Greatest Romance Classic Collection



Most Demanding Bestseller Books of all Time

Greatest Romance Classic Collection: Most Demanding Bestseller Books All Time: Hadrian the Seventh by Fr. Rolfe/ Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions by Edwin A. Abbot/ The Romance of Lust: A classic Victorian erotic novel.

In this Collection, we have created HTML Tables of Contents that will make reading a real pleasure!

The first table of contents (at the very beginning of the ebook) lists the titles of all Collections included in this volume. By clicking on one of those titles you will be redirected to the beginning of that work, where you'll find a new TOC that lists all the chapters and sub-chapters of that specific work.

About Anthology:

Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions

Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions is a satirical novella by the English schoolmaster Edwin Abbott Abbott, first published in 1884 by Seeley & Co. of London. Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions is a satirical novella by the English schoolmaster Edwin Abbott Abbott, first published in 1884 by Seeley & Co. of London. Written pseudonymously by “A Square”, the book used the fictional two-dimensional world of Flatland to comment on the hierarchy of Victorian culture, but the novella's more enduring contribution is its examination of dimensions.

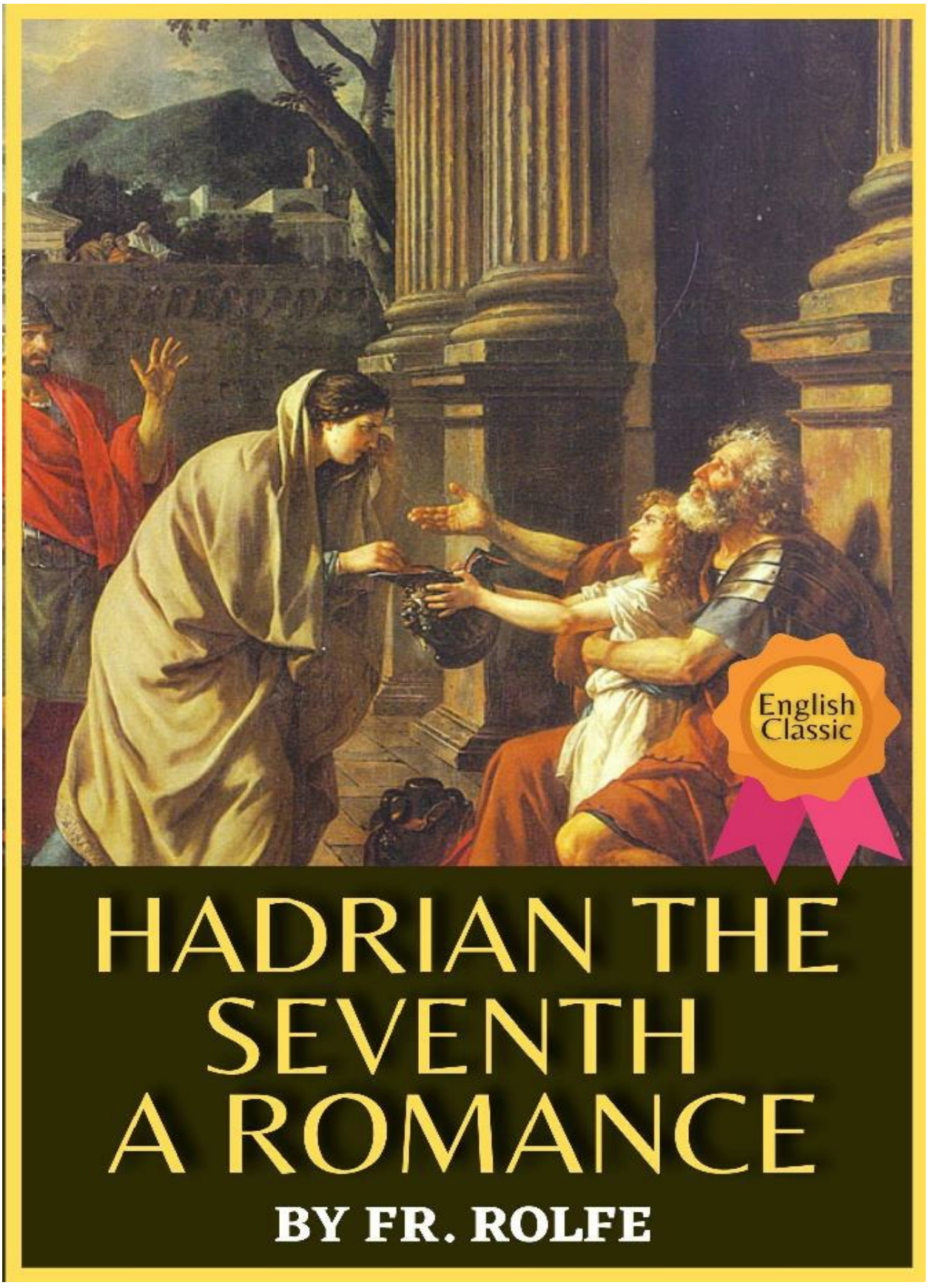
The Romance of Lust: A classic Victorian erotic novel

The Romance of Lust: A classic Victorian erotic novel by Anonymous. The Romance of Lust or Early Experiences is a Victorian erotic novel written anonymously in four volumes during the years 1873–1876 and published by William Lazenby. Henry Spencer Ashbee discusses this novel in one of his

bibliographies of erotic literature.

Hadrian the Seventh a Romance

Hadrian the Seventh: A Romance (sometimes called Hadrian VII) is a 1904 novel by the English novelist Frederick Rolfe, who wrote under the pseudonym "Baron Corvo". Rolfe's best-known work, this novel of extreme wish-fulfillment developed out of an article he wrote on the Papal Conclave to elect the successor to Pope Leo XIII. The prologue introduces us to George Arthur Rose (a transparent double for Rolfe himself): a failed candidate for the priesthood denied his vocation by the machinations and bungling of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical machinery, and now living alone with his yellow cat.



HADRIAN THE SEVENTH
A ROMANCE

BY FR. ROLFE

FR. ROLFE

HADRIAN THE SEVENTH
A ROMANCE
(1904)

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TO MOTHER

In Obedience to the Decree of URBAN P.M. VIII, I declare that I have no Intention of attributing any other than a purely human Authority to the Miracles, Revelations, Favours, & particular Cases, recorded in this Book; & the same as regards the Titles of Saints & Blessed applied to Servants of GOD not yet canonized: except in those Cases which have been confirmed by the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman See, of which I declare myself to be an obedient Son; & therefore I submit myself & all which I have written to her Judgment.

FR. ROLFE.

xxij Jul., 1904.

HADRIAN THE SEVENTH

PROOIMION

In mind he was tired, worn out, by years of hope deferred, of loneliness, of unrewarded toil. In body he was almost prostrate by the pain of an arm on the tenth day of vaccination. Bodily pain stung him like a personal affront. “Some one will have to be made miserable for this,” he once said during the throes of a toothache. He was no stranger to mental fatigue: but, when to that was added corporeal anguish, he came near collapse. His capacity for work was constricted: the mere sight of his writing materials filled him with disgust. But, because he had a horror of being discovered in a state of inaction, after breakfast he sat down as usual and tried to write. Dazed in a torrent of ideas, he painfully halted for words: stumbling in a maze of words, he frequently lost the thread of his argument: now and then, in sheer exhaustion, his pen remained immobile. He sat in a small low armchair which was covered with shabby brocade, dull-red and green. An old drawing-board, of the large size denominated Antiquarian, rested on his knees. The lower edge frayed the brocade on the arms of the chair. His little yellow cat Flavio lay asleep on the tilted board, nestling in the bend of his left elbow. That was the only living creature to whom he ever spoke with affection as well as with politeness. His left hand steadied his ms., the sheets of which were clipped together at the top by a metal clip. At the upper edge of the board a couple of Publishers' Dummies reposed, having the outward similitude of six-shilling novels: but he had filled their pages with his archaic handwriting. The first contained thoughts—not great thoughts, nor thoughts selected on any particular principle, but phrases and opinions such as Sophokles' denunciation,

Ὢ μιαρον ἠθος και γυναικος ὑστερον,

or Gabriele d'Annunzio's sentence

“Old legitimate monarchies are everywhere declining, and Demos stands ready to swallow them down its miry throat.”

The second was his private dictionary which, (as an artificer in verbal expression,) he had compiled, taking Greek words from Liddell-and-Scott and Latin words from Andrews, enlarging his English vocabulary with such

simple but pregnant formations as the adjective “hybrist” from ὑβριστης, or the noun “gingilism” from *gingilismus*.

He was looking askance at his ms. In two hours, he had written no more than fourteen lines; and these were deformed by erasures of words and sentences, by substitutions and additions. He struck an upward line from left to right across the sheet: laid down his pen: lifted board, cat, books, and ms., from his knees; and laid them by. He could not work.

He poked the little fire burning in the corner of a fire-clayed grate. He was shivering: for, though March was going out like nine lions, he was very lightly clad in a blue linen suit such as is worn over all by engineers. He had an impish predilection for that garb since a cantankerous red-nosed prelate, anxious to sneer at unhaloed poverty, inanely had said that he looked like a Neapolitan. He brushed the accumulation of cigarette-ash from the front of his jacket and seized a pair of spring-dumb-bells: but at once returned them, warned by the pain of his left arm-pit. He took up the newspaper which he had brought with him after breakfast, and read again the news from Rome and the news of Russia. The former, he could see, was merely the kind of subterfuge which farthing journalists are wont to use when they are excluded from a view of facts. It said much, and signified nothing. “Our Special Correspondent” was being hoodwinked; and knew it: but did not like to confess it; and so indulged his imagination. Something was occurring in Rome: something mysterious was occurring in Rome. That could be deduced from the dispatch: but nothing more. The news of Russia was a tale of unparalleled ghastliness. It emanated from Berlin: no direct communication with Russia having taken place for a fortnight.

“How exquisitely horrible it is,” he said to Flavio; “and I believe it's perfectly true. The Tzar,—well, that was to be expected. But the Tsaritza,—though, if ever a woman bore her fate in her face, she did, poor creature. Those dreadful haunted eyes of hers! That hard old young soft face! The innocent babies! How abominably cynically cruel! Yet there have been omens and portents of just such a tragedy as this any time these last few years. They must have known it was coming. Or is this another example of the onlookers seeing most of the game?” He fetched a book of newspaper cuttings, and turned the pages. “Here you are, Flavio,” he said to the sleeping cat; “and here—and here. If these are not forewarnings—well!”

He sat down again, and studied certain paragraphs attentively.

EDUCATION BY THE KNOUT.

