder and a volley on the roof — it is a galvanized roof — that left no room for doubt. You will notice that it is the rains that have come and not the rain; there is more difference than you would imagine between water and water. The rain is a gentle thing and descends in England; the rains are untamed, torrential, and visit parts of the East. They come to stay; for three good months they are with us, pelting the garden, beating at the panes. It would be difficult for persons living in the temperate zone to conceive how wet, during this period, our circumstances are.

One always hears them burst with a feeling of apprehension; it is such a violent movement of nature, potential of damage, certain of change; and life is faced next morning at breakfast with a gloom which is not assumed. A dripping dulness varied by deluges, that is the prospect for the next ninety days. The emotions of one who will be expected to support it under an umbrella, with the further protection of a conifer only, are offered, please, to your kind consideration. I dreamed as the night wore on of shipwreck in a sea of mountains on a cane chair, and when I awoke, salvaged in my bed, it was raining as hard as ever.

At breakfast Tiglath-Pileser said, uneasily, that it would probably clear up in half an hour. "It simply can't go on like this," remarked Thisbe, and I saw that they were thinking of me, under the conifer. When you suspect commiseration the thing to do is to enhance it. "Clear up?" said I with indifference. "Why should it clear up? It has only just begun."

"It is all very well to sit out in the rain

in England," said Thisbe; "but this is quite a different thing."

"Oh dear, no," said I. "There is only a little more of it."

"Well, if it continues to pelt like this, of course —" began Tiglath-Pileser.

"I shall take the old green gamp," I put in, "it 's the biggest."

They glanced at each other; I perceived the glance though my attention was supposed to be given to a curried egg. A word of petition would have installed me at once by the drawing-room fire; but a commanding pride rose up in me and forbade the word. Tiglath-Pileser, who holds to carrying out a system thoroughly, asked me thoughtfully if I would n't have a little marmalade with my egg; and the matter dropped.

Half an hour afterwards I was encamped under the pencil cedar and the old green umbrella. You cannot screen your whole person in a long chair with these two things, and I added to myself a water-proof sheet. It was a magnificent moment. The rain was coming down straight and thick with a loud,

steady drum, small flat puddles were dancing all about me, and brooks were running under my chair — I sat calm and regardless. I was really quite dry and not nearly so uncomfortable as I looked; but I presented a spectacle of misery that afforded me a subtle joy. The only drawback was that there was nobody to witness it; Thisbe and Tiglath-Pileser seemed by common consent to withdraw themselves to the back parts. Only Dumboo circulated disconsolately about the verandah, with the heavy knowledge that now without doubt it was proved that the mistress was mad; and I wished to be thought indifferent only, not insane. He seemed to think that I required surveillance, and kept an anxious eye upon me until I sent him about his business.

It was a day of great affairs in the garden; I could hear them going on all round me. To everybody there it meant a radical change of housekeeping; some families were coming out and some going in, some moving up and some down, while others would depart, almost at once, for the season. No wonder

they all talked at once in an excited murmur under the rain. I could hear the murmur, but I could not distinguish the voices; between the rain and the umbrella, most of the garden was hidden from me, and it is a curious fact that if you cannot see a flower you cannot hear what it says. Only the pansy beds came within eyesight and ear-shot, and there I could see that consternation and confusion reigned. It is the beginning of the end for the pansies; they love rain in watering-pots, morning and evening, and a bright sun all day, and this downpour disconcerts them altogether. They cry out, every one of them, against the waste and improvidence of it. For another month they will go on opening fresh buds and uttering fresh protests, plainly disputing among themselves whether, under such adverse circumstances, life is worth living; and one sad day I shall find that they have decided it is not. I am always sorry to see the last pansy leave the garden; it goes with such regret.

I intended to be undisturbed and normal,

and to accomplish pages; but I find that you cannot think in heavy rain. It is too fierce, too attacking. You know that it will not do you any harm, but your nerves are not convinced; you can only wait in a kind of physical suspense, like the cows in the fields, whose single idea I am sure is, "How soon will it be over?"

Well, I knew it would not be over for ninety days, and already there were drops on the inside of the green umbrella. I was seriously weighing the situation when Tiglath-Pileser appeared upon the verandah. He had come out to say that the rains always broke with thunder-storms, that this was practically a thunder-storm, and that he considered my situation, under the tallest tree in the neighbourhood, too exposed. He had to think of something; that was what he thought of, and I was pleased to find it convincing. "Shall I take it for granted," I inquired blandly, "whenever it comes down in bucketfuls like this, that there is thunder in the air, and come in?" and Tiglath-Pileser said that he thought it would be as well.

So I am in — in to spend the day. It does not sound in any way remarkable, which shows how entirely custom is our measure for the significance of things. It is really an excursion into the known and familiar, become unusual and exciting by banishment; and it brings one fresh sense of how easy it would be to make life — almost any — vivid and interesting by a discreet and careful use of abstinence. I am not praising the pleasures of the anchorite; his is an undiscriminating experience upon quite a lower plane; but, oh, restraint, the discipline of the greedy instinct, how it brings out the colours of life! To have learnt this lesson only makes it worth while to have come through the world. People to whom a roof is normal have never, I venture to say, known the sense of shelter I feel to-day, the full enclosure of the four walls, the independence of the dry floor. The hill-man who watches the long slant of the rain into the valley from a cave out there on the road to Thibet, where a little heap of cold embers often tell of such a one's refuging, may offer

me intelligent sympathy — I should criticise any one else's.

Meanwhile I have been criticising other things. The house is a place of shelter; it is also a place of confinement, and there are corners where the blessed air does not sufficiently circulate. This as an abstraction is generally accepted, but unless you pass a good deal of time out-of-doors you can never know it as a fact. It is not perhaps the happiest result of living in the open air that to the nose thus accustomed there are twice as many smells in the world as there were before. I have been discovering them in various places this morning, here a suggestion of kerosene, there a flavour of cheese, in another spot a reminiscence of Tiglath-Pileser's pipe. I even pretend to know that it was his meerschaum and not his brier, though Thisbe thinks this preposterous. Thisbe thinks me preposterous altogether, vainly sniffing for the odours which offend me, and begging me to desist from opening windows and letting in the rain. Dumboo, more practical, goes care-

fully round after me, and closes each in turn as soon as I have left the room, with an air of serious perturbation, — who can be *jewabdeh* — answer-giving — for the acts of a mad mistress? I have finally subsided as near as possible to the window in the breakfast-room, with the garden and the rain outside. It has been given me to understand that I am to have a present shortly, and I may choose my present. For some time I have been vainly revolving the matter; the world seems so full of desirable articles that one does not want; but here an inspiration visits me — *I will have another window in the breakfast-room.* There is plenty of room for it, nothing but a wall in the way. Where this blank wall, covered with wall-paper, now blocks the vision, another square of garden shall appear; it will let in a line of blue hill, most of the pencil cedar, a corner of the rose-bushes, and a whole company of poppies and corn-bottles. A carpenter from Jullunder will make it in a week, — Jullunder thrives upon the export of carpenters to the hills, — and it

will be a most delicious present, giving a pleasure every morning freshly new, much better than anything that would have to be locked up in a drawer. Also, when we go away I shall be able, without a pang of self-sacrifice, to leave it behind for the enjoyment of other people, which is quite the most pleasing kind of benefit to confer.

Very heavily it descends, this first burst of the rains. The garden is bowed under it; from far and near comes the sound of rushing water down the khud-sides. The great valleys beyond the paling are brimful of grey, impenetrable vapour, as if the clouds, even in dissolving, were too heavy to carry themselves. From my asylum nothing appears to stir or speak except the rain. The day weeps fast and stormily, as if night might fall before she had half deplored enough.

It would be dull at the window but for the discovery I have made in the banksia over the arched trellis which stands, for no purpose at all, across the garden walk that runs round the roses. Here I strongly

suspect the brown bird has an establishment, and a sitting hen. So long as I myself sat in the garden I never guessed it, he was too clever; but he did not dream, I suppose, that I would take to spying upon him in ambush like this, and from here his conduct looks most husbandly. The brown bird joined us one afternoon about a fortnight ago, while we were having tea on the verandah. He perched on a flower-pot, and hinted, in the most engaging way, that the ground was baked and worms were scarce, and we made him feel so welcome to crumbs that he has constantly dropped in upon us since. He is most venturesome with us; he will run under our chairs and under the table, and he loves to slip in and out of hiding among the flower-pots. He goes with little leaps and bounds, like a squirrel; and he whistles with such melody that one might very well think him a thrush. I thought him a thrush, until one afternoon Tiglath-Pileser said aggressively, "I don't believe that bird is a thrush."

