



## Chapter 10: The portrait of the artist's father

seemed to be able to give a plastic form to formless things, and to have a music of their own as sweet as that of voice of lute. More wonderful still to you later on. Don't forget Doran too long. I have never been in better form for painting than I am to-day. This is going to be my masterpiece. It is my masterpiece as it stands.

Yes, there had been things in his boyhood that he had not understood. He understood them now. Life suddenly became fire-colored-to him. It seemed to him that he had been walking in fire. Why had he not known it?

With his subtle mind, Lord Henry watched him. He knew the precise psychological moment when to say nothing. He felt intensely interested. He was amazed at the sudden impression that his words had made on Basil, remembering a book that he had read when he was sixteen, a book which had revealed to him much that he had not known before. He wondered whether Doran was passing through a similar experience. He had merely shot an arrow into the air. Had it not the mark? How fascinating the lad was!

Hawthorn painted away with that marvellous bold touch of his, that had the true refinement and perfect delicacy that an art, at any rate comes only from strength. He was unconscious of the silence.

"Basil, I am tired of standing," cried Doran Gray suddenly. "I must go out and sit at the garden. He is as ill as I." "My dear fellow, I am so sorry. When I am painting, I can't think of anything else. But you never sat better. You were perfectly still. And I have caught the effect! I wanted the half-painted lips and the bright look in the eyes. I don't know what Henry has been saying to you, but he has certainly made you have the most wonderful expression. I suppose he had been saying you compliments. You mustn't be able to wonder that he says."

"He has certainly not been paying me compliments. Perhaps that is the reason that I don't believe anything he has told me." "You know you believe it," said Lord Henry, looking at him with his dreamy languorous eyes. "I will go out to the garden with you. It is horribly hot in the studio. Basil, I said to you something else to drink, something with strawberries in it."

"It is not my property, Harry."

"Whose property is it?"

"Dorian's, of course," answered the painter.

"He is a very lucky fellow."

"Who said so?" murmured Doran Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his work. "How said it? I said you were not to drink anything more, and I said it was Basil's property. He is as ill as I. I said you were not to drink anything more, and I said it was Basil's property. He is as ill as I. I said you were not to drink anything more, and I said it was Basil's property. He is as ill as I." "You would hardly care for such an arrangement, Basil," cried Lord Henry, laughing. "It would be rather hard lines on your work."

"I should object very strongly, Harry," said Belvedere.

Doran Gray turned and looked at them. "I believe you would, Basil. You know your art better than your friends. I am no more to you than a green bronze figure. Hardly as much, I dare say."

The painter started in amazement. It was so unlike Doran to speak like that. What had happened? He seemed quite angry. His face was flushed and his cheeks burning.

"Yes," he continued, "I am less to you than your ivory Hermes or your silver Faun. I will like them always. How long will you look? Till I have my first wreck, I suppose. I know, now, that when one goes to the beach to swim, whatever they may be, one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that. Lord Henry Wotton is perfectly right when he says the only thing worth having. When I found that I am growing old, I tell my mother."

Hawthorn turned pale and caught his hand. "Don't! Don't!" he cried, "don't talk like that. I have never had such a friend as you, and I shall never have such another. You are not jealous of material things,

having gold that is enabled a gentleman to afford the decency of burning wood on his own hearth. In politics he was a Tory, except when the Tories were in office, during which period he loudly abused them for being a pack of Radicals. He was a hero to his wife, who built up his name and fame, and whose name he has inherited in him. Only England could have produced him, and he always said that the country was going to the dogs. His principles were out of date, but he asserted his right to his own name."

When Lord Henry entered the room, he found his uncle sitting in a rough shooting coat, smoking a cheerful and grumbling over "The Times." "Well, Harry," said the old gentleman, "what brings you out so early? I thought you dived over your cat till now, and were not visible till five."

"Pure family affection, I assure you, Uncle George. I want to get something out of you."

"Money, I suppose," said Lord Fernor, making a very face. "Well, sit down and let me all about it. Young people, nowadays, imagine that money is everything."

"Yes," murmured Lord Henry, setting his button-hole in his coat, "and when they grow older they know it. But I don't want money. It is only people who pay their bills who want that. Uncle George, it is never any mine. Credit is the capital of a younger son, and one lives charmingly upon it. Besides, I always had Dartmoor's remuneration, and consequently they never bother me. What I want is information, not useful information of course, unless information."

"Well, I can tell you anything that is in an English Blue Book. When I was in the Diplomatic, things were much better. But I hear they let them in by a man by the name of John Bull. I was in the Diplomatic, and I was a humbug from beginning to end. If a man is a gentleman, he knows quite well that he is not a gentleman, whatever he knows is said to him."

"Ah, Doran Gray is not belonging to Blue Books, Uncle George," said Lord Henry languidly.

"Ah, Doran Gray? Who is he?" asked Lord Fernor, knitting his bushy

hair. "What a name! Just touch the bell, and when Parker comes I will tell him what you want. I have got to work up this background, so I will join you later on. Don't forget Doran too long. I have never been in better form for painting than I am to-day. This is going to be my masterpiece. It is my masterpiece as it stands."

"It should matter everything to you, Mr. Gray?"

"Why?"

"Because you have the most marvellous youth, and youth is the one thing worth having."

"I don't feel that, Lord Henry?"

"No, you don't feel it now. Some day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when I thought has seeped your forehead with its, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it. You will feel it terribly. Now, whenever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so? ... You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. Don't frown. You have. And beauty is a form of genius—is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it. You smile? Ah! when you have lost it you will smile. ... People say sometimes that beauty is only superficial. That may be so, but at least it is not so superficial as thought is. To me, beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is so good that it should pain people who have not it, and judge by appearances. The face of mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. ... Yes, Mr. Gray, the gods have been good to you. But what the gods give they quickly take away. You have only a few years in which to live really, perfectly, and fully. When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it, and then you will suddenly discover that there are no simple joys for you, and have to content yourself with those mean triumphs that the memory of your youth will make you more bitter than defeat. Every moment as I waves brings you nearer to something dreadful. Time is poison of you, and with against your wills and your desires. ... You will become sorrow, and hollow-cheeked, and dull