PETERSBURG.—All Russia is in a state of unrest and seething with discontent. The very air is alive with the rumours of tumults on the one hand and of *coups d'état* on the other. The strangest stories are being bandied about as to what is taking place at Kiev, Sula, and all parts of the Empire, in fact, but especially in Moscow. There, it seems, while students and members of the higher classes are being thrown into prison by the hundred—not a few of them being packed off to Siberia—the workers are being treated with quite extraordinary consideration. They are even allowed to say their say and hold public meetings without let or hindrance, a thing unheard of in Russia. In Petersburg itself an ominous state of things prevails, and the city is completely in the hands of the police and the military. The streets are thronged with gensdarmes; even private houses are packed with soldiers; and never a week passes without some disorder arising or some public demonstration being made. In February a terrible scene occurred in the house of Nicholas II., a sort of People's Palace. In the course of a theatrical performance there some students threw down from the gallery into the body of the hall leaflets in which they demanded redress of their grievances. The place was crowded with law-abiding people for the most part; nevertheless the gensdarmerie who are always within hail, rushed in and simply trampled under foot all who came in their way. One great fellow was seen to deliberately stamp on the face of a poor lad who had fallen, cracking it like a nut. How many were injured is unknown and probably will remain so. On Sunday the state of things was even worse. During the previous week the students had sent to the leading journals, and even to the police, a formal announcement that they intended to hold a demonstration in the Newsky Prospect to demand in constitutional fashion the redress of their grievances. It was taken for granted that measures would be taken to prevent the meeting, and the Newsky was crowded for the occasion with the usual loungers and pleasure-seekers. But so far as everyone was aware the police seemed to have done nothing in the matter, and it was known only to a few that the courtyards of the great houses of the neighbourhood were filled with gensdarmes and soldiers. Up to twelve o'clock all went well; then quite suddenly not only students but working men began to stream into the Newsky from every side-street; and within a very few minutes the place was one vast crowd. In the square before the Kasan Cathedral alone there were 3,000 at least. Suddenly seditious cries were raised, red flags were waved, stones were

thrown, and in the midst of it all the gensdarmes began a mad gallop through the crowd. It was a ghastly sight, for they slashed right and left with their swords, even at the bystanders bent only on escaping. Many were wounded, some were killed—how many no two accounts agree—and in the course of the following week hundreds of arrests were made. Since then other demonstrations of the same kind have been held, and will continue to be held, let the cost be what it may, the students declare, until a clean sweep has been made of the police regime under which Russia is groaning.

THE GATHERING OF THE STORM.

M. Baltaicheff's murder has drawn the world's attention to the present state of things in Russia—which is much worse than most people imagine. The present movement is not confined to the students alone, though it is that class which makes most noise. The revolutionary fever has gained a hold of the lower classes—Brains and Brawn as we said yesterday have combined, and the combination is formidable. More significant, however, than anything else, if it be true, is the statement of the *Neue Freie Presse* that during the demonstrations in the Kasan Square in Petersburg a detachment of infantry was called upon to fire upon the crowd, the men thrice refused to obey, were marched back to barracks, no enquiry being subsequently held, and that similar incidents have occurred elsewhere. With universal service the Army is only the people in uniform. Any popular feeling must sooner or later touch the Army, and if the soldiers cannot be depended upon to shoot, the game of absolutism is up. The great cataclysm may be nearer at hand than is generally supposed.

SIGNS OF SMOULDERING REVOLT.

PETERSBURG.—In two of the districts of the Poltava Government workmans' riots have occurred in consequence of the systematic repression of “Little Russia” by “Greater Russia.” The journal *Pridjeprowski Krai* gave the first intimation of the state of affairs, and was promptly suspended for eight months.

PETERSBURG.—The murder of the Procurator of the Holy Synod is regarded in a measure as the symptom of the general situation in Russia. It is reported that the chateau of the Duke of Mecklenburgh in S.E. Russia has been pillaged and destroyed by rioters.

BERLIN.—On the arrival of the express train from Berlin at Wirballen on the

Russian frontier to-day, a passenger was arrested, and Nihilist documents were discovered in his trunks. This is the third Nihilist arrest within the fortnight. The Berlin police have received information from Petersburg of numerous revolutionists having recently left France. They are now maintaining from Berlin a vigorous agitation against the Tsar's Government. From London, too, the whereabouts of several suspects have been reported. In most cases the Berlin authorities are powerless to effect arrests, but they always supply full information to Russia, so that suspicious characters are always detained in passing the frontier.

ANARCHY ADVANCING.

The *Kreuzzeitung*, which is unusually well-informed in Russian affairs, expresses the opinion that one of the immediate consequences of the triumph of Japan will be a general rising of the Russian peasants against their landlords, and of the army against the aristocracy. The same paper declares that revolutionary agents of Social Democratic tendencies have long been systematically poisoning the minds of the people.

He turned back to THE GATHERING OF THE STORM, and read the ominous paragraph again. “Warning enough, in all conscience,” he said: “first, the Public Prosecutor assassinated at Odessa, then the Chief of Secret Police of Petersburg, then the Procurator of the Holy Synod; and now a hekatombe, sovereign, royalty, aristocracy, government, bureaucracy, all annihilated, and Anarchy in excelsis. France will take fire at any minute now, that's absolutely certain. Oh, how horrible! But we're all Christians, Flavio; and this is only one of the many funny ways in which we love one another.”

He rose and went to the window. The yellow cat deliberately stretched himself, yawned, and followed; and proceeded to carry out a wonderful scheme of feints and ambuscades in regard to a ping-pong ball which was kept for his proper diversion. The man looked on almost lovingly. Flavio at length captured the ball, took it between his fore-paws, and posed with all the majesty of a lion of Trafalgar Square. Anon he uttered a little low gurgle of endearment, fixing the great eloquent mystery of amber and black velvet eyes, tardy, grave, upon his human friend. No notice was vouchsafed. Flavio got up; and gently rubbed his head against the nearest hand.

“My boy!” the man murmured; and he lifted the little cat on to his shoulder. He went downstairs. He could not work; and he was going to take an easy;

and he wanted a novel, he said to his landlady. He feared that he had read all the books in the house. Yes, and those in the drawing-room too. After a quarter of an hour, application to a neighbour produced three miserable derelicts, a nameless sixpenny shudder, a Braddon, and an Edna Lyall. Not to seem ungracious, he took them upstairs; and pitched them into a corner, to be returned upon occasion. That salient trait of his character, the desire not to be ungracious, the readiness to be unselfish and self-sacrificing, had done him incalculable injury. This world is infested by innumerable packs of half-licked cubs and quarter-cultivated mediocrities who seem to have nothing better to do than to buzz about harassing and interfering with their betters. Out of courtesy, out of kindness, he was used to give way; but all the same he tenaciously knew and clung to his original purpose. He knew that delay was his enemy: yet he invariably would stand aside and let himself be delayed. And now towards the end of his youth, he was poor, lonely, a misanthropic altruist.

He returned to his armchair, breathing a long sigh of irritation and exhaustion: broke up three cigarette dottels for a (tobacco famine was afflicting him), rolled them in a fresh paper, and applied a match. Flavio, with an indulgent protestant mew, bounded from his knee to a bedroom chair; and coiled himself up to sleep.

The armchair was placed directly in front of the fireplace, the ordinary garret-coloured iron fireplace and mantel of a suburban lodging-house attic. To the grey wall above the mantel a large sheet of brown packing-paper was tacked. On this background were pinned photographs of the Hermes of Herculaneum, the terra-cotta Sebastian of South Kensington, Donatello's liparose David and the vivid David of Verrocchio, the wax model of Cellini's Perseys, an unknown Rugger XV. prized for a single example of the rare feline-human type, and the O.U.D.S. Sebastian of *Twelfth Night* of 1900. Tucked into the edges of these were Italian picture post-cards presenting Andrea del Sarto's young St. John, Alessandro Filipepi's Primavera, a page from an old Salon catalogue showing Friant's Wrestlers, another from an old Harper's Magazine shewing Boucher's Runners, a cheap and lovely chromo of an olive-skinned black-haired cornflower-crowned Pancratius in white on a gold ground, the visiting-cards of five literary agents, and a post-card tersely inscribed *Verro precipitevolissimevolmente*. The mantel-shelf contained stone bottles of ink, pipes, a miniature in a closed morocco case, a cast of Cardinal Andrea della

Valle's seal from Oxford, two pairs of silver spectacles in shagreen cases, four tiny ingots of pure copper, a sponge gum bottle, and an open book with painted covers showing Eros at the knees of Psyche and a mysterious group of divers in the clear of the moon. The door was at a yard to the left of the fireplace, at a right-angle. Uncared-for clothes, black serge and blue linen, hung upon it. A small wooden wash-stand stood between the door and the armchair, convenient to the writer's hand. A straw-board covered the hole in its top; and supported ink-bottles, pens, pen-knife, scissors, a lamp, a biscuit-tin of cigarette-dottels, sixteen exquisite Greek intaglj. On the lower shelf stood a row of books-of-reference. Between the wash-stand and the fire was the chair whereon Flavio slumbered, (if one may use so indelicate a word of so delicate a cat). About four feet of wall extended on the right of the fireplace. Pinned there were a pencil design for a *Diamastigosis*, a black and white panel of young Sophokles as Choregos after Salamis done on the back of an Admiralty chart, a water colour of Tarquinio Santacroce and Alexander VI., a pair of foils and fencing masks, and a curious Greco-Italian seal shewing St. George as a wing-footed Perseys wearing what looked like the Garter Mantle and labelled φυλαξ ἀρχης. Substitutes for shelves stood against the lower part of the wall. A rush-basket, closed and full of letters, set up on end, supported files of the *American Saturday Review*, the *Author*, the *Outlook*, the *Salpinx*, *Reynards's*, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and a feather broom for dusting books and papers or for correcting Flavio when obstreperous. Another rush-basket, placed lengthwise on a bedroom chair, held a row of books, ms. note-books, duodecimo classics of Plantin, Estienne, Maittaire, with English and American editions of the writer's own works. The third wall was pierced by two small windows, wide open to the full always. A chest of drawers protruded endways into the room. Its top was used as a standing desk. The drawers opened towards the fourth wall. Sheaves of letters in metal clips hung at the end. Between it and the armchair, more shelves were contrived of rush-baskets placed beneath and upon a small wooden table. Books-of-reference, lexicons, and a box of blank paper, congregated here convenient to the writer's hand. The little table drawer contained note-paper, envelopes, sealing-wax, and stamps. The whole was arranged so that, when once ensconced in the armchair before the fire with his writing-board on his knees, the digladiator could reach all his weapons by a simple extension of his arms. The attic was eleven feet square, low-pitched, and with half the ceiling slanting to the fourth foot from the floor on the fourth wall.

Here was a camp-bed, a small mirror, and a towel-rail, three pairs of two- six- and ten-pound dumb-bells, a pair of boots on trees, a bottle of eucalyptus and a spray-producer.

His eyes, as they wandered round the room, met these things. He took a towel, and went downstairs to the bath-room to wash his hands. On returning he enticed Flavio with a bit of string. The cat was unwilling to play: gazed at him with innocent imperscrutable round eyes: elaborately yawned and requested permission to retire. The odour of the kitchen-dinner was perceptible. The door was opened; and shut.

He put the butt of his cigarette in an earthenware jar on his left for future use. The maid appeared with his lunch, a basinful of bread and milk. Following some subconscious train of thought, he stretched himself, took the little mirror from the wall and went to the window.

“It's one of your bad days, my friend,” he commented, regarding his own image. “You look all your age, and twelve years more. Draw down those feathered brows, man. Never mind the upright furrow which makes you look stern. Draw them down; and open your eyes; and look alert. Do something to counteract the tender thin line of that mouth. You mustn't let yourself relax like this. It brings out your wrinkles, and shews the sparseness of your hair. If you had an inch more thigh, and say a couple of inches more shin, you might look people down a little more: but with that meek subservient aspect—how Luckock used to chaff about it!—no wonder everyone takes advantage of you. What's the good of having your fastidious mind clearly written on that fastidious mouth if you don't insist on behaving fastidiously. Cultivate the art of looking as though you were about to say No. You always can say Yes after No. But, if you begin with Yes, as you always do, you prevent yourself from ever saying No. That's why everyone can swindle you. You're far too anxious to give way. Buck up a bit, you ugly little thing! Ugly as you are, you're neither vulgar nor common-place. Straighten your back, and open your eyes wide, and pull yourself together.”