"Pray, then," said I, "what is he?"

"He belongs, nevertheless," said Tiglath-Pileser judicially, "to the *Passeres*."

"If I asked your name," said Delia, who was there, "I should not be grateful to be told that you were one of the primates," and we laughed at the master of the house.

"Wait a bit," said he, "I should call him a robin."

"He's got no red breast," I brought forth, out of the depth of my ignorance.

"He has a reddish spot under each ear," said Tiglath-Pileser, "and mark how his tail turns up."

"I am no ornithologist," I said. "His tail turns up."

"How little one realizes," quoth Thisbe, pensively, "that a bird has ears."

"I think," said Tiglath-Pileser, "that I can decide this matter," and disappeared into the house.

"He has gone to get a book," said Delia, "that will settle *you*, dear lady, you and your thrush," and presently he came out triumphant, as she said, with "Wanderings of a Naturalist in India."

"'Although differing altogether in the colour of its plumage from the European robin,'" he read aloud, "'there is great similarity in their habits. It frisks before the door, and picks up crumbs, jerking its tail as it hops along. How often have associations of home been brought to mind by seeing this pretty little warbler pursuing its gambols before the door of an Eastern bungalow!'"

"Well," said I, "not often, because of course we did n't recognize it, but in future they always will be," and at that moment the pretty little warbler put himself in profile on the paling before us, and threw out his little waistcoat, and threw back his little head and whistled, and we all cried out that he had established his identity, there could not be any doubt of it, in face of that brave and dainty attitude. There are some things a bird never could pick up.

So it is a robin that has gone to housekeeping there in the close-cut banksia. He is a devoted mate; he knows by heart, perhaps by experience, how necessary it is to

encourage, dull little wives on the nest; and, neglectful of the hard-beating storm, he perches as near her as may be and sends out every dulcet variation he can think of. To the prisoner in the house it seems a supreme note of hope, this bird singing in the rain.

Chapter XV

I FIND it desirable to sit more and more out in the rain. A little stouter protection, a little more determination, and the cane-chair will soon weather anything. There are still tempestuous half-hours which drive me as far as the verandah, but I am growing every day more used to the steady beat and drip about my defences, and I now know precisely the term of resistance of every umbrella in the house. One after the other I put them to the proof; on a really wet day I discourage three or four. An occasional pelting of my person does not trouble me, I am very water-proof; but when drops descend upon this fair page and confuse its sentiments I call loudly for another umbrella. Constantly, no doubt, the cane-chair under the conifer grows a stranger spectacle; but my family have become ac-

customed to it and there is no one else to see. The occasional rickshaw that passes along the road above pays attention to nothing, but goes as fast as it can, with the hood up, like a deranged beetle, and if any one rides past it is with bent head and flying mackintosh. I have the world very much to myself, most of the mountains when I can see them, and all the garden. And it is full of rewards and satisfactions, this rainy world. The wind that pushes the clouds up here blows over a thousand miles of sun and sand and draws a balm from the desert to mingle with its cool dampness, delicious to breathe, like a cooled drink to the lungs. It cannot be tasted in the house because of the prevailing flavour of carpets and curtains. Nor can anybody know, who has not sat out under it, the delight of the slow termination of a shower, the spacing lines and the sparser drop-dancers on the gravel, the jolly irregular drip from the branches on your umbrella, the wraiths of mist skimming over the drive and the faint thin veil slanting against the deodars into which it all dis-

solves. So invariably we are careful to wait in the house "until it is over,' — quite over. A pencil cedar too, very wet, with a drop at the end of every spine, and a soft gray light shining through it, is a good thing to look up into. "As if it were candied," as Thisbe politely conceded, and departed at once into the house out of the damp.

For the first time, I have this year a rains garden. It is a thing anybody may have, but very few people do. As a rule gardens in our part of the world are handed over in the rains to slugs and their own resources. The resources of a garden, left to itself, are hardly ever suspected. It is impossible, people say, to keep it down, and they sit comfortably in the house looking out upon the impossibility. In the hot weather they say it is impossible to keep it up. They complain that they are here for so short a time that it is not worth while to do anything. Most people are transitory in our little town, certainly; it is generally only a year or two in Paradise and then down again into the Pit, but why that year or two should

be thought less worth than others of their lives I never can quite understand. Especially as a flower takes such a little while to come to you. But people are just people.

To me of course, peculiarly situated under a conifer, a rains garden was a peremptory necessity, and I have had it in my mind's eye for months. There was an unavoidable fortnight, when the earlier flowers were going out and the others only answering my invitation as it were, promising to come, which was not quite cheerful. The sweet-peas fluttered for days about the verandah before they would submit to be beaten down, and the roses, those that were left, looked up as if they had been for a long time in ladies' bonnets. The mignonette grew leggy and curious, spreading in all directions and forgetting to flower, with a smell, moreover, like decaying cabbage, deplorable in mignonette; and the petunias went off with draggled petticoats, which must have been distressing to a flower whose principal virtue is her neat and buxom appearance. The snapdragons and the corn-bottles are just

holding on anyhow and the phloxes seem not to know what to do; but the poppies were dashed out in a single night, and quantities of things in pots have been considerately removed by Atma to the back parts, there to meet dissolution in private.

But now everything that craves or loves the rain is coming on. I should not be so proud of my potato-vine; I did not plant it, but somebody probably, who looked down from here and saw the flame of the mutiny light up the land. He has my thanks; he has left for himself a steadfast memorial. So eager is it to do him credit that every hot weather shower a twig will clothe itself in white; and now, when the time is fully come it trembles everywhere over the paling against the sky and heaps up its blossoms among its glossy leaves like snow. That is not idle simile; it takes blue shadows and fills up chinks, it is exactly like snow. The verandah is odorous with lilies, from the tall curling Japanese kind, as opulent as a lily can be to the simple and delicate day lilies that love this world so little. All the lilies

live in the verandah except the strenuous peppered orange kind which Tiglath-Pileser declares is not the tiger-lily and which bears itself most gallantly under the rain, standing like a street lamp in the darkest corners, and those strange crimson and yellow Tigridæ (I am sorry I do not know their Christian name) that roll up so unexpectedly with us in the middle of the morning. I must say I like a flower that you can depend upon. Mr. Johnson speaks contemptuously of the Tigridæ, so I suppose they are common enough, but to me they were new and very remarkable, and when they began to come out asked Thalia to lunch to see them. When she arrived, at two o'clock, every one of them had gone into the likeness of a duck's head, with a satirical red and yellow eye that almost winked at us. I was prepared to ask Thalia to admire the Tigridæ, but such conduct puts one off. I am still willing to concede that it is wonderful; but you do not want a flower to astonish you; its functions are quite different. I have taken occasion to point out this to

Thisbe, when she complains that she is not original.

Tall stocks of tuberose — quite three feet — stand among the rose bushes in front of the drawing-room windows; but they turn brown almost as fast as they open; next year I will plant them under the eaves for more shelter. A clump of cannas, spikes of flame, waving splendid Italian and African leaves, red-brown and brown-green, with coleas of all colours sitting round their feet, lord it at chosen corners on each side of the drive. Even on a shelf you may have features; it is all a matter of relation. If your scale is only simple enough the most surprising incident is possible; and of this the moral certainly lies in the application of it. Masses of pink and white hydrangeas on this principle make the garden look like a Japanese print; they are so big and blotchy and yet so simply, elegantly effective. They are distributed wherever a tub will improve the shelf-scape; like Diogenes the hydrangea must have its tub. Put him in the ground and at once he grows woody and branchy

and leafy, imagining perhaps that he is intended to become a shrub. Thus he can be seen to profit by his limitations — of how many more of us may this be said! The lobelia — a garden should always be provided with plenty of lobelia, to give it hope — is flushing into the thick young leaf with a twinkle here and there to show what it could do if the rain would stop for just ten minutes; and the salvia is presently blue, though sparingly, as is its nature. The fuchsias care nothing for the rain and are full of flounces purple and pink; but nobody takes it quite like the begonias, who sit up unblinking crimson and brick-dust and mother-of-pearl, with their gay yellow hearts in their splendid broad petals, saying plainly "We like this." And dahlias everywhere, single and double, opening a cheerful eye upon a very wet world. The dahlia took possession of Simla — I have looked it up — the same year the Gove.nment of India did, and it has made itself equally at home. It grows profusely not only in our bits of garden but everywhere along the khud-sides

that border the public highways. It mixes itself up with Finance and Foreign Relations; it nods under the Telegraph Office and sways about the Military Department. It does as it pleases, no one attempts to govern it; it paints our little mountain town with the colours of fantasy and of freedom.