He put the mirror in its place; and again cast a glance round the room, seeking something to read, something, anything, that was not too recent in his mind. He picked up at random one of the rejected novels. It was called *Donovan*. He remembered having seen (in an ex-tea-pedlar's magazine) a print of the writer thereof. He also remembered that he had found her self-conscious pose and labial conformation intensely antipathetic.

His sense of beauty was a great deal more than acute. Let his predilection (which was for reticent expert virtue in the male and for innate delicate modesty in the female) once be satisfied, and the door to his favour lay open.

“However,” he argued with himself, “she sells her books by tens of thousands while we don't sell ours by tens of hundreds. We'll have a look at her work, and see how she does it.”

He ate his bread and milk; and seriously and deliberately set himself to dissect and analyse the book.

The manner of the portrayal of a youth, of an abnormal type of youth, the Sentient-Modest type, at once disgusted him by its inadequacy and superficiality. The male human animal is omnipresent: it is not difficult for an observant and careful writer to describe the γνωριμωτερον φυσει, things as they appear. But the author's sex had prevented her from knowing, and therefore, from describing the γνωριμωτερον ἡμιν, things as they are. It is doubtful whether Man ever mentally knew Woman. It is certain that Woman never knew Man: except in cases of occession—the author of *The Gadfly* for example. He found the image of Donovan fairly convincing: not so the real. Donovan, in his eponymous history, obviously was the creation of a good sweet-minded woman, who created him in her own image.

The student several times was at the point of closing the book from sheer annoyance. Only the knowledge that he had nothing else to do, and the desire to gain instruction, caused him to persevere. His temper only was logical in so far as it endowed him with the faculty of pursuance. He began many things: he followed them: oftentimes the influence of Luna on his environment obliged him to pause: but invariably he returned to them—even after long years he returned to them—; and then, slowly, surely, he concluded what he had begun. He had tenacity—the feline pertinacity of vigorous untainted English blood. Cigarette after cigarette he rolled, and smoked. He frequently turned back and read a chapter over again. Flavio mewed for admittance. He took him on his knee: and continued reading, stroking the little cat meanwhile, tickling his larynx till he purred content. So the dull March afternoon passed. At five, the maid brought a tray containing black coffee and dripping toast. At half-past six, he took a bath and attended to his appearance, execrating the pain of his swollen arm and the difficulty of keeping it out of the water. He dined at half-past seven on some soup, and haricot-beans with butter, and a baked apple. Meanwhile he counted the split

infinitives in the day's *Pall Mall Gazette*. When he was adolescent, an Oxford tutor had said of him that he possessed a critical faculty of no mean order. At the time, he had not understood the saying perfectly: but he cultivated the faculty. He taught himself in a very bitter school, the arts of selection and discrimination, and the art of annihilating rubbish. To this perhaps was due his complete psychical detachment from other men. He trod upon so many worms. And few things are more exasperating than a man of whom it truly may be said “A chiel's amang ye takin' notes.” After dinner, he returned to his attic with his cup and the coffee-pot: and resumed his task. In time, he forgot the pain of his arm: he even forgot the usual terrified anticipation of the late postman's knock, such was his faculty for concentration. He smoked cigarettes and sipped black coffee now and then, oblivious of Flavio who returned from a walk about eleven and promptly went to sleep on the foot of the bed. A little after midnight, he reached the end of the book: turned back and examined the last chapter again; and put it down.

“Yes,” he said, “she's a dear good woman. Her book—well—her book is cheap, awkward, vulgar,—but it's good. It's unpalteringly ugly and simple and good. Evidently it's best to be good. It pays.... Anyhow it's bound to pay in the long run.”

He pushed Flavio's chair to the wall near the door: by its side he placed the wash-stand from the left of his armchair. He disposed the armchair also against the wall, leaving a cleared space of garret-coloured drugget between the dead fire and the bed. This was his gymnasium.

“If a book like that pays,” he reflected, “it must be that there's a lot of people who care for books about the Good. Why not do one of that sort instead of casting folk-lore and history before publishers who turn and rend you? The pity is that the Good should be so dreadfully dowdy. Evidently το καλονk and το ἀγαφον are just as distinct as they were in the days of the Broad-browed One. Sophisms again! Why can't you be honest and simple instead of subtile and complex? You're just like your own cat ambuscading a ping-pong ball as strategically and as scrupulously as though it were a mouse. For goodness' sake don't try to deceive yourself. It's all very well to pose before the world: but there's no one here to see you now. Strip, man, strip stark. You perfectly know that the Good always is admirable, whether it be dowdy or chic; and that what you call the Beautiful is no more than a matter of opinion, worth,—well, generally speaking, not worth six and eight-pence.”

He threw all his clothes on the armchair: picked his trousers out of the heap and folded them lengthwise over the towel-rail: powdered his arm with borax and bound cotton-wool over it: looked at his dumb-bells while he brushed his hair: sprayed the room with eucalyptus; and got into bed. Extreme fatigue and pain rendered him almost hysterical. His thoughts expressed themselves in ejaculations when he had tied a handkerchief over his eyes, straightened his legs, and laid his right cheek on the pillow.

“Yes! It pays to be good—just simple goodness pays. I know, oh I know. I always knew it.

God, if ever You loved me, hear me, hear me. De profundis ad Te, ad Te clamavi. Don't I want to be good and clean and happy? What desire have I cherished since my boyhood save to serve in the number of Your mystics? What but that have I asked of You Who made me?

Not a chance do You give me—ever—ever——.

Listen! How can I serve You? How be happy, clean, or good, while You keep me so sequestered?

Oh I know of that psalm where it is written that You set apart for Yourself the godly. Am I godly? Ah no: nor even goodly. I'm Your prisoner writhing in my fetters, fettered, impotent, utterly unhappy.

Only he, who is good and clean, is happy. I am clean, God, but neither good nor happy. Not alone can a man be good or happy. Force, which generates no one thing, is not force. All intelligence must be active, potent. I'm intelligent. So, O God, You made me. Therefore I must be active. Of my nature I must act. For the chance to act, I languish. I am impotent and inactive always. He, who wishes to be good, strives to do good. Deeds must be done to others by the doer. Therefore I, in my loneliness, am futile. Friends? And which of them have You left me faithful these twelve years of my solitude, God? Not one. Andrews, faithless; and Aubrey, faithless; Brander, faithless; Lancaster, faithless; Strages, faithless and perfidious; Scuttle also; Fareham, Roole, and Nicholas, faithless; Tatham, faithless; that detestable and deceitful Blackcote who came fawning upon me crying 'Courage! You shall suffer no more as you have suffered!' and then robbed me of months and years of labour. Ah! and Lawrence, my little Lawrence, faithless.

Women? What do I know of women. Nothing.

Fiat justitia—well, there's Caerleon. But a bishop is very far above me; and his friendship is only condescension,—honest, genial, kind, but—condescension. Still, he wishes me well. I truly think it. But if only he would believe me, trust me, shew faith in me, and absolutely trust me,—I might do what the mouse did for the lion.

Strong? But why do I name my splendid master. Strong of nature and Strong of name and station, Strong of body and Strong of mind, immensely my superior altogether, knowing all my weakness and all my imperfection: who, to me, is as much like You as any man can be! It is only grand indulgence and urbanity on his part which make him know me; and, when the sun lacks splendour, only then will Megaloprepes need me, only then Kalos Kagathos perchance may need me.

Why, O God, have You made me strange, uncommon, such a mystery to my fellow-creatures, not a 'man among men' like other people?

Do I want to appear like other people? No, no, certainly not: but—Lord God, am I such a ruffian as to merit exile?

Oh of course I'm a sinner, vile and shameful. But, God, look at the wreck which You have let them make of me and my life. You have some purpose in it all. Oh you must have, if You are, God; and I know that You are. O God, I thank You.

But look,—haven't I tried and toiled and suffered? Yet You never allow me any satisfaction, any gain or reward for all my trouble. No: but You always let some shameless brigand rob me, snatching the fair fruit of my labours.

Yes: I know how I dream of certain pleasures, certain luxuries, cleanness, whiteness, freshness, and simplicity, and the life of quiet healthful vigorous and serene well-doing, all in secret, and all unostentatious, which, when once I achieve success, I will have. I know all about that. But You know also I that never should use success in that way, if You gave it to me. Now did I ever use success for myself and not for others? No: I couldn't endure the eternal silent wistful vision of Your Maiden-Mother.

You know why I want freedom, power, and money—just to make a few people happy, just to put things right a bit, just to make things easy, just to straighten out tangled lives whose tangles make me rage because I myself am helpless. Is that wrong? No—I swear my aim is single and unselfish. I don't want credit even. You well know that You made me all-denuded of the power

of loving anybody, of the power of being loved by any. Self-contained, You have made me. I shall always be detached and apart from others.

Murmur? No. I never have murmured—nor will murmur.

Truly, though, I should like to love, to be loved: but, so long I have been alone and lonely, I suppose I must go on like that always till the end. They are frightened of me, even when they come to the very verge of loving. They are frightened because of certain labels which I frequently use to put on others: frightened lest I should fit them also some day with a label. Oh, often they have told me that they wouldn't like me to be against them.

I will stop that, O God, if You desire it. But, instead of it, what? I think You mean me not to waste the one talent You have given. Then, I beg of You, give me scope. I must act.

No: I am not doing well at present—not my best. Oh, I know it, and I loathe it. All my life is a pose. Somehow or other I have taken the pose, or stolid stupids force me into the pose, of strange recondite haughty genius, very subtile, very learned, inaccessible,—everything that's foolish. God, You know what a sham I am: how silly this is: how very little I know really. Don't I know it too? Don't I always tell them? Then they say that I'm modest—me—ha!—modest!

Here's the truth, by my One Hope of Salvation. I am frightened of all men, known and unknown; and of women I go in violent terror: though I always do say superb and hard things to the one, and all pretty gentle soft things to the other, while writing pitilessly of them both:—for I'm frightened of them, frightened; and I want to avoid them; and to keep them off me. Therefore I pose. And, therefore also, I provide an image which they can worship, like, or loathe, as it pleases, or displeases, or strikes awe—and they generally loathe it. All the time, while they manifest their feelings, I look on like a child at Punch and Judy.

Oh, it's wrong, very wrong, wrong altogether. But what can I do? God, tell me, clearly unmistakeably and distinctly tell me, tell me what I must do—and make me do it.”

He got out of bed: took his rosary from his trousers' pocket; and returned. During the fifth meditation on the Finding of The Lord in the Temple, he fell asleep.

“Dr. Courtleigh and Dr. Talacryn?” he repeated as a query, in the tone of one to whom Beelzebub and the Archangel Periel have been announced at eleven o'clock on the morning of a working day.

“Yes,” the maid replied. “Clergymen. One is that bishop who came before.”

“The bishop who came before! And——What's the other like?”

“Oh, quite old and feeble—rather stoutish—but he's been a fine handsome man in his day. He wears a red necktie under his collar.”