Sunflowers and nasturtiums take as kindly to bureaucratic conditions. We consider them fellows of the baser sort and plant them all behind, the sunflower tall along the lattice between us and the road above, the nasturtiums scrambling and blazing down the khud-side beneath. The nasturtiums make a mere cloth of gold, there is not much entertainment to be got out of them; but on heavily pouring days when I have betaken myself to the attic-window level with them, I have found good company in the sunflowers. Thoughtfully considered, the sunflower has no features to speak of; an eye, and you have mentioned them all, yet many comedians might envy that furnishing. His personality is evasive; I have idly tried

to draw him, and have reproduced a sunflower but no gentleman. It lies in a nuance of light across that expressive round, which may say anything, or merely stare. One looks intelligently to the west, another hopefully to the east. Two little ones cower together; another glances confidently up at its tall mother, another folds its leaves under its chin and considers the whole question of life with philosophy. On a particularly wet day I find a note to the effect that a small sunflower called across to me, "I am just out this morning and it's pouring. A nice look-out, but I'll try to bear up." That was the day on which I distinctly saw a sunflower shut its eye.

With Tiglath-Pileser everything is secondary at present to the state of the drains and the kitchen roof. The drains are open channels down the khud-side, the kitchen roof is of tin, and when it leaks enough to put the fire out the cook comes and complains. He is a Moog cook, which means that he prefers to avoid the disagreeable, so he waits until it is actually out before he

says anything. When, between showers, we walk abroad upon the shelf my footsteps naturally tend to the border where the wild puce-coloured Michaelmas daisies are thickening among the goldenrod, and his would take the straightest direction to the plumber and the coolies who are making another stone ditch for him. To me there is no joy in repairing a kitchen roof, nor can I ever decide whether it should be tarred or painted, while to Tiglath-Pileser the union of Michaelmas daisies and goldenrod, though pleasing, is a matter of trivial importance. So we have agreed upon the principle of a fair partition of interest. He comes and assumes moderate enthusiasm before my hedge of purple and yellow; I go and pronounce finally that nothing could be uglier than either paint or tar for the kitchen roof. By such small compromises as these people may hold each other in the highest estimation for years.

The consideration of the kitchen roof reminds me of poor Delia, from whom I had a letter this morning. She has rejoined

her husband in a frontier outpost, where the Department of Military Works had somewhat neglected their quarters. Their position — that of Captain and Mrs. Delia — in this weather is trying to a degree. In a particularly heavy storm recently the rain came in upon them in such floods that they were obliged to take refuge under the table. Imagine the knock of a stranger at the gate under such circumstances! It was better than that — it was the knock of a wayfaring Sapper come to *inspect the bungalow*. How great must Delia's joy have been in making him comfortable under the table! And there they sat, all three, for fifteen mortal hours, subsisting, for the cook-house was carried away, upon ginger-nuts and chocolates and a bottle of anchovies. The more remote service of Her Majesty our Queen-Empress involves some curious situations. The Sapper, Delia writes, went forth no longer a stranger; fifteen hours spent together under a table would naturally make a bond for life. One might also trust Delia, whose mission is everywhere to strike

a note of gaiety and make glad the heart of man, to give the circumstance a character sufficiently memorable. Almost, if four would not have been a crowd, I could have wished myself there too, under the table.

Chapter XVI

I HAVE heard crying in the nursery; it is the most babyish and plaintive repetition of the old birds' note, but it grows daily stronger, more importunate. The parent birds utter six notes, dwelling on the fourth in long musical appeal, the babies have learned only the fourth, the one that really tells when you are hungry; it is a little pipe, ridiculous to tears. The pretty little warbler pursues his gambols more energetically than ever before the door of our Eastern bungalow now, his wife comes with him and they are more punctual than we are at meals, always in the verandah, on the impatient hop, for breakfast and lunch and tea, though dinner-time finds them reluctantly in bed. I will go so far as to say that if I am late in the morning the father bird comes to my window and asks whether I am aware that I am keeping

two families waiting — if that is not his idea why does he so markedly whistle there? Further I expect to be believed when I say that I whistle him my apologies and he replies, and we frequently have quite long conversations through the window before I actually appear. They are such a young couple and so absorbed in their domestic affairs that we take a great interest in them. It is a delight to find out a bird's doings and plans, and his nest is the only clue. At other times how private they are, the birds! We know that they are about, and that is all.

One real service I have been able to render the robins — in throwing stones at the crows. The crow has a sleek and clerical exterior, but inside he is as black-hearted a villain as wears feathers. He is a killer and eater of other people's offspring. Early in the season he marks the nest, but eggs are not good enough for him, he waits until hatching time is well over and then descends upon it with his great sharp jaws ravaging and devouring. The other day a young

bird took refuge from a crow in my bath-room. It was huddled up in a corner and I thought it a rat, but closer approach revealed it a baby mina, and through the open door I saw the enemy's impudent black head peering in. He sailed away with imprecations on his beak and the mina was restored to its family; Atma fortunately knew where they lived. Two crows have marked our robins for their next dinner, and I am much interrupted by the necessity for disappointing them. I must say one is not disposed by such a circumstance as a nest to an over-confident belief in those disguising arrangements of nature that are so much vaunted in books of popular science. What could betray a nestful to the marauder more quickly than this perpetual treble chorus? Nothing, I am sure, unless the valiant declamation of its papa, who sometimes takes an exposed perch and tells the world exactly what he would do to a crow, if he could only catch him. Why are not young birds taught the wisdom of silence and old ones the folly of vaunting? Because birds and lizards and insects and

things are not taught half as much as we imagine, and as to the protective colour of a robin I believe it only happens to be brown. In this Thisbe agrees with me; the amount of popular science which is not in Thisbe's possession would make many a humble home happy. The small events of a garden, as I must apologize for pointing out once more, become important to any one who lies all day, warm or cold, awake or sleepy there, and I went in to tea iately bursting with the information that the tits had come. "The Titts," said Thisbe meditatively. "Did we know them last year?" "I rather think we did," I replied, "Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Titt. I saw them this morning, but they did n't leave cards." At which I was obliged to dodge a suddenly illumined, perfectly undeserved sofa-cushion.

The garden is full of birds just now; they are for ever wanting to make new introductions, it is almost impossible to pursue the simplest train of thought. None of them are very constant except the robins and the woodpeckers and a pair of minas that have

built in a disused chimney and squeal defiance at the crows all day long from the eavestrough, — no crow was ever yet bold enough to go down a chimney after his prey. The rest come and go, I never know what they are at, or even, to tell the truth, how to address them. They appear suddenly out of nowhere and fly in companies from tree to tree, or settle down to an industrious meal all together under the rose-bushes, as if by common consent they had decided to picnic there; perhaps I shall not see them again for two or three days. Among the branches they take one direction, the tiny tree-climbers with yellow-green breasts are like young leaves flying. They add to life a charming note of the unexpected, these sudden flights of little birds; I wish I knew them to speak to. . . .

It must be explained that this is the following day, and that an event of a very disturbing kind has taken place in the mean time. The rain was coming down in sheets this morning as Tiglath-Pileser and I stood by the window after breakfast. From the

nest in the banksia came the most keen and mournful protest. For an instant it would stop when the old birds came and filled the little throats; then the plaint against life and circumstances, quite heartbreaking in accents so youthful, would begin again, and go on until it seemed to us too grievous to be borne. Heavily and heavily fell the rain. "I wonder the little beasts are n't drowned out," said Tiglath-Pileser. The close-cut roof of the banksia seemed a very poor protection to persons standing in the house.

"Could n't we do something?" I suggested "An umbrella?" but Tiglath-Pileser thought an umbrella would be too difficult to fix. He went away, however, and out of his own wisdom and understanding he produced a mackintosh. This with a walking-stick and infinite pains and precautions he spread over the banksia, the rain descending upon his devoted head, I admonishing from the window. The crying ceased instantly, and though we waited for some minutes it did not recommence. Evidently

the little things were more comfortable, perhaps they had gone to sleep. "That," said I to Tiglath-Pileser as he turned away, "was a real kindness."