“Well—I—am!... Thanks. I'll be down in a minute.”

George put his writing-board away and brushed the front of his blue linen jacket, mentally and corporeally pulling himself together.

“Flavio, I should just like to know the meaning of this. I rather wish that I had Iulo here to back me up. If they are meditating mischief, an athletic and quarrelsome youngster, with an eye like a basilisk and a mouth full of torrential English, would be an excellent trump to play. Mischief? What nonsense! Don't you give way to your nerves, man. Respectable epistatai do not habitually engage in mischief, as you are well aware. You have nothing to fear: so put on a mask—the superior one with a tinge of disdain in it—and brace yourself up to resist the devil; and go downstairs at once to see him flee.”

The two visitors were in the dining-room, a confined drab and aniline room rather over-filled with indistinct but useful furniture. When George entered, they stood up—grave important men, of over forty and seventy years respectively, dark-haired and robust, white-haired and of picturesque and supercilious mien. George went straight to the younger prelate: kneeled; and kissed the episcopal ring.

“Your Eminency will understand that I do not wish to be disrespectful,” he said to the senior, with as much quiet antipathy as could be crowded into one man's voice: “but the Bishop of Caerleon calls himself my friend; and I am at a loss to know to what I may attribute the honour of Your Eminency's presence, or the manner in which you will allow me to receive you.”

“I hope, Mr. Rose, that you will accept my blessing as well as Dr. Talacryn's,” the Cardinal-Archbishop replied in a voice where hauteur strangely struggled with timidity. He extended his hand. George instantly took it; and respectfully kneeled again, noting that this ring contained a

cameo instead of the cardinalitial sapphire. Then he caused his guests to become seated. The atmosphere seemed to him laden with the invigorating aroma of possibilities.

“Zmnts[1] wishes to ask you a few questions,” the young bishop began; “and he thought you would not take it amiss if I were present as your friend.”

George shot a glance of would-be affectionate gratitude at the speaker; and turned, saying “I have been imagining Your Eminency in Rome—in the Conclave.”

“I was there until a fortnight ago; and then,—well, you are said to be an expert in the annals of conclaves, Mr. Rose, so it will interest you to know that we stand adjourned.”

“For the removal of the Conclave from Rome?”

“Oh dear no! There is no need for removal. The Piedmontese usurpers treat us with profound respect, I'm bound to say. No. We simply stand adjourned.”

“But this is extremely interesting!” George exclaimed. “Surely it's unique? And may I ask,—no, I would not venture to inquire the cause: but, is this generally known? I have seen nothing of it in the papers; and I am not on speaking terms with any Roman Catholics except the——”

“No. It is not generally known; and it is not intended to make an official announcement, for reasons which you will understand, and which, I believe, you will respect.”

“I am much honoured by Your Eminency's confidence,” George purred.

“Certain affairs required my personal presence in England;” the cardinal continued. He was a feeble aged man, almost senile sometimes. He hesitated. He stumbled. But he maintained the progression of the conversation on its hands and knees, as it were, with “These are very pregnant times, Mr. Rose.”

George went to the door: admitted his cat who was mewing outside; and resumed his seat. Flavio brushed by cardinalitial and episcopal gaiters turn by turn: bounded to his friend's knee: couched; and became still, save for twinkling ears. The prelates exchanged glances.

“But perhaps you will let me say no more on that subject, and come directly to the point I wished to consult you upon.” The cardinal now seemed to have cleared the obstacles; and he archiepiscopally pranced along. “It has recently

been brought very forcibly to my remembrance that you were at one time a candidate for Holy Orders, Mr. Rose. I am cognizant of all the unpleasantness which attended that portion of your career: but it is only lately that I have realised the fact that you yourself have never accepted, acquiesced in, the adverse verdict of your superiors."

"I never have accepted it. I never have acquiesced in it. I never will accept it. I never will acquiesce in it."

"Would you mind telling me your reasons?"

"I should have to say very disagreeable things, Eminency."

"Never mind. Tell me all the truth. Try to feel that you are confiding in your spiritual father, whose only desire is to do justice—I may even say to do justice at the eleventh hour."

"I am inclined indeed to believe that, because you yourself have condescended to come to me. I wish, in fact, to believe that. But—is it advisable to rake up old grievances? Is it desirable to scarify half-healed wounds? And, how did Your Eminency find me after all these years?" The feline temper of him produced dalliance.

"It certainly was a difficult matter at first. You had completely disappeared ____"

"I object to that," George interrupted. He suddenly saw that this was the one chance of his life of saying the right thing to the right person; and he determined to fight every step of the way with this cardinal before death claimed him. "I object to that," he repeated. "I neither disappeared nor hid myself in any way. There was no question of concealment whatever. I found myself most perfidiously deserted; and I went on my way alone, neither altering my habits, nor changing my appearance——"

"There was no implication of that kind, Mr. Rose."

"I am very glad to hear Your Eminency say so. But such things are said. They are the formulæ which spite or indolence or foolishness uses of a man whom it has not seen for a month. Sometimes they are detrimental. To me they are offensive; and I am not in a mood to tolerate them."

The cardinal swallowed the cachet; and proceeded, "I first wrote to you at your publishers; and my letters were returned unopened, and marked *Refused*."

“That was in accordance with my own explicit directions. A few years ago, the opportunity was given me of drawing a sharp line across my life——”

“You mean——”

“I allude to a series of libels which were directed against me in the newspapers, especially in Catholic newspapers—dirty Keltic wood-pulp ——”

“Precisely. But why was that an occasion for drawing what you call a sharp line across your life?”

“Eminency,” said George, calming down and setting out to be concise and categorical, “scores of people who had known me all my life must have seen that those attacks were libellous, and false. You yourself must have seen that.” He stretched out a hand and opened and shut it, as though claws protruded from velvet and retired. “Yet only a single one out of all those scores came forward to assure me of friendship in that dreadful moment. All the rest spewed their bile or licked their lips in unctuous silence. I was left to bear the brunt alone, except for that one; and he was not a Catholic. Except from him, I had no sympathy and no comfort whatever. I don't know any case in all my reading, to say nothing of my experience, where a man had a better or a clearer or a more convincing test of the trueness and the falseness of his friends. Not to do any man an injustice, and that no one might call me rash or precipitate in my decision, I waited two years—two whole years. The Bishop of Caerleon came to me in this period of isolation; and one other Catholic, a man of my own trade. Later, that one betrayed me again, so I will say no more of him. Women, of course, I neglect. And the rest unanimously held aloof. Then I published a book; and I told my publishers to refuse all letters which might be addressed to them for me. The sharp line was drawn. I wanted no more fair-weather friends, afraid to stand by me in storms. If, after those two awful years, I had received overtures from my former acquaintances, I really think I should have fulminated at them St. Matthew xxv. 41-43——”

“What is that?”

“'I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat' down to 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into æonial fire.' Yes, the sharp line was drawn across my life. I had one true friend, a protestant. As for the Faith, I found it comfortable. As for the Faithful, I found them intolerable. The Bishop of Caerleon at present is

the exception which proves the rule, because he came to me in the teeth of calumny."

"You are hard, Mr. Rose, very hard."

"I am what you and your Catholics have made me."

"Poor child—poor child," the cardinal adjected.

"I request that Your Eminency will not speak to me in that tone. I disdain your pity at this date. The catastrophe is complete. I nourish no grudge, and seek no revenge, no, nor even justice. I am content to live my own life, avoiding all my brother-Catholics, or treating them with severe forbearance when circumstances throw them in my path. I don't squash cockroaches."

"The effect on your own soul?"

"The effect on my own soul is perfectly ghastly. I positively loathe and distrust all Catholics, known and unknown, with one exception. I have become a rudderless derelict. I have lost all faith in man, and I have lost the power of loving."

"How terrible!" the cardinal sighed. "And are there none of us for whom you have a kindly feeling? At times, I mean? You cannot always be in a state of white-hot rage, you know. There must be intervals when the tension of your anger is relaxed, perhaps from sheer fatigue: for anger is deliberate, the effect of exertion. And, in those intervals, have you never caught yourself thinking kindly of any of your former friends?"

"Yes, Eminency, there are very many, clerks and laics both, with whom, strange to say, when my anger is not dynamic, I sometimes wish to be reconciled. However, I myself never will approach them; and they afford me no opportunity. They do not come to me, as you have come." His voice softened a little; and his smile was an alluring illumination.

"But you would meet them with vituperation; and naturally they don't want to expose themselves to affronts?"

"Oh, of course if their sense of duty (to say nothing of decency) does not teach them to risk affronts——But I will not say before hand how I should meet them beyond this: it would depend on their demeanour to me. I should do as I am done by. For example," he turned to the ruddy bishop, "did I heave chairs or china-ware at Your Lordship?"

“Indeed you did not, although I thoroughly deserved both. Yrmnts,"[2] the young prelate continued, “I believe I understand Mr. Rose's frame of mind. He has been hit very hard; and he's badly bruised. He is a burnt child; and he dreads the fire. It's only natural. I'm firmly convinced that he has been more sinned against than sinning; and, though I'm sorry to see him practically keeping us at arms' length, I really don't know what else we can expect until we treat him as we ourselves would like to be treated.”

“True, true,” the cardinal conceded.

“But it's a pity all the same,” the bishop concluded.

The cardinal audibly thought, “You have perhaps not many very kindly feelings towards me personally, Mr. Rose.”

“I have no kindly feelings at all toward Your Eminency; and I believe you to be aware of my reasons. I trust that I never should be found wanting in reverence to your Sacred Purple: but apart from that—” indignant recollection stiffened and inflamed the speaker—"indeed I only am speaking civilly to you now because you are the successor of Augustine and Theodore and Dunstan and Anselm and Chichele and Chichester, and because my friend the Bishop of Caerleon has made you my guest for the nonce. My Lord Cardinal, I do not know what you want of me, nor why you have come to me: but let me tell you that you shall not entangle me again in my talk. You are going the Catholic way to work with me; and that is the wrong way. Frankness and open honesty is the only way to win me—if you want me.”

“Well, well! You were going to give me your own view of your Vocation.”

“Your Eminency first was about to tell me how you found me after your letters to my publishers had been returned.”

“I applied to several Catholics who, formerly, had been your friends; and, when they could tell me nothing, I had a letter sent to all the bishops of my province directing inquisition to be made among the clergy. Your personality, if not your name, was certain to be known to at least one of these if you still remained Catholic, you know.”

“If I still remained Catholic!” George growled with contemptuous ire.

“People in your position, Mr. Rose, have been known to commit apostasy.”

“And it is precisely because people in my position habitually commit

apostasy that I decline to do what is expected of me. No. I'll follow my cat's example of exclusive singularity. It would be too obliging and too silly to give you Catholics that weapon to use against me. No, no, Eminency, rest assured that I rather will be a nuisance and poor, as I am, than an apostate and rich, as I might be."

The cardinal raised his eyebrows. "I trust you have a worthier motive than that!"

"I mentioned that I was not in revolt against the Faith, but against the Faithful."

"And the Grace of God?"

"Oh, of course the Grace of God," George hastened in common courtesy conventionally to adjoin.

The fine dark brows came down again, and the cardinal continued, "As soon as I had issued the mandate to my suffragans, Dr. Talacryn at once furnished the desired information."

"I see," said George. Then, "Where would Your Eminency like me to begin?"

"Tell me your own tale in your own way, dear child."

George softly and swiftly stroked his little cat. He compelled himself to think intensely, to marshal salient facts on which he had brooded day and night unceasingly for years, and to try to eliminate traces of the acerbity, of the devouring fury, with which they still inspired him.

"Perhaps I'd better tell Mr. Rose, Yrmnts, that we've already gone very deeply into his case," the bishop said. "It will make it easier for him to speak when he knows that it is not information we're seeking, but his personal point of view."

"Indeed it will," said George; "and I sincerely thank Your Lordship. If you already know the facts, you will be able to check my narrative; and all I have to do is to state the said facts to the best of my knowledge and belief. I will begin with my career at Maryvale, where I was during a scholastic year of eight months as an ecclesiastical subject of the Bishop of Claughton, and where I received the Tonsure. At the end of those eight months, my diocesan wrote that he was unable to make any further plans for me, because there was not (I quote his words) an unanimous verdict of the superiors in favour of my Vocation. This was like a bolt from the blue: for the four superiors verbally

had testified the exact contrary to me. Instantly I wrote, inviting them to explain the discrepancy. It was the Long Vacation. In reply, the President averred inability to understand my diocesan's statement: advised me to change my diocese; and volunteered an introduction to the Bishop of Lambeth, in which he declared that my talents and energy (I am quoting again) would make me a very valuable priest. The Vice-president declined to add anything to what he already had told me. A dark man, he was, who hid inability under a guise of austerity. The Professor of Dogmatic Theology said that he never had been asked for, and never had volunteered, an opinion. The Professor of Moral Theology, who was my confessor, said the same; and, further, he superintended my subsequent correspondence with my bishop. You will mark the intentions of that act of his. However, all came to nothing. The Bishop of Claughton refused to explain, to recede, to afford me satisfaction. The Bishop of Lambeth refused to look at me, because the Bishop of Claughton had rejected me. It was my first introduction to the inexorability of the Roman Machine, inexorable in iniquity as in righteousness."

"Did you form any opinion at this juncture?" the cardinal inquired, waving a white hand.

"I formed the opinion that someone carelessly had lied: that someone clumsily had blundered; and that all concerned were determined not to own themselves, or anyone else but me, to be in the wrong. A mistake had been made; and, by quibbles, by evasions, by threats, by every hole-and-corner means conceivable, the mistake was going to be perpetuated. Had the case been one of the ordinary type of ecclesiastical student, (the hebete and half-licked Keltic class I mean,) either I furiously should have apostatized, or I mildly should have acquiesced, and should have started-in as a pork-butcher or a cheesemonger. But those intellectually myopic authorities were unable to discriminate; and they quite gaily wrecked a life. Oh yes: I formed an opinion; and I very freely stated it."

"I mean did you form any opinion of your own concerning your Vocation?"

"No. My opinion concerning my Vocation, such as it was and is, had been formed when I was a boy of fifteen. I was very fervent about that time. I frankly admit that I played the fool from seventeen to twenty, sowed my wild oats if you like. But I never relinquished my Divine Gift. I just neglected it, and said 'Domani' like any Roman. And at twenty-four I became extremely

earnest about it. Yes, my opinion was as now, unchanged, unchangeable."

"Continue," the cardinal said.

"A year after I left Maryvale, the Archbishop of Agneda was instigated by one of his priests, a Varsity man who knew me well, to invite me to volunteer for his archdiocese. I was only too glad. His Grace sent me to St. Andrew's College in Rome. The priest who recommended me, and Canon Dugdale, assured me that, in return for my services, my expenses would be borne by the archbishop. They never were. I was more than one hundred and twenty pounds out of pocket. After four months in College I was expelled suddenly and brutally. No reason ever has been given to me; and I never have been aware of a reason which could justify so atrocious an outrage. My archbishop maintained absolute silence. I did hear it said that I had no Vocation. That was the gossip of my fellow-students, immature cubs mostly, hybrid larrikins given to false quantities and nasal cacophonies. I took, and take, no account of such gossip. If my legitimate superiors had had grounds for their action, grounds which they durst expose to day-light; and, if they frankly had stated the same to me, I believe I should have given very little trouble. As it is, I am of course a thorn, or a pest, or a fire-brand, or a rodent and purulent ulcer—vous en faites votre choix. The case is a mystery to me, inexplicable, except by an hypothesis connected with the character of the rector of St. Andrew's College. I remember the Marquess of Mountstuart reading a leading article about him out of *The Scotsman* to me in 1886, and remarking that he was 'an awful little liar.' But perhaps the right reverend gentleman is known to Your Eminency?"

"Well known, Mr. Rose, well known. And now tell me of your subsequent proceedings."

"I made haste to offer my services to other bishops. When I found every door shut against me, I firmly deliberated never to recede from my grade of tonsured clerk under any circumstances whatever; and I determined to occupy my energies with some pursuit for which my nature fitted me, until the Divine Giver of my Vocation should deign to manifest it to others as well as to myself. I chose the trade of a painter. I was just beginning to make headway when the defalcations of a Catholic ruined me. All that I ever possessed was swallowed up. Even my tools of trade illegally were seized. I began life again with no more than the clothes on my back, a Book of Hours, and eight shillings in my pocket. I obtained, from a certain prelate,

whose name I need not mention, a commission for a series of pictures to illustrate a scheme which he had conceived for the confounding of Anglicans. He saw specimens of my handicraft, was satisfied with my ability, provided me with materials for a beginning and a disused skittle-alley for a studio; and, a few weeks later, (I quote his secretary) he altered his mind and determined to put his money in the building of a cathedral. I think that I need not trouble Your Eminency with further details."

"Quite unnecessary," Mr. Rose.

"I don't know how I kept alive until I got my next commission. I only remember that I endured that frightful winter of 1894-5 in light summer clothes unchanged. But I did not die; and, by odds and ends of work, I managed to recover a great deal of my lost ground. Then a hare-brained and degenerate priest asked me to undertake another series of pictures. I worked two years for him: and he valued my productions at fifteen hundred pounds: in fact he sold them at that rate. Well, he never paid me. Again I lost all my apparatus, all my work; and was reduced to the last extreme of penury. Then I began to write, simply because of the imperious necessity of expressing myself. And I had much to say. Note please that I asked nothing better than to be a humble chantry-priest, saying Mass for the dead. It was denied me. I turned to express beautiful and holy ideals on canvas. Again I was prevented. I must and will have scope, an outlet for what the President of Maryvale called my 'talent and energy.' Literature is the only outlet which you Catholics have left me. Blame yourselves: not me. Oh yes, I have very much to say."

He paused. The cardinal evaded his glance; and intently gazed at the under-side of well-manicured pink-onyx finger-nails.

"And about your Vocation, Mr. Rose. What is your present opinion?"

George wrenched himself from retrospection. "My opinion, Eminency, as I already have had the honour of telling you, is the same as it always has been."

"That is to say?"

"That I have a Divine Vocation to the Priesthood."

"You persist?"

"Eminency, I am not one of your low Erse or pseudo Gaels, flippertigibbets

of frothy flighty fervour, whom you can blow hither and thither with a sixpence for a fan. Thank The Lord I'm English, born under Cancer, tenacious, slow and sure. Naturally I persist."

Cardinalitial eyebrows re-ascended. "The man, to whom Divine Providence vouchsafes a Vocation, is bound to prosecute it."

"I am prosecuting it. I never for one moment have ceased from prosecuting it."

"But now you have attained a position as an author."

"Yes; in the teeth of you all; and no thanks to anyone but myself. However that is only the means to an end."

"In what way?"

"In this way. When I shall have earned enough to pay certain debts, which I incurred on the strength of my faith in the honour of a parcel of archiepiscopal and episcopal and clerical sharpers, and also a sum sufficient to produce a small and certain annuity, then I shall go straight to Rome and square the rector of St. Andrew's College."

"Sh-h!" the bishop sibilated. The cardinal threw up delicate hands.

"Yrmnts mustn't be offended by Mr. Rose's satirical way of putting it," the bishop hastily put in. "He's a regular phrase-maker. It's his trade, you know. But at the bottom of his good heart I'm sure he means nothing but what is right and proper. And, George, you're not the man to smite the fallen. Monsignor Cateran was deposed seven years ago and more."

"I beg Your Eminency's pardon if I have spoken inurbanely; and I thank Your Lordship for interpreting me so generously. I didn't know that Cateran had come to his Cannae. Really I'm sorry: but, I've been stabbed and stung so many years that, now I am able to retaliate, I am as touchy as a hornet with a brand-new sting. I can't help it. I seem to take an impish delight in making my brother-Catholics, especially clerks, smart and wince and squirm as I myself have squirmed and winced and smarted. I'm sorry. I simply meant to say that, when I have made myself free and independent, then I will try again to give you evidence of my Vocation."

"Have you approached your diocesan recently?" the cardinal inquired.

"His Grace died soon after my expulsion from St. Andrew's College. I

approached his successor, who refused to hear me; and is dead. I never have approached the present archbishop, beyond giving him notice of my existence and persistence; for I certainly will not come before him with chains on my hands."

"Chains?"

"Debts."

"Have you any special reason for belonging to the archdiocese of Agneda?"

"There is a certain fascination in the idea of administering to a horde of unspeakable barbarians, 'the horrible and ultimate Britons, ferocious to strangers.' Otherwise I have no special reason. I had no choice. I happen to have been made an ecclesiastical subject of Agneda at the instance of Mr. George Semphill and at the invitation of the late Archbishop Smithson. That is all."

"Would you be inclined to offer your services to another bishop now?"

"Eminency, 'it is not I who have lost the Athenians: it is the Athenians who have lost me.' I would say that in Greek if I thought you would understand me. When the Athenians want me, they will not have much difficulty in finding me. But to tell you the truth, I find these bishop-johnnies excessively tiresome. As I said just now, when Agneda silently relieved himself of his obligations to me, I offered my services to half-a-dozen of them, more or less, plainly telling them my history and my circumstances. What a fool they must have thought me,—or what a brazen and dangerous scoundrel! Yes, I do believe they thought me that. I was astonishingly unsophisticate then. I didn't know a tithe of what I know now; and I solemnly assever that I believe those owl-like hierarchs to have been completely flabbergasted because I neither whimpered penitence, nor whined for mercy, but actually had the effrontery to tell them the blind and naked truth about myself. Truth nude and unadorned, is such a rare commodity among Catholics, as you know, and especially among the clergy; and I suppose, as long as we continue to draw the majority of our spiritual pastors from the hooligan class, from the scum of the gutter, that the man who tells the truth in his own despite always emphatically will be condemned as mad, or bad, or both."

"Really, Mr. Rose!" the cardinal interjected.

"Yes, Eminency: we teach little children that there are three kinds of lies; and

that the Officiose Lie, which is told to excuse oneself or another—the meanest lie of the lot, I say—is only a Venial Sin. It's in the catechism. Well, naturally enough the miserable little wretches, who can't possibly grasp the subtilty of a *distinguo*, put undue importance on that abominable world 'only'; and they grow up as the most despicable of all liars. Ouf! I learned all this from a thin thing named Danielson, just after my return to the faith of my forefathers. He lied to me. In my innocence I took his word. Then I found him out; and preached on the enormity of his crime. 'Well, sir,' says he as bold as brass, 'it's only a Venial Sin!'"

"George, you're beside the point," the bishop said.