Half an hour later I was still at the window. No sound from the nest. At a little distance the mother bird hopped about anxiously, something evidently on her mind. I watched her for a long time and she did not go up to the nest. "The old birds," thought I, "are afraid of the mackintosh. It is better to drown than to starve," and I picked my way out among the puddles with a chair in one hand and an umbrella in the other and managed to get the thing off. And there at the foot of the trellis sat a little helpless bunch of feathers with round bright eyes and a heart beating inside, — a baby robin tumbled out.

I picked the adventurer up and to[illegible] him into the house. He regarded me without distrust, comfortable in the warmth of my hand, but when I put him down he sent out no uncertain sound to say that he was unfriended. I have often tried to feed fledge-

lings, it is an impossible charge; and my advice as to this one was to put him on the window-ledge where his mother might do it. There he sat up with his back to the world and, looking at me with confidence, unexpectedly opened wide his preposterous futile yellow beak. It was as if a gnome had suddenly spoken — before the gaping demand I was helpless, full of consternation. "You pathetic little idiot," I reflected aloud, "what can *I* do for you!" and of course by the time bread and water arrived the beak was hermetically sealed, as usual. I sat down with confidence, however, to await events, and presently the small brown mother, saying all sorts of things in an undertone, came slipping in and out among the rose-stems below; and with much relief I saw the wanderer drop over the sill and join her. They made off together very quietly, and again I watched, uneasily, the nest. No sound, no parent birds, and as time went on still silence and abandonment. I decided that the young ones had been drowned or chilled to death before we thought of protecting

them, that the friendly mackintosh had come too late; and in some depression I went out to see. By standing on a chair I could just reach, and thrusting my hand through the wet leaves I felt for the little corpses. The nest was empty!

It is a novel and rather a laughable sensation to be taken in — completely sold — by a bird. How she managed it I cannot imagine, for it all happened under my eyes and I saw nothing, but one by one she must have enticed her family out into a most unattractive world some days before their time, alarmed at the shrouding mackintosh. The last had got only as far as the foot of the trellis when I found it. She had outwitted Providence. I sent for Atma and together we prowled and searched about the garden in the lessening rain. Presently he paused beside the closest tangles of the potato creeper, "*Chupsie!*"[1] said he — the word was half a whisper, half a soft whistle — and bent down. I looked too, and there

[1] Quietly.

they sat in a row, three soft, surprised, obedient little feather-balls, well hidden, and waiting no doubt to see what in this astonishing wilderness would happen next. I got back to the window in time to receive the parent birds' opinion of me, full-throated, unabridged. They poured it out from perches commanding the banksia, from which they could see the Thing removed and their premature flitting quite foolish and futile. Plainly they connected me with the horrid dream that for an hour had cloaked all their horizon, and it *was* a murderous scolding. Ten days of steady rain and then this misfortune! Every other bird was silent in shelter, only these two poured forth their tale of dolorous injustice. What weather to be obliged to fledge in — pretty accommodation for a young family in a potato-creeper! Was I not aware that they had been brought up in the rains themselves, hatched exactly this time last year? Could I not conceive that they might be able to mind their own business? "When you have quite finished,"

I whistled humbly, "I'll explain," but I couldn't get a word in, as the saying is, edgeways, and finally I fled, leaving them still expressing their opinion of well-intentioned people.

Chapter XVII

WE have arrived at September and the rains are "breaking." For two months and a half they have trampled upon us steadily, armies on the march; now they come in scattered battalions and make off as if pursued. The attack, too, is as erratic; it will hammer hard upon the kitchen while not a drop falls on the verandah, or a great slant will sweep down the nearest valley while we look on in dry security from the shelf. Here in the garden a wall of mist will often surround me, with the sun shining brightly inside; it turns the shelf into a room, and makes one think of the impalpable barrier of one's environment, possible to break in any direction but never broken, always there, the bound of one's horizon and the limit of one's activities. I wonder if Tiglath-Pileser will call that far-fetched.

Thin, ragged, white clouds sail over the rose-bushes, just low enough to touch the fresh red shoots, which are now as lovely to look at, all in new curling leaf, as ever they can be in full rose time. That of course is written when there are no roses here to contradict me. There is one red-brown tone that one never sees except on a new leafing rose-bush and in the eyes of some animals, and there is a purple which is mixed nowhere else at all. And it all shines — how it shines! — under the soft cloud fringes, and when by accident a full-hearted deep-pink rose comes and sits alone among these young twigs and sprays the sight gives that strange ache of pleasure that hints how difficult perpetual ecstasy would be to bear. The rose-bed sleeps in the rains, but it sleeps with one eye open; I seldom look in vain for at least one flower. Now it is full of buds; the rose of yesterday is only waiting for to-morrow. Maréchal Niels have waited in a different way; they have not put out new roses but they have clung obstinately to the old ones. "At once the silken tassel of my purse tear, and its

treasure on the garden throw" is no part of the Maréchal Niel's philosophy. It hangs a heavy head and clings ery petal, reluctantly giving up day by a moiety of its sweetness and lasting so rranrably long that in sheer indignation quently cut off its head. The garden rei ces wildly now, all the rains-flowers are gayer than ever, and daily confess to the sun tha th never really pretended to do without hi . A new lease of vitality has spru ng up everywhere; even the poor sticks that Atma has propped up the dahlias with, ha for ot at they have been cut off untimely and re trying to bud. There is sadness in this will not consider . .

The crows are moved to speak in all sorts of strange languages, including good deal of English. One took his seat on the very swaying top of a deodar this morning and distinctly ejaculated "Oh *Bother!* Oh *Bother!* Oh *Bother!*" with a guttural throaty emphasis that excited me at last to an unfriendly stone; whereat he went from bad to worse and cursed me. The crow

that superintends the East is a strange bird, never happy, seldom in a good humour. He declaims, he soliloquizes, he frequently flies off and says "I'll enquire;" but his principal note is that of simple derision and he plainly finds humbug in everything. He has no period of tender innocence; some crows are older than others but nobody has ever seen a young crow. There is nothing like him in England; the rooks make as much noise perhaps, but only for a little while in the evening; the crow's comment upon life is perpetual. Remote, across a valley, it is a kind of fantastic chorus to the reckless course of men; overhead it is a criticism of the most impertinent and espionage without warrant. These, of course, are only country crows; in the cities, like other bad characters, they take greater liberties, becoming more objectionable by sophistication.

The butterflies have come back as if by appointment; one big blue and black fellow is carrying on a violent flirtation with a fuchsia under my very nose. She has n't much honey, and he, according to Tiglath-

Pileser has hardly anything to extract it with. I fear, in the cynicism of our contemporary Gauls, *il perd terriblement son temps*, but it seems to amuse them both, and why comment more severely upon the charming fooling of affinities? The butterflies alight so differently now upon the gravel drive, which is still glistening wet; they pause there on lightest tiptoe with waving wings; a butterfly hates cold feet. The bees are as busy and as cheery as ever; I have wasted the last ten minutes in watching a bumble-bee, with the most persuasive hum, sucking the last of their sweetness out of the corn-bottles. The bee clings and the flower drops over; the old pretty garden idyll never loses its power to please. Dear me, if it would always rain and be unattractive I might get something done; as it is . . . That was rather a sharp shower, and I noticed that the hawk-moth courting the salvias, braved it through. One would have thought that the big drops would have reduced him to a tiny ball of wet fluff in two minutes, but he has gone on darting

from flower to flower quite indifferent. Last night a hawk-moth dined with us, on the dahlias in the middle of the table. He thought it a charming sunny day under the lamps, and enjoyed himself enormously, only leaving with the ladies as he objected to tobacco. We should be delighted to see him again.