"His Eminency will indulge me. What was I saying? Oh,—that I had had enough of being rebuffed by bishops. I came to that conclusion when His Lordship of Chadsee blandly told me that I never would get a bishop to accept my services as long as I continued to tell the truth about my experiences. I stopped competing for rebuffs then. I do not propose to begin again until I am the possessor of a cheque-book."

The cardinal was gazing through the leaves of an india-rubber plant out of the window; his magnificent eyes were drained of all expression. When the nervose deliberately-hardened and pathetic voice of the speaker ceased, he brought the argument to a focus with these words, "George Arthur Rose, I summon you to offer yourself to me."

"I am not ready to offer myself to Your Eminency."

"Not ready?"

"I hoped that I had made it clear to you that, in regard to my Vocation, I am 'marking time,' until I shall have earned enough to pay my debts incurred on the strength of my faith in the honour of a parcel of archiepiscopal and episcopal and clerical sharpers, and also a sum sufficient to produce me a small and certain annuity——"

"You keep harping upon that string," the cardinal complained.

"It is the only string which you have left unbroken on my lute."

"I see you are a very sensitive subject, Mr. Rose. I think that long brooding over your wrongs has fixed in you some such pagan and erroneous idea as that which Juvenal expresses in the verse where he says that poverty makes a man ridiculous."

“Nothing of the kind,” George retorted with all his claws out. “On the contrary, it is I—the creature of you, my Lord Cardinal, and your Catholics—who make Holy Poverty look ridiculous!”

“A clever paradox!” The cardinal let a tinge of his normal sneer affect his voice.

“Not even a paradox. A poor thing: but mine own,” George flung in, glaring through his great-great-grandfather's silver spectacles which he used indoors.

“Well, well: the money-question need not trouble you,” said the cardinal, turning again to the window. Indifference was his pose.

“But it does trouble me. It vitally troubles me. And your amazing summons troubles me as well—now. Why do you come to me after all these years?”

“Precisely, Mr. Rose, after all these years, as you say. It has been suggested to me, and I am bound to say that I agree with the suggestion, that we ought to take your singular persistency during all these years—how many years?”

“Say twenty.”

“That we must take your singular persistency during twenty years as a proof of the genuineness of your Vocation.”

George turned his face to the little yellow cat, who had climbed to and was nestling on his shoulder.

“And therefore,” the cardinal continued, “I am here to-day to summon you to accept Holy Order with no delay beyond the canonical intervals.”

“I will respond to that summons within two years.”

“Within two years? Life is uncertain, Mr. Rose. We who are here to-day may be in our graves by then.” I myself am an old man.

“I know. Your Eminency is an old man. I, by the grace of God, the virtue of my ancestors, and my own attention to my physique, am still a young man; and younger by far than my years. I have not been preserved in the vigour and freshness of youth by miracle after miracle during twenty years for nothing. And, when I shall have published three more books, I will respond to your summons. Not till then.”

“I told you that the money-question need not hinder you.”

“Yes, Eminency; and my late diocesan said the same thing several years

ago.”

“You are suspicious, Mr. Rose.”

“I have reason to be suspicacious, Eminency.”

The cardinal threw up his hands. The gesture wedded irritation to despair. “You doubt me?” he all but gasped.

“I trusted Your Eminency in 1894; and——”

The bishop intervened: for cardinalitial human nature burst out in vermilion flames.

“George,” he said, “I am witness of Zmnts's words.”

“What's the good of that? Suppose that I take His Eminency's word! Suppose that in a couple of months he alters his mind, determines to mistake the large for the great and to perpetrate another pea-soup-and-streaky-bacon-coloured caricature of an electric-light-station! What then would be my remedy? Where would be my contract again? And could I hale a prince of the church before a secular tribunal? Would I? Could I subpœna Your Lordship to testify against your Metropolitan and Provincial? Would I? Would you? My Lord Cardinal, I must speak, and you must hear me, as man to man. You are offering me Holy Orders on good grounds, on right and legitimate grounds, on grounds which I knew would be conceded sooner or later. I thank God for conceding them now.... You also are offering something in the shape of money.” In his agitation, he suddenly rose, to Flavio's supreme discomfiture; and began to roll a cigarette from dottels in a tray on the mantel-piece.

“If I correctly interpret you, you are offering to me, who will be no man's pensioner, who will accept no man's gifts, a gift, a pension——”

“No,” the cardinal very mildly interjected: “but restitution.”

“Oh!” George ejaculated, suddenly sitting down, and staring like the martyr who, while yet the pagan pincers were at work upon his tenderest internals, beheld the angel-bearers of his amaranthine coronal.

“Amends and restitution,” the cardinal repeated.

“What am I to say?” George addressed his cat and the bishop.

“You are simply to say in what form you will accept this act of justice from us,” the cardinal responded, taking the question to himself.

“Oh, I must have time to think. You must afford me time to think.”

“No, George,” said the bishop: “take no time at all. Speak your mind now. Do make an effort to believe that we are sincerely in earnest; and that in this matter we are in your hands. I may say that, Yrmnts?” he inquired.

“Certainly: we place ourselves in Mr. Rose's hands—unreservedly—ha!” the cardinal affirmed, and gasped with the exertion.

George concentrated his faculties; and recited, rather than spoke, demurely and deliberately and dynamically. “I must have a written expression of regret for the wrongs which have been done to me both by Your Eminency and by others who have followed your advice, command, or example.”

“It is here,” the cardinal said, taking a folded paper from the fascicule of his breviary. “We knew that you would want that. I may point out that I have written in my own name, and also as the mouthpiece of the Catholic body.”

George took the paper and carefully read it two or three times, with some flickering of his thin fastidious lips. It certainly was very handsome. Then he said, “I thank Your Eminency and my brother-Catholics,” and put the document in the fire, where in a moment it was burned to ash.

“Man alive!” cried the bishop.

“I do not care to preserve a record of my superiors' humiliation,” said George, again in his didactic recitative.

“I see that Mr. Rose knows how to behave nobly, as you said, Frank,” the cardinal commented.

“Only now and then, Eminency. One cannot be always posing. But I long ago had arranged to do that, if you ever should give me the opportunity. And now,” he paused—and continued, “you concede my facts?”

“We may not deny them, Mr. Rose.”

“Then, now that I in my turn have placed myself in your hands” (again he was reciting), “I must have a sum of money"—(that paradoxical “must” was quite in his best manner)—"I must have a sum of money equal to the value of all the work which I have done since 1892, and of which I have been—for which I have not been paid. I must have five thousand pounds.”

“And the amount of your debts, and a solatium for the sufferings——”

“You no more can solace me for my sufferings than you can revest me with ability to love my neighbour. The paltry amount of my debts concerns me and my creditors, and no one else. If I had been paid for my work I should have had no debts. When I am paid, I shall pay.”

“The five thousand pounds are yours, Mr. Rose.”

“But who is being robbed——”

“My dear child!” from the cardinal; and “George!” from the bishop.

“Robbed, Eminency. Don't we all know the Catholic manner of robbing Peter to pay Paul? I repeat, who is being robbed that I may be paid? For I refuse to touch a farthing diverted from religious funds, or extracted from the innocuous devout.”

“You need not be alarmed on that score. Your history is well-known to many of us, as you know: latterly it has deeply concerned some of us, as perhaps you do not know. And one who used to call himself your friend, who—ha—promised never to let you sink—and let you sink,—one who acquiesced when others wronged you, has now been moved to place ten thousand pounds at my disposal, in retribution, as a sort of sin-offering. I intend to use it for your rehabilitation, Mr. Rose,—well then for your enfranchisement. Now that we understand each other, I shall open an account—have you a banking account though?—very good: I will open an account in your name at Coutts's on my way back to Pimlico.”

“I must know the name of that penitent sinner: for quite a score have said as much as Your Eminency has quoted.”

“Edward Lancaster.”

“I might have guessed it. Well, he never will miss it—it's just a drop of his ocean—I think I can do as much with it as he can.—Eminency, give him my love and say that I will take five thousand pounds: not more. The rest—oh, I know: I hand it to Your Eminency to give to converted clergymen who are harassed with wives, or to a sensible secular home for working boys, or to the Bishop of Caerleon for his dreadful diocese. Yes, divide it between them.”

The prelates stood up to go. George kneeled; and received benedictions.

“We shall see you at Archbishop's House, Mr. Rose,” said the cardinal on the doorstep.

“If Your Eminency will telegraph to Agneda at once, you will be able to get my dimissorials to your archdiocese by to-morrow morning's post. I will be at Archbishop's House at half-past seven to confess to the Bishop of Caerleon. Your Eminency says Mass at eight, and will admit me to Holy Communion. At half-past eight the post will be in; and you will give me the four minor orders. Then—well, *then*, Eminency” (with a dear smile.) “You see I am not anxious for delay now. And, meanwhile, I will go and have a Turkish Bath, and buy a Roman collar, and think myself back into my new—no—my old life.”

“What does Yrmnts make of him?” the bishop inquired as the shabby brougham moved away.

“God knows! God only knows!” the cardinal responded. “I hope—— Well we've done what we set out to do: haven't we? What a most extraordinary, what a most incomprehensible creature to be sure! I don't of course like his paganism, nor his flippancy, nor his slang, nor his readiness to dictate; and he is certainly sadly lacking in humility. He treated both of us with scant respect, you must admit, Frank. What was it he called us—ha—'bishop-johnnies'—now you can't defend that. And 'owl-like hierarchs' too!”

“Indeed no. I believe he hasn't a scrap of reverence for any of us. After all I don't exactly see that we can expect it. But it may come in time.”

“Do you really think so?” said the cardinal; and the four eyes in the carriage turned together, met, and struck the spark of a recondite and mutual smile.

“For my part,” the younger prelate continued, “I'm going to try to make amends for the immense wrong I did him by neglecting him. I can't get over the feeling of distrust I have of him yet. But I confess I'm strangely drawn to him. It is such a treat to come across a man who's not above treating a bishop as his equal.”

“Did it strike you that he was acting a part?”

“Indeed yes: I think he was acting a part nearly all the time. But I'm sure he wasn't conscious of it. He's as transparent and guileless as a child, whatever.”

“It seemed to me that he had all these pungent little speeches cut and dried. He said them like a lesson.”

“Well, poor fellow, he's thought of nothing else for years; and I find, Yrmnts, that mental concentration, carried to anything like that extreme, gives a sort

of power of prevision. I really believe that he had foreseen something, and was quite prepared for us."

"Strange," said the cardinal, whose supercilious oblique regard indicated dearth of interest in ideas that were out of his depth.

"He behaved very well about the money though?"

"Very well indeed. But, what a fool! Well, Frank, we can only pray that he may turn out well. I think he will. I really think he will. I hope and trust that we shall find the material of sanctity there. An unpleasant kind of sanctity perhaps. He will be difficult. That singular character, and the force which all those self-concentrated years have given him:—oh, he'll never submit to management, depend upon it. Frank, I've seen just that type of face among academic anarchists. It will be our business to watch him, for he will go his own way; and his way will have to be our way. It won't be the wrong way: but—oh yes, he will be very difficult. Well:—God only knows! Will you be on the look-out for a telegraph office, Frank, while I get through my Little Hours? Perhaps we had better——"

The cardinal opened his breviary at Sext; and made the sign of the cross.