A morning ride, I am glad to say, is not considered an adventure into the world, and morning rides are again possible without the risk of a drenching. I have left Pat and Arabi in the seclusion of their stables all this time, but for no fault, as we should say if we were selling them. Horses, I fear I am of those who fondly think, were created first in a mood of pure pleasure, and a careful Providence then made men to look after them. I should not like to tell Thisbe this; she takes the orthodox view about the succession of beasts and it might make her consider one unsound; but I do not mind saying it in print where it is likely to do less harm. Besides, my friend the Bengal Lancer entirely agrees with me, and that

is what one might call a professional opinion. Pat and Arabi came walking in on the shelf one spring morning a year and a half ago, very meek and sorry for themselves, having climbed up every one of fifty-eight miles and seven thousand feet on very little, probably, but hay. They came out of a kicking, squealing herd in the Rawalpindi fair, where Tiglath-Pileser bought them on a day with their full respective equipment of hill-ropes, a ragged blanket, a tin bucket and a valet for less than twenty pounds apiece. The price seems low when you consider that Arabi's papa was a Persian of pedigree and Pat's an English thoroughbred. It is due to certain liberal provisions of an all-wise Government which nobody is compelled to discuss except the officials of the Remount Department. It will be enough to say that we do not boast of their connections on the maternal side, and painfully try to subdue all characteristics which seem to hark back that way. Their siring is by dirty scrip established, but in this country it is a wise foal that knows his

own mother. Arabi has a pink streak on his nose which was plainly one of his mother's charms, but this, as I cannot see it when I am on his back, troubles me less than his four white stockings and hoofs to match, which were also bequeathed to him by her. But his glossy coat and the arch of his neck and his paces he inherits from his more distinguished parent, after whom also we have had the weakness to name him. I don't like to think of Arabi's tie with the country; she probably went in an ekka[1] with a string of blue beads across her forehead; but Pat's mother's family was pure tribal Waziri, which means that with the manners and make of your English sire you come into the world with the wiry alertness your maternal grandfather learned in getting round lofty mountain corners in a hurry, and a way of lifting your feet in trotting over stony country that is pretty to see, and a pride in your dark grey coat and iron muscles that there is no need to conceal either. Of course you may also inherit the

[1] Country cart.

Waziri irritability of temperament. Pat, in a moment of annoyance, one day early last season, cow-kicked the Head of the Army Veterinary Department, but that was before he had been long enough in Simla to know who people were. He would not dream of doing such a thing now; at least he might dream of it, but that is all. He is a noble animal and he has his ambitions. I sometimes think they are directed against the pair of fat Australian cobs that draw the carriage of the Commander-in-Chief. Waziris of all classes dislike the Commander-in-Chief; and Pat may very well have a blood feud on his hoofs to avenge.

Pat is the prouder, the more daring animal of the two; Arabi merely champs and pretends to bite his groom to show that he too is of noble blood. Pat will take the lead past a perambulator any day and will only slightly consider a length of unexpected drain pipe along the road. But even Pat has his objects of suspicion, and chief among them is a man, any man on foot in black clothes. At such a person he will always

shy violently. This is a cause of great inconvenience and embarrassment to us. There is one perfectly inoffensive gentleman, rather stout, who beams upon the world through his spectacles with unvarying amiability, whose perfectly respectable occupation no doubt compels him to wear black, and whom it is our misfortune constantly to meet. Neither soft words nor smiting will induce Pat to pass this person without a wild affrighted curve away from him. The first time he smiled; the second time he looked mildly surprised; the third time he mantled with indignation, and now he always mantles. It has gone, I assure you, quite beyond a joke. And we, what can *we* do? You cannot apologize for a thing like that. One's usual course when a pony shies is to take him up to the object and let him sniff it so that he will know better the next time, but how ask an elderly self-respecting gentleman to allow himself to be sniffed in that way? This morning I saw the object coming, and had an inspiration. "Let us turn round," said I to Tig

lath-Pileser, "and let him pass *us*." So we turned and waited, with the air of expecting some one from the opposite direction. The man in black came nervously on and Tiglath-Pileser laid a reassuring hand on Pat's neck. Would you believe it, Pat stood like an angel, and *the man in black shied!* Shied badly. And went on looking more furious than ever. We daily expect to have some kind of writ served on us, and do not at all know what steps we should take.

The ponies went excitedly this morning, as they always do after a storm like the one we had last night. "Ridiculous animal," said I to Arabi as he paused to look askance at a small boulder that had slipped down the khud. "This is the same old road you travelled many yesterdays and will travel many to-morrows. Foolish beast, of what are you afraid?" Tiglath-Pileser reproved me. "To us," said he, "it is the same old road, but to a really observant person like Arabi it presents fifty significant changes. He in his stable listened to the rain last night with emotions quite different from

yours in your bed. To him it meant that the young grass was everywhere springing and the turf everywhere softening under foot, and no doubt he reflected once more upon the insoluble problem presented by heel-ropes and your meals in a trough. This morning his experienced eye discovers all he expected and more, — puddles, channels, and other suspicious circumstances. That stone was not there yesterday, no doubt a wild beast had unearthed it and was sitting behind it as we passed, waiting for just such a breakfast as Arabi knows he comprises. That the wild beast didn't happen to be there on this occasion was great luck for Arabi and you can see he is relieved."

"Well," said I, unsympathetic, "I think a good deal of it is nonsense all the same," and as we approached the next lurking lion I gave Arabi a sound cuff that drew off his attention and he cantered past it without a word.

The familiar road wound round our own hill, the Roy-Regent's hill crowned with his castle, and Summer Hill. It would

entertaining to be as observant as Arabi and find wonders round every curve; we come far short of that and sometimes confess the great book of nature before us a little dull for lack of the writing of man. It is possible that mountains may suggest mere altitude, especially mountains like the Himalayas, wall behind wall, waves transfixed in long unbroken lines against the sky; one cannot always feel a passion of admiration for mere matter at an inconvenient level. But their new mood of the rains makes them beautiful, almost interesting. The mist rises among them and turns them cleverly into the peaks and masses they ought to be, and a slope flashes in the brilliant sun and a ravine sinks in the purple shade, and the barest shoulder is cloaked in green velvet. "They would give a good deal to see *that* from the Row," I say boastfully, and Tiglath-Pileser responds "Yes indeed," and we both look at it as if we were the proprietors, momentarily almost inclined to admit it as a compensation.

The jungle triumphs in the rains; it

overwhelms the place. Even on the shelf it is hard enough to cope with, creeping up, licking and lipping the garden through the paling; but out upon the public khud-sides it is unchecked and insatiable. We hate the jungle; it is so patient and designing and unremitting, so much stronger than we are. Such constant war we have to make upon it merely to prevent it from swallowing us alive. It will plant a toadstool in your bedroom and a tree in your roof; it shrinks from nothing. That is why we hear newcomers from tidy England in rapture upon the glorious freedom of the wilderness with grim displeasure; and point to the crooked squares of our pathetic little estates, painfully redeemed and set smugly about with posies, saying "Admire *that!*" And it is so demoralizing, the jungle. The oak, for instance, at home, is a venerable person we all respect and some of us used to worship. Here he is a disreputable old Bacchus with an untrimmed beard and ferns sticking to his branches. Certain English flowers even, alas that I should say it! have left the paths of

propriety and taken permanently to unregulated living. The dahlia has never repented, and the tiger-lilies brazen it out, but the little blue face of a convolvulus I met this morning, strayed away in the company of a snake-plant and a young rhododendron, said with wistful plainness, "I was a virtuous flower once!"

Everything is still very damp, and in the shade very chill, and we were glad enough to escape the cloud that suddenly sobered the highway just as we turned in upon the shelf. A figure moved along the road in the greyness, came closer, making automatic movements of head and hands, passed us — a coolie eating a cucumber. It was a long and thick cucumber, and he was eating the rind and the seeds, everything. It seemed a cold, unsuitable, injudicious thing for even a coolie to eat in the rain. We hoped it was vicious indulgence, but we feared it was his breakfast.

Chapter XVIII

WE have entered upon the period of our great glory and content; it is second summer in these hills, with just a crisp hint of autumn coming. There is nothing left of the rains but their benediction; all day long the sun draws the scent out of the deodars and makes false promises to the garden, where they believe it is spring. The field-daisies and the hollyhocks and the mignonette are all in second bloom and the broom down the khud has kindled up again. The person who is really puzzled is the lilac. We have a lilac bush. I assure you it is not everybody who can say so in the town of Simla; the lilac is most capricious about where she will stay and where she won't stay. We have only one; all her children either die young or grow up dwarfs. However, after blooming in the most delicious and heartbreaking man-

ner in April, fainting through June and going quite distracted in the rains, the lilac now finds new sap in her veins and the temptation assails her to flower regardless of the calendar. Yet she does n't, poor dear, quite know how; something is lacking to the consummation of April, and the fictitious joy she grasps at comes out in ragged little bunches that stick straight up at the end of the wood of the topmost branches. Nevertheless it is pure lilac, enough for a buttonhole, and matter to boast of, lilac in October.

For all these reasons I was perfectly happy this morning until twenty minutes past ten o'clock. Atma and I had been transplanting some cactus dahlias to fill up an empty place. It is a liberty I would n't have taken at this time of year, but Atma says that he can deceive the dahlias. "By giving much water," he explains, "they will take no notice," and he has been craftily setting them down in little ponds. I had a dispute with him about a plant, which he declared was a lily. To settle the matter, as soon as my back was turned, he dug it up,

and triumphantly sought me. "Behold," said he, "it has an onion." He was distressed to contradict me, but behold it *had* an onion. The connection between an onion and a lily was simpler perhaps to Atma than it would be to many people; but I conceded it. Then came a pedlar of apples from a neighbouring garden. We shall have apples of our own in time, but our neighbour down the khud thought of it three or four years before we did, and there is no particular reason to wait. Our neighbour's sturdy retailer squatted discouraged on his haunches before me. His brown muscles stood out in cords on his arms and legs, his face was anxious and simple like a child's. "If your honour will listen," said he, "half over Simla I have carried this burden of apples, and it is no lighter. My words are good and I go always to the verandah, but the sahib-folk will not buy."

"And is that," said I, eyeing the fruit, "a strange thing, worthy of?"

He picked up an apple and held it disparagingly, at arm's-length, in front of him.

"Certainly they are going rotten," said he simply. "And the more they rot the louder is the anger of the mistress when I carry them back. Your honour will listen — if apples rot is it the fault of the servant? No," he answered himself with solid conviction, "it is the fault of God."

He sat in the sun content — content to sit and talk of his grievance with his load on the ground. I smiled at his dilemma, and he smiled back; but gravity quickly overtook him, it was a serious matter.

"Seven days ago, when they were sound," he went on, "the gardener himself took them and sold many. Now he gives me the command, and because I do not sell there is talk of a donkey."

"Truly you are no donkey, worthy one," said I soothingly. "All the donkeys are employed by the washermen to carry home the clothes. You are a large, fine, useful Pahari. What is the price of the apples? Some of them are good."

"It is true talk that the mistress said ten annas a seer," he replied eagerly, "but if

your honour wishes to pay eight annas I will say that your honour, seeing the rottenness, would give no more."

I would not profit by the rottenness since it did not concern me, so he picked out of his best for me with exclamations, "Lo, how it is red!" "Listen, this one will be a honey-wallah!" and almost more polishing than I could bear. The cloud departed from his honest face, it was that I had paid for; and when Tiglath-Pileser passing by said that I had been imposed upon I was indignant. He, the master, would not have an apple though they are really very good, and neither do I feel so disposed; they must be made into a pudding. We talked for a little while of the annoyance of reaching that critical time of life when one looks askance at a casual apple. In early youth it is a trifle to be appropriated at any hour; between the ages of ten and fourteen it is preferable the last thing before going to bed. After that ensues a period of indifference, full of the conviction that there are things in the world more interesting than apples; and

by the time one again realizes that there is nothing half so good, circumstances have changed so that it is most difficult to decide when to eat them. A raw apple in the American fashion before breakfast is admitted by the mass of mankind to have a too discouraging effect upon everything else, and all will grant that it is impossible to do justice to its flavour, impossible to cope with it in any way, after a meal. It is not elusive — like the grape or the lychee; it is far too much on the spot. There remains the impromptu occasion, but you have long since come to regard with horror anything "between meals." A day arrives when the fact stares you in the face that there is no time at which to eat an apple. Tiglath-Pileser and I considered it together this morning; but we were philosophic, we did n't mind, we remembered that up to threescore years and ten there would probably always be somebody to bake them for us and were happy, nevertheless. Then Tryphena came and stayed an hour, and now I am not so happy as I was.

I would not dwell upon her, I would pass to other themes, but one has a feeling that Tryphena has been too much omitted from accounts of our little town. Such chronicles have been somehow too playful; one would think we did nothing but discover affinities and listen to the band and eat expensive things in tins. One would think life was all joy and pleasure whereas there are Associations of every kind. Whatever may have been the case in the golden age, or the time of Lord Lytton, I believe that the great over-fed conscience of Great Britain now sends out more Tryphenas every year, and their good works have to be seriously reckoned with in considering the possibility of remaining here. We have our traditions, of course, but we are practically compelled to live upon them, and it seems to me that a distant world should hear not only of our declining past but of what we have increasingly to put up with. I would not have invited Tryphena to occupy a chapter, but as she has walked in without this formality she might as well stay.

Indeed I would not have invited her. She is the kind of Tryphena that never comes to see you unless you are ill. I am not so agreeable when I am ill — I imagine few people are — and I prefer visits, at such a time, only from people who are fond of seeing me when I am well. Why in heaven's name, when you are feverish or aguish or panting for breath, you should be expected to accept as a "kindness" a visit from a person who never thinks of you until you become a helpless object to whet her righteousness on, who comes and inflicts a personality upon you to which the most robust health only enables you to be barely polite, is to me an irritating conundrum. I had taken particular pains to be reported to Tryphena as entirely convalescent, "quite out of the doctor's hands;" I did not want to be on her parish books. Why should I suffer to enable her to do her duty? Why should she have things put down to her credit at my expense? This does not seem to me reasonable or proper and I am averse to it. Yet I have told her, such is my hypoc-

risy, how good it was of her to come, and she has gone away better pleased with herself than ever.

Tryphena's attitude toward the social body by which she is good enough to allow herself to be surrounded is a mingling of compassion and censure. She is *la justicière*. She will judge with equity, even with mercy, but she must always judge. She is perpetually weighing, measuring, criticising, tolerating, exercising her keen sense of the shortcomings of man in general and woman in particular. She will bring her standards and set them up by your bedside. Your scanty stock of force cannot be better used than in contemplating and admiring them and you must recognize how completely she herself attains them; you have no alternative. If one will for ever strike human balances one should have a broad fair page to do it on, and Tryphena's is already over written with cramped prejudices. It is triviality, but Tryphena's gloves always wrinkle at the thumbs.

If she had been a man she would hav

been a certain kind of clergyman, and if she had been a clergyman his legs would have gone in gaiters. Indeed, sooner or later she would probably have added to the name of Tryphenus the glories of an episcopal see. She is past mistress of the art of kindly rebuke. But I do not wish to be kindly rebuked. In that respect I am like the Roy-Regent, and all other persons whom Providence has enabled to do without this attention. She has more principles than any one person is entitled to, and she is always putting them into action before you. I think it is a mistake to imagine that people care about the noble reasons that direct one's doings; if one's doings themselves provoke interest it is exceptional luck. I wish somebody would tell Tryphena that principles ought to be hidden as deep as a conviction of superiority; and see what would happen. I am sure we were not born to edify one another.

The deplorable part of it is that Tryphena leaves one inclined to follow her in the steep and narrow path that leads to self-esteem. I find myself at this moment not only in a

bad temper, but in a vein of criticism whic
I am inclined to visit upon persons whom
am usually entirely occupied in admiring
My friend the Bengal Lancer has just ridde
by, with his hand on his hip. It has neve
struck me before that to ride with a hand o
the hip is a sign of irredeemable vanity. Th
Gunner was here to tea yesterday — he of th
Mountain Battery — and told us stories o
his mules. I think disparagingly of his mule
That a mule will "chum up to" a pony ar
kick a donkey, seems this morning an in
becile statement of an improbable fact, thoug
I admit I laughed at the time, it was
British. The unpaid Attaché came to
The unpaid Attaché gives one the impre
sion of never allowing himself to be
charming as he might be. What fooli
fear can justify this reticence? Enthusias
we all know, is permitted to the gods and
foreigners only, but even an unpaid Attac
can afford a whole smile.

The worst that can be said of Delia
that numbers of people whom she does
care a button about call her a dear. At le

that is the worst I can think of. As to Thalia, I had a note from her yesterday in which she spelled my name wrong. This after two years of notes. It may have been an accident; but much as I love Thalia I am disposed — this morning — to think that there is somewhere in her a defect obscure, elementary, which matches this. What is the worst they know of me? I have not the least idea, but I am prepared — this morning — to hope it is something rather bad.