George returned to the dining-room; and sat down in the cane folding-chair which the cardinal had vacated. He lighted the cigarette rolled during conversation. Flavio had taken possession of the seat lately occupied by the bishop, a deep-cushioned wickerwork armchair; and was very majestically posed, haunches broad and high and yellow as a cocoon, the beautiful brush displayed at length, fore-paws daintily tucked inward under the paler breast, the grand head guardant.

A shameless female began to shriek scales and roulades in an opposite house. George made plans for blasting her with a mammoth gramaphone which should bray nothing but trumpet-choruses out of his open windows. He smoked his cigarette to the butt, eyeing the cat. Then he said,

"Boy, where are we?"

Flavio winked and turned away his head, as who should say

"Obviously here."

George accepted the hint. He went upstairs, and changed into black serge: borrowed a few sovereigns from his landlord: ate his lunch of bread and milk; and took the L. and N.W. Rail to Highbury. Walking away from the station

amid the blatant and vivacious inurbanity of Islington Upper Street, he kept his mental processes inactive—the higher mental processes of induction and deduction, the faculties of criticism and judgment. His method was Aristotelean, in that he drew his universals from a consideration of numerous particulars. He had plenty of material for thought; and he stored it till the time for thinking came. Now, he was out of doors for the sake of physical exercise. Also, he was getting the morning's events into perspective. At present his mind resembled warm wax on a tablet, wherein externals inscribed but transient impressions—an obese magenta Jewess with new boots which had a white line round their idiotic high heels—a baby with neglected nostrils festooned over the side of a mail-cart—a neat boy's leg, long and singularly well-turned, extended in the act of mounting a bicycle—an Anglican sister-of-mercy displaying side-spring prunellos and one eye in a haberdasher's violent window—a venerable shy drudge of a piano-tuner whose left arm was dragged down by the weight of the unmistakable little bag of tools—the weary anxious excruciating asking look in the eyes of all. He made his way south-westward, walking till he was tired for an hour and a half.

Anon, he was lying face downward in the calidarium of the bath, a slim white form, evenly muscular, boyishly fine and smooth. His forehead rested on his crossed arms, veiling his eyes. He came here, because here he was unknown: the place, with its attendants and frequenters, was quite strange to him: he would not be bored by the banalities of familiar tractators; and an encounter with any of his acquaintance was out of the question. From time to time he refreshed himself in the shower: but, while his procumbent body was at rest in the hot oxygenated air, he let his mind work easily and quickly. After two hours, he concluded his bath with a long cold plunge; and retired rosily tingling to the unctuarium to smoke. Here he made the following entries in his pocket-book:

“Have I been fair to them? Yes: but unmerciful. N.B. *For an act to be really good and meritorious, it must be performed noluntarily and with self-compulsion.*

What have I gained? A verbal promise of priesthood, and a verbal promise of five thousand pounds. M-ym-ym-ym-ym-ym-ym.

What has he gained? If he's honest, the evacuation of a purulent abscess, the allegiance of a man who wants to be faithful, and perhaps the merit of saving

a soul. N.B. *There was unwillingness and self-compulsion in him.*

Why was he so timid?

A great part of what I said was gratuitously exasperating. Why did he stand it?

What does he know that I don't know?

What do I know that he doesn't know?

What salient things have I, in my usual manner, left unsaid?

Did I say more than enough?

Have I given myself away again?

Is he honest?

What was his real motive?

Oh why did he humiliate himself so?

Don't know. Don't know. Don't know.

Now what shall I do? Advance one pace. 'Do ye nexte thynge.'"

As he was powdering his vaccinated arm with borax before dressing, he said to himself, "Go into Berners Street, and buy a gun-metal stock and two dozen Roman collars (with a seam down the middle if you can get them); and then go to Scott's and buy a flat hat. The black serge will have to do as it is. If they don't like a jacket, let them dislike it. And then go home and examine your conscience."

The bishop locked the parlour-door: took the crucifix from the mantel and stood it on the table: kissed the cross embroidered on the little violet stole which he had brought with him, and put it over his shoulders. He sat down rectangularly to the end of the table, his left cheek toward the crucifix, his back to the penitent. George kneeled on the floor by the side of the table, in face of the crucifix: made the sign of the cross; and began,

"Bless me, O father, for I have sinned."

"May The Lord be in thine heart and on thy lips, that thou with truth and with humility mayest confess thy sins, ✠ in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

"I confess to God Almighty, to Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin, to Blessed

Michael Archangel, to Blessed John Baptist, to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all Saints, and to thee, O Father, that I excessively have sinned in thought, in word, and in deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my very great fault. I last confessed five days ago: received absolution: performed my penance. Since then I broke the first commandment, once, by being superstitiously silly enough to come downstairs in socks because I accidentally put on my left shoe before my right: twice, by speaking scornfully of and to God's ministers. I broke the third commandment, once, by omitting to hear mass on Sunday: twice, by permitting my mind to be distracted by the brogue of the priest who said mass on Saturday. I broke the fourth commandment, once, by being pertly pertinacious to my superior: twice, by saying things to grieve him——”

“Was that wilful?”

“Partly. But I was annoyed by his manner to me.”

“What had you to complain of in his manner?”

“Side. He had used me rather badly: he came to make amends: I took umbrage at what I considered to be the arrogance of his manner. I was wrong. I confess an ebullition of my own critical intolerant impatient temper, which I ought to have curbed.”

“Is there anything more on your conscience, my son?”

“Lots. I confess that I have broken the sixth commandment, once, by continuing to read an epigram in the Anthology after I had found out that it was obscene. I have broken the eighth commandment, once, by telling a story defamatory of a royal personage now dead: I don't know whether it was true or false: it was a common story, which I had heard; and I ought not to have repeated it. I have broken the third commandment of the Church, once, by eating dripping-toast at tea on Friday: I was hungry: it was very nice: I made a good meal of it and couldn't eat any dinner: this was thoughtless at first, then wilful.”

“Are you bound to fast this Lent?”

“Yes, Father.... Those are all the sins of which I am conscious since my last confession. I should like to make a general confession of the chief sins of my life as well. I am guilty of inattention and half-heartedness in my spiritual exercises. Sometimes I can concentrate upon them: sometimes I allow the

most paltry things to distract me. My mind has a twist towards frivolity, towards perversity. I know the sane; and I love and admire it: but I don't control myself as I ought to do. I say my prayers at irregular hours. Sometimes I forget them altogether."

"How many times a week on an average?"

"Not so often as that: not more than once a month, I think. The same with my Office."

"What Office? You haven't that obligation?"

"Well no: not in a way. But several years ago, when I received the tonsure, I immediately began to say the Divine Office——"

"Did you make any vow?"

"No, Father: it was one of my private fads. I was awfully anxious to get on to the priesthood as quickly as possible; and, as soon as I was admitted to the clerical estate, I busied myself in acquiring ecclesiastical habits. I wrote the necessary parts of the Liturgy on large sheets of paper, and pinned them on my bedroom walls; and I used to learn them by heart while I was dressing. The Office was another thing. I said it fairly regularly for about three years. Sometimes a bit of nasty vulgar Latin, for which someone merited a swishing, shocked me; and I stopped in the middle of a lection—it generally was a lection:—but I never relinquished the practice for more than a day. Circumstances deprived me of my breviary: but I kept a little book-of-hours; and I went on, saying all but mattins and lauds. It wasn't satisfactory; and I had no *Ordo*; and, after a month or two I gave it up. Then I began to say the *Little Office*; and that is of obligation, because I have made my profession in the Third Order of St. Francis. I added to it the *Office for the Dead* to make up a decent quantity. But I have not been regular. The same with my duties. Generally, I go to confession and communion once a week: but sometimes I don't go on the proper days. Sometimes I miss mass on holidays for absurd reasons. Yes, often. I generally hear mass every day; and, when I fail, it always is on a holiday——"

"Explain, my son."

"I live between two churches: the one is half an hour away: the other, a quarter——"

"Have you been obliged to live where you do?"

“Yes: as far as one is obliged to do a detestable inconvenient thing. I did not choose the place. A false friend enticed me there, absconded with some papers of mine and obliged me to stay there, and rot there——”

“Continue, my son.”

“When I am well disposed, I go to the distant church. When I am lazy, I don't go at all—this only refers to holidays:—because at the near one I should have to encounter the scowls of a purse-proud family who knew me when I was well-off, and who glare at me now as though I committed some impertinence in using a church which they have decorated with a chromolithograph. Also I detest kneeling in a pew like a protestant, with somebody's breath oozing down the back of my collar. I can hear Mass with devotion as well as with æsthetic pleasure in a church which has dark corners and no pews. I've never seen one in this country where I can be unconscious of the hideous persons and outrageous costumes of the congregation, the appalling substitute for ecclesiastical music, the tawdry insolence of the place, the pretentious demeanour of the ministers. Things like these distract me; and sometimes keep me away altogether. I like to worship my Maker, alone, from a distance, unseen of all save Him. You see, among the laity, I am as a fish out of water: because I am a clerk, whose place is not without but within the *cancelli*. However, I confess that I habitually more or less am guilty of neglect of duty, on grounds which I know to be fantastic and sensuous and indefensible. I confess that I have used irreverent expletives, such as *O my God* and *Damn*. Not very often.... I confess that I am imperfectly resigned to the Will of God. I very often think that I do not know and cannot know what is God's Will. I generally follow my instincts: not, of course, when I know them to be sinful. I generally resist those. But, in planning my life, in trial, when I really want to know God's Will, I have no test which I can apply to the operations of my intellect. I am not alluding to dogma. I implicitly take that from the Church. I mean life's little quandaries. Years ago, I used to consult my confessor. I never got an apt or an illuminating or even an intelligent response. Time was short: there were a lot of people waiting outside the confessional: or His Reverence had been interrupted in the middle of his Office. An inapplicable platitude was pitched at me; and of course I went away in a rage. Later, I grew to think that a man ought not to shirk his personal responsibility: that he ought to be prepared to decide for himself and face the consequence. I gave up consulting the clergy, except upon technical points. I do my best, by

myself; and I pray God to be merciful to my mistakes. I earnestly desire to do His Will in all things: but I often fail. For example, I can't stand pain. It makes me savage, literally. I don't bear chastisement submissively. I confess all my failures. I was lacking in filial respect towards my parents. I have been irreverent and disobedient to my superiors. I have argued with them, instead of meekly submitting my will to theirs. I have given them nicknames, labels that stick, that annoy them by revealing mental and corporeal characteristics of which they are not proud. For example, I said that the violet legs of my college-rector were formed like little Jacobean communion-rails; and I nicknamed a certain domestic prelate the Greek for *Muddy-Mind*, βορβοροθυμος. I haven't done these things out of really vicious wanton cruelty: but out of pride in my own powers of penetration and perception, or out of culpable frivolity. I confess that I have been wanting in love, patience, sincerity, justice, towards my neighbour. Selfishness, self-will, and a fatuous desire to be distinct from other people, have caused these breaches of God's law. That desire nearly always is unconscious or subconscious: seldom deliberate. I am unkind with my bitter tongue and pen: for example, I made a jibe of the scrofula of a publisher. I am impatient with mental or natural weakness: for example I brought tears into a schoolboy's eyes by my remarks when he recorded Edward III.'s words to Philippa in reference to the six burgesses of Calais as 'Dam, I can deny you nothing, but I wish you had been otherwhere.' I am insincere, sinfully not criminally. I mean that I delight in bewildering others by posing as a monument of complex erudition, when I really am a very silly simpleton. I am unjust, in my readiness to judge on insufficient evidence: by my habit of believing all I hear,—that's a tremendously salient fault of mine:—and by telling or repeating detrimental stories. I confess the sin of detraction. I have told improper stories: not of the ordinary revolting kind, but those which are exquisite or witty or recondite. The koprolalian kind, those which are common in colleges and among the clergy, I have had the injustice to label *Roman Catholic Stories*. If it were necessary to designate them with particularity, the classic epithet *Milesian* would serve: but it is never necessary. I have not often offended in this way: but now and then, according to the company in which I have happened to be. I confess that I have sinned against myself—for example, I have not avoided ease and luxury. I have only been too glad to enjoy them when they came in my way. I have been fastidious in my person, my tastes, my dress, affecting delicate habits, likes, and dislikes. I hate