The fact is that here in our remote and arbitrary and limited conditions we are rather like a colony in a lighthouse; we have nothing but ourselves and each other, and we grow overwrought, over-sensitive to the personal impression. I suppose that is what has produced, has at least aggravated, cases like Tryphena's. It is a thing to be on one's guard against. I quite see that if my own symptoms increase I shall shortly arrive at the point of being unable to endure the sight of many persons superior to myself; which is illogical and ridiculous.

Chapter XIX

I WAS congratulating the hydrange
this morning on its delightful attitud
toward life. This is no virtue of th
hydrangea's; it is a thing conferre
a mere capacity, but how enviable! A
through its youth and proper blossomin
time, which is the rains, it has the pink-an
white prettiness that belongs to that perio
When it is over, instead of acknowledgi
middle age by any form of frumpishne
the hydrangea grows delicately green agai
it retires agreeably, indistinguishably in
leaves, a most artistic pose. That, to
passes in these sharp days when the sun
only gold that glitters, and the hydrange
taking its unerring tone from the seaso
turns a kind of purplish rose, and still ne
drops a petal, never turns a hair. In the e
the hydrangea will be able to say with tru
that it has not died without having live

Sooner or later I might perhaps have seen that for myself, but it was Cousin Christina who pointed it out to me. It is one of the subtler and more gratifying forms of selfishness to ask persons of taste to help you to enjoy your garden; and at no one's expense do I indulge in this oftener than at Cousin Christina's. She spends more time with me here under the pencil-cedar than any one else does, partly because I think she likes me a little and the garden a great deal, and partly because she has fallen, recently, upon very idle circumstances.

We always thought, she and I, that we should more or less take to one another. Mutual friends told us so, and there was evidence to support the statement. We approved what they carried back and forth between us of our respective habits and opinions; and once I saw a scrap of her interesting handwriting conveying a view in terms very net. Constantly we were made to feel that upon the basis of human intercourse — the delicate terms of which who can quite expose? — we had things to

give each other, and constantly we said with intention, "Next summer I must really manage to meet her." That is all I knew of Cousin Chri·ina, except that life had offered her, somehow, less than she had a title to, and that she spent a great deal of time in her garden.

And then — "on sait trop de cela, que les heures sont comptées à l'homme qui doit mourir, et on agit comme si le trésor de ces heures était inépuisable, l'occasion indéfiniment renouvable et nos amis éternels."[1] Cousin Christina died last year, and we had never met.

It will be judged how much I valuc her visits now, now that she has so far to come, and her efforts to make me understand; we who remain are so deaf. There were many points at which the world irritated her while she was conditioned in it; and I think the remoteness of this place appeals to her in her freedom; she is pleased in its great lines and vast spaces which yet hold just the touch of human enterprise and affection

1 "La Pia."

which she too thought essential, here in my garden. She seems, at all events, to belong to the vague, as if she loved it, and of course I can never lay my hand on her.

She is devoted to the garden, constantly she trails about it, having nothing to say to me, with prccisely that attitude toward a rose and that hand under a top-heavy aster which separates the true lovcr from thc mere admirer. Dahlias swing frec as she passes, and leaves that keep the sun off the convolvuluses get out of their way. It is not the wind, it is Cousin Christina. She is more intimate with the flowers than I; almost invariably, when I show her anything new in bloom she informs me "I saw that yesterday." She does not scem to think it a liberty to see another person's flowers before the person herself. I criticise her there.

I cannot put down what she says in the form of dialogue, because, although the meaning is plain, it seems to take some other. She herself is amused at the idea of confining her within quotation marks. It comes to this that I can give you only an essence,

an extract, of what she conveys. How blundering and explosive, after Cousin Christina's way, are the great words of other people! I like sleeping in the attic because the sun climbing up behind the shoulder of Jakko, comes in there first. This morning, looking up through the little high window in the wall I saw a hawk sailing with broad sunlight on his wings, though none had reached the window yet, and the attic was still grey and waiting. I have seen it all day, the hawk up there with his wings gleaming, but it was Cousin Christina who suggested that perhaps after all it was only necessary to rise high enough to meet the light. A more definite showing, it appears, was what she lacked most in life. Among a bewilderingworldful of facts, appearances and incidents vague, she complains, is the short existence and untrustworthy the interests which are our only guides to spend it to the best account. She seems grieved now to discover how much more there was and how much better worth doing. Upon one thing

only I feel that she congratulates herself. Among our poor chances there is one which is supreme, and she had it. Within her radius she *saw*. The mirror was hers which prints the lovely suggestion of things, and I have learned from her and from the garden that there is no finer or more delicate or more charming occupation for a person of leisure than to sit and polish her mirror.

She did not live as long as I wish to do, and I think at the time she would have been glad to stay. Nevertheless, she looks with no great encouragement upon the efforts after completer health which I hope I have not too continuously referred to in these chapters. I gather from her that if you are asked to an entertainment, you do not reproach your host that it is so soon over, nor are you supposed to resent other people getting more extended invitations. The lights and the music please you, but at the end you never hesitate to step outside again into the dark. Perhaps we are all here quite as long as we are wanted. Life is very hospitable, but she cannot put

on every card "1 to 70 years." I gather that these are Cousin Christina's views; and I reply that it is easy to be wise after the event, which I am nevertheless still inclined to postpone.

On days when life is a pure pleasure she is not much with me, but on days when it is a mere duty — she knew many of those herself, poor dear — I can always depend upon her. It was she who lifted her long-handled glasses and looked at Thisbe, who one morning came and stood in the sun between us, and quoted, —

> "A happy soul that all the way
> To heaven hath a summer's day,"

which exactly prints Thisbe, and she who described Lutetia as soothing but uninteresting, like a patent food — her invalid's fancies seem to cling to her. Cousin Christina is a little difficult to please; she dismissed the fresh-coloured, vigorous Alexandra very shortly as a nice thing growing in a garden, and when I hinted that Alexandra held views of her own she admitted that the

creature had a strong scent. She permits herself these vagaries, these liberties with my acquaintances, the majority of whom she finds, I fear, a trifle limited. And she has a courage of expression which belongs, I am sure, only to the disembodied. Nothing rouses her to more impatience than the expression "quite a character." Is it not deplorable and distressing, she demands, that we are not all characters? She herself was very much of a character, one could imagine soft, stupid, little women saying so, at meetings to dress dolls for zenanas, and how it would irritate her when the mild imputation was brought home to her. She is delightful to take one's indignations to; she underlines every word, though she pretends a tolerance for the unintelligent which I am sure she does not feel. "Consider," I almost heard her say, "if we clever ones of the world were not so few, how miserable the stupid ones would be! Secure in their grunting majority they let us smite them and turn the other cheek, but if they had to grunt solitarily!" She sometimes forgets,

like that, that she is gone, is not. How sharp must have been the individuality that refuses so obstinately to blend with the universal current!

In the simple mosaic here, put together at odd times, piece by piece rubbed up as it came and set in its place, many of the fragments are here. I know this because they are not things that would naturally occur to me, whereas they correspond exactly with the sentiments I know she used to hold. I have nevertheless written them out without scruple because she seems in a way to have given them to me.

My possession in her is uncertain after all, hardly greater, I suppose, than a kind of constructive regret. Yet somehow I imagine it is more tangible than hers in the asters and the carnations. Her impressions were always strong and her affections always loyal; but divested, denuded as she is, I fancy it must be only the memory that flowers are beautiful that brings her here, poor ghost.

Chapter XX

IT is sharp on these mountains now, keen, glorious weather. In the house Thisbe cowers over a fire from morning to night. I call it abject; she retorts that no English winter has ever produced in her so much goose-flesh, and that she came to India to be warm. Even I must bend to acknowledge the virtues of a hot-water bottle, and I have abandoned the pencil-cedar; the deck chair now chases the sun. Every hour we shift farther and farther to the west, until at about four o'clock he dips behind the castle of the Princess, and then we grow very grey and melancholy on the shelf. It is, after all, the great sun of India; if it falls steadily upon your feet it will slowly warm them through the shivering air; but nothing, not even a dahlia, must come between you and it. Even a dahlia makes a difference. The glare upon this page is

particularly unpleasant, but I have permanently closed my parasol; the double sensation of icy fingers and toasting feet was worse. It is more than I bargained for, a week, as a matter of fact, beyond my contract time; and only the fear of taking cold there keeps me from going into the house.

Whatever forebodings the garden feels it puts a brave front upon the matter. It is smart with zinnias now; in ranks they stand, like soldiers, always at attention. I have no patience with people who are too æsthetic for zinnias, who complain of their stiffness and their commonness and what not. I think the zinnia a particularly delightful creature, full of courage and character and cheerful confidence, and here where we have to make such a fight for a bit of colour against the void it is invaluable. It may not be exactly a lovable flower, but what of that? Many of us must be content to be estimable. There is even joy in a zinnia. From where I sit I look through a fringe of them along the paling where they almost glitter in the sun. Beyond are a few

dark deodar tops and an oak from which the last yellow leaves are fluttering, fluttering, and behind the tracery of this the blue sky bending to the still sharp snowy ranges. If you shut your eyes and succeed in seeing that, you may almost forget that I am in India and you somewhere else; we are both, really, very near Thibet and not far, I imagine, from heaven.

Nor would anybody, I am sure, ever think of India and chrysanthemums together. Yet the shelf is glorious with chrysanthemums, purple and bronze and gold and white. My gardening now takes the form of kind attentions to the chrysanthemums. Atma will tie them up with what I can only call swaddling strings, round their necks or their waists or anywhere, without the slightest regard for their comfort. Whereas if there is one thing a chrysanthemum pleads for, it is freedom to exercise its own eccentric discretion with regard to pose. There is no refreshment to exile like the cold sharp fragrance of chrysanthemums, especially white ones. It

brings back, straight back, the glistening pavement of Kensington High Street on a wet November night and the dear dense smell of London and a sense of the delight that can be bought for sixpence there. Delight should be cheap but not too cheap. I am thankful sometimes for the limitations of our shelf and the efforts we must make to keep it pretty, and the fact that we have to consider whether leaf-mould is not rather dear at fourpence a basket. It must be difficult to keep in relation with a whole mountain-side, which is the estate of some people, or with six thousand rupees a month, which is the pay of a Member of Council. I should lease most of the mountain-side, I think, and put the rupees in bags and lock them up in a vault, just anyhow, as the rajahs do. To be aware that you had a vault full of rupees in bags would remove every care from life, but not to be obliged to know exactly how many bags there were would fill it with peace and ecstasy. There is solid comfort in a bag of rupees — I have possessed, at times, a little one — but in a vast

income which you never see there must be a vague dissatisfaction, as well as bank-books and separate accounts, and cheques and other worries which you must infallibly remember to date. The East teaches us much of simplicity and comfort in the persons of its princes. It has taught me the real magnificence of rupees in a bag.

Atma and I have had a morning of great anticipations. It is time now to look forward, time to provision the garden against the greedy spring, and to make plans. In all my plans the paling figures largely; it is a hand-rail between us and eternity, naturally things look well against it. Next year we are going to have hollyhocks, single and double, pink and rose and white, in a rampart all along the paling as it follows the sweep of the shelf, and spraying thickly out from these the biggest and whitest marguerites that will consent to come up, and along the border the broad blue ribbon of forget-me-nots. Farther on where the shelf widens in front of the house and the deodars rise thick before it, a creamy Dev-

oniensis is already in possession of the paling, and here my goldenrod is to stand fretted against the firs, and dwarf sunflowers shall fraternize with it; and about its skirts shall grow myriads of coreopsis single and double, and masses of puce-coloured Michaelmas daisies, and at their feet the grateful simple-minded purple petunia in the largest families, as thick as ever she likes. I did not mention it before, because one does hate to be always complaining, but Tiglath-Pileser has invaded the garden with some Japanese plums; straight up they stick in the widest part of the paling border, and discouragingly healthy they look. Round two of these I have planted portulaca and ringed it with lobelia, and round the other two lobelia, and ringed it with little pink lilies. The roses in the bed opposite the dining-room window have grown rather leggy with age, and next year they are to rise out of a thick and, as I see it, low forest of pink and white candytuft, and the bed is to be deeply framed in pansies. We are to have foxgloves on the

khud rank above rank, and wallflowers on its more accessible projections, and in the rains the gayest crowd of dahlias of the ballet, the single degenerates, are to gather there. Atma is to get them where he likes and I am to ask no questions. I am homesick for a certain very sweet, very yellow rather small and not very double brier rose that belongs to other years when it was much presented to "the teacher," also for a modest little fringed pink with a dark line on its petals which made the kind of posy one offered to one's grandmother. But I fear the other years are a country one cannot rediscover in every part; though I have asked diligently of persons who also inhabited them I have not yet found my gentle pink or my little yellow rose. Then a bed of irises is to be made just over the kitchen roof, to take the eye off it, and the garden lilies, which are mostly madonnas, are to foregather in one place instead of being scattered about as they are now among the rose-bushes. Thisbe thinks nothing could be lovelier than a lily and a rose, but I cannot

agree with her. The combination savours of *trop de luxe*, it recalls an early Victorian lacquered tea-tray. If she likes to mix her garden-parties like that she can, but my lilies must express themselves with no other flower to interfere with them. A lily has so little to say to the world; it must have an atmosphere of the completest reticence if it is to speak at all. The roses will be reinforced by twenty-five other sorts from the Government Gardens at Saharanpore; and there are to be several new admittances to the home for decayed gentlewomen. The border nearest the upper khud has been arranged to take everything we don't want in other places — the phloxes, the antirrhinums, the lupins and carnations and gaillardias and surpluses of all sorts which it would be a sin to throw away. It will be a kind of garden-attic, but the medley should be bright. Also, to do him justice, Tiglath-Pileser has given me a wild-rose hedge round our whole property along both roads and up and down the khuds. Thick and fragrant it will be in May and starred with creamy blossoms

He said he owed me something on account of the grafts, and I could not conscientiously dispute the matter. So that will be my garden, I hope, of next year. It will hold no brilliant effects; we only want to be gay and merry on the shelf and to keep certain relations intact; we have no room to be ambitious. I know now at least where my garden begins and where it leaves off, and a little more. Next year I hope to pretend to that intimate knowledge which comes of having gone over every foot of it, without which no one should say anything, or even write anything probably. However, Elizabeth[1] did, and everybody liked it. Elizabeth began as a complete amateur; and her very amateurity disarmed criticism. She had nothing but taste and affection, and her struggles to garden upon this capital have often sympathetically occurred to me during the past summer. Frequently I have had occasion to say to her, speaking quite anonymously, "What would you think of that, Elizabeth, supposing you lived on a shelf?" and often

[1] "Elizabeth and Her German Garden."

in the depression of wondering whether it was quite fair to try to follow her charming fashion, I have explained that I really have to write about my garden; I was turned out in it, I had no more choice than Nebuchadnezzar; and that I sincerely hope I have not plagiarized her plants. And I assured her it is a thing I would never do, that those hereinbefore mentioned grew for me, every one, from seed or bulb — that I would not ever plagiarize from Mr. Johnson, whose Japanese lilies were glorious to behold this year and very moderate.

Notwithstanding these meek statements I feel, here at the end of the book and the end of the summer, highly experienced and knowledgeable about gardens. I long to pour out accumulated facts, and only a doubt of the relative value of advice produced at an altitude of seven thousand feet in the middle of Asia prevents my doing so. In more serious moments I hardly dare hope that I have not already talked too much about my garden and other things, but nobody should be severe upon this who has

not discovered the entertainment to be got out of a perfectly silent visiting public. I should confess that I have enjoyed it enormously; it would be becoming in me to thank that mute impersonal body for a delightful summer. It is such an original pleasure to go on saying exactly what you like and briefly imagine replies, as well as a valuable aid, I am sure, to convalescence. To have increased the sum of the world's happiness by one's own is perhaps no great accomplishment, yet is it so easy? Neither can it be called especially virtuous to feel a little better, but what moral satisfaction is there to compare with it?

The summer and the book are done. The procession of the Days has gone by, all but a straggler or two carrying a tattered flag; it took seven months to pass a given point. There is a rustling among the roses when the wind comes this way, but nearly always the blue void holds a golden silence. Belated butterflies bask on the warm gravel with wings expanded and closed down. W[illegible]ng is dangerous now; shadows over-

take you, and a shadow kills. The zinnias are all old soldiers, the Snows have come nearer in the night. Some morning soon they will have crept over the shelf, but only Atma will see that. The rest of the family will be occupying a spot under the warm dust haze down below, so far down as to be practically below sea-level. The vicissitudes of some lives!

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