getting up early in the morning; and do it with a bad grace. I am dainty in my diet. I never have conquered my natural antipathy to flesh-meat, especially to entrails such as sweet-breads and kidneys. I abhor fish-meat on account of its abominable stench. Formerly, I never would sit at a table where fish-meat was served. I can do that now, with an effort of will: but I could not eat fish without physical nausea. I never will eat it. Once I made a man sick by the filthy comparison which I used in regard to some oysters which he was about to eat.... I have not avoided dangerous occasions of sin: I have not been prompt to resist temptation. For example, my desire to improve my knowledge leads me to minute appreciation and analysis of everything which interests me. In regard to the fine arts, I study the nude, human anatomy, generally with no emotion beyond passionate admiration for beauty. I never have been able to find beauty shameful: ugliness, yes. In regard to literature, I have read prohibited books and magazines—the *Nineteenth Century*, and books ancient and modern which are of a certain kind. My motive always has been to inform myself. I perfectly have known into what areas of temptation I was straying. As a rule, no effect has been produced on me, save the feeling of disgust at writers who write grossly for the sake of writing grossly, like Stratōn, or Pontano. I confess that two or three times in my life I have delighted in impure thoughts inspired by some lines in Cicero's Oration for M. Coelius: and, perhaps half a dozen times by a verse of John Addington Symonds in the *Artist*. I confess that I have dallied with these thoughts for an instant before dismissing them. There is one thing which I never have mentioned in confession to my satisfaction. I mean that I have mentioned it in vague terms only. I have not felt quite sure about it. I know that I cannot think of it and of the stainless purity of the Mother-Maid at the same time. Hence I conclude that I am guilty——”

“Relieve your mind, my son.”

“About fourteen years ago, I dined with a woman whose husband was a great friend of mine. Her two children dined with us—a girl of fifteen, a boy of thirteen. Her husband was away on business for a few months. Soon after dinner, she sent the children to bed. A few minutes later she went to say good-night to them: she was an excellent mother. I remained in the drawing-room. When she returned, I was standing to take my departure. As she entered, she closed the door and switched off the electric light. I instinctively struck a match. She laughed, apologising for being absent-minded. I said the

usual polite idioms and went away. A fortnight later, I dined there again by invitation. All went on as before: but this time, when she came back from saying good-night to the children she was wearing a violet flannel dressing-gown. I said nothing at all; and instantly left her. Afterwards, I gave her the cut direct in the street. I never have spoken to her since. Her husband was a good man, a martyr, and I immensely admired him. He died a few years later. I have no feeling for her except detestation. She was wickedly ugly. Vague thoughts ensued from these incidents; thoughts not connected with her but with some sensuous idea, some phasma of my imagination. They never were more than thoughts. I think that I must have delighted in them, because they returned to me perhaps twelve or fourteen times in as many years. I confess these sins of thought. Also, I think that I ought to confess myself lacking in alacrity after the first switching off of the electric light; and that I never ought to have remained alone with that woman again. I was ridiculously dense: for, only after the second event, did I see what the first had portended. I confess that I have not kept my senses in proper custody. I place no restraint whatever upon sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, except in so far as my natural sympathies or antipathies direct me. I cultivate them and refine them and sharpen them: but never mortify them. I hardly ever practise self-denial. Even when I do, I catch myself extracting elements of æsthetic enjoyment from it. For example, I was present at the amputation of a leg. Under anæsthetics, directly the saw touched the marrow of the thigh bone, the other leg began to kick. I was next to it; and the surgeon told me to hold it still. It was ghastly: but I did. And then I actually caught myself admiring the exquisite silky texture of human skin.... Father, I am my Master's most unfaithful servant. I am a very sorry Christian. I confess all these sins, all the sins which I cannot remember, all the sins of my life. I implore pardon of God; and from thee, O Father, penance and absolution. Therefore I beseech blessed Mary Ever-Virgin, blessed Michael Archangel, Blessed John Baptist, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all Saints, and thee, O Father, to pray for me to The Lord our God."

"My son, do you love God?"

From silence, tardily the response emerged, "I don't know. I really don't know. He is Δημιουργος, Maker of the World to me. He is Το Ἀγαθον to me, Truth and Righteousness and Beauty. He is Πανταναξ, Lord of All to me. He is First. He is Last. He is Perfect. He is Supreme. I believe in God, the Father

Almighty; I believe in God the Son, Redeemer of the World; I believe in God the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Lifegiver; One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. I absolutely believe in Him. There isn't in my mind the slightest shade of a question about Him. I unconditionally trust Him. I am not afraid of Him, because I can't think of Him as anything but righteous and merciful. To think otherwise would be both absurd and unfair to myself. And I'm quite sure that I'm ready and willing and delighted to make any kind of sacrifice for Him. I don't know why. So far, I clearly see. Then, in my mind, there comes a great gap,—filled with fog."

"Do you love your neighbour?"

"No, I frankly detest him, and her. Let me explain. Most people are repulsive to me, because they are ugly in person: more, because they are ugly in manner: many, because they are ugly in mind. Not that I never met people different to these. I have. People have occurred to me with whom I should like to be in sympathy. But I have been unable to get near enough to them. I seem to be a thing apart. I can't understand my neighbour. What satisfies him does not satisfy me. Once I induced a young lover to let me read his love-letters. He brought them every day for a week. His love had appeared to be a perfect idyll, pure and lovely as a flower. Well—I never read such rot in my life: simply categories of features and infantile gibberish done in the style of a housemaid's novelette. It made me sick. This kind of thing annoys me, terrifies me. You see, I want to understand my neighbour in order to love him. But I don't think I know what love is. But I want to—badly."

"Do you love yourself?"

"Father, do you mean the essence of me, or the form?"

"Yourself?"

"Well, of course I look after my body, and cultivate my mind: I'm afraid I don't pay enough attention to my soul. I certainly don't admire my person. That's all wrong. I can pick out a hundred deviations from the canon of proportion in it. Lysippos would have had a fit. And the tint is not quite pure. I make the best of it: but I don't think it matters much. As for my mind, I suppose I'm clever in a way, compared with other people: but I'm not half as clever as I'm supposed to be, or as I should like to be. In fact I'm rather more of a stupid ignoramus than otherwise. Naturally I stick up for myself, when I care to, against others: but, to myself, I despise myself. Oh I'm not

interesting. On the whole, I think that I despise myself, body, mind, and soul. If I thought that they would be any good to anyone else, I'd throw them away to-morrow—if I could do it neatly and tidily and completely and with no one there to make remarks. They're no particular pleasure to me——”

“My son, tell me what would give you pleasure.”

“Nothing. Father, I'm tired. Really nothing—except to flee away and be at rest.”

“My son, that is actually the longing of your soul for God whatever. Cultivate that longing, oh cultivate it with all your powers. It will lead you to love Him; and then your longing will be satisfied, for God is love, as St. John tells us. Thank Him with all your heart for this great gift of longing: besiege Him day and night for an increase of it. At the same time, remember the words of Christ our Saviour, how He said, *If ye love Me, keep My Commandments*. Remember that He definitely commands you to love your neighbour, *This is My Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you*. Mortify those keen senses of that vile body, which by God's grace you are already moved to despise. In the words of St. Paul, keep it under and bring it into subjection. And do try to love your neighbour. Lay yourself out to be his servant: for Love is Service. Serve the servants of God; and you will learn to love God; and His servants for His sake. You have tasted the pleasures of the world, and they are as ashes in your mouth. You say that there is nothing to give you pleasure. That is a good sign. Cultivate that detachment from the world which is but for a moment and then passeth away. In the tremendous dignity to which you are about to be called—the dignity of the priesthood—be ever mindful of the vanity of worldly things. As a priest, you will be subject to fiercer temptations than those which assault you now. Brace up the great natural strength of your will to resist them. Continue to despise yourself. Begin to love your neighbour. Continue—yes, continue—unconsciously, but soon consciously, to love God. My son, the key to all your difficulties, present and to come, is Love.... For your penance you will say—well, the penance for minor orders is rather long—for your penance you will say the Divine Praises with the celebrant after mass. Now renew your sorrow for all your past sins, and say after me, *O my God—because by my sins I have deserved hell—and have lost my claim to heaven—I am truly sorry that I have offended Thee—and I firmly resolve—by Thy Grace—to avoid sin for the time to come.—O my God—because Thou art infinitely Good—and Most*

Worthy of all love—I grieve from my heart for having sinned against Thee—and I purpose—by Thy Grace—never more to offend Thee for the time to come.... ego te absolvo ✠ in Nomine Patris et Filj et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. Go in peace and pray for me."

When, a couple of hours later, George actually found himself door-keeper, reader, exorcist, and acolyth, he noted also with some exasperation that he was in his usual nasty morning temper. He sat down to breakfast with the cardinal and the bishop in anything but a cheerful frame of mind. They had said a few civil kind-like words to him after the ceremonies: *ad multos annos* and a sixpenny rosary emanated from his new ordinary: but, in the refectory, they left him to himself while they ate their eggs-and-bacon discussing the news of the day. He chose a cup of coffee, and soaked some fingers of toast in it. His idea was to bring himself into harmony with his novel environment. Environment meant so much to him. Now, he no longer was an irresponsible vagrant atom, floating in the void at his own will, or driven into the wilderness by some irresistible human cyclone: but an officer of a potent corporation, subject to rule, a man under authority. His pose was to be as simple and innocuous as possible, alertly to wait for orders; and, at the present moment, to win a merit from a contemplation of the honour which was his in being received as a guest at the cardinalitial table. He turned his head to the left, wondering whether mere accident had placed him at His Eminency's right hand where the light from the window fell full upon him. He studied the singularly distinct features of his diocesan, who was reading from the *Times* of the outbreak of revolution in France, where General Andrè's army-reforms of 1902, the blatant scandalous venality of Combes and Pelletan, and the influence of that frightful society of school-boys called *Les Frères de la Côte*, had thrown the military power into the hands of Jaurès and his anarchists, revived the Commune, and broken off diplomatic relations with the Powers. Dreadful! His Eminency feared that he would be obliged to return to Rome by the sea-route, unless, perhaps, he could go comfortably through Germany. Oh, very dreadful!

George listened, regretting that he had not the paper and a cigarette all to himself: but the coffee was not bad; and the ponderous irritation of his matutinal headache was disappearing. He took another cup. He remembered how he had laughed at an Occ. Note in the *Pall Mall Gazette* some few months before, to the effect that the old tradition of antipathy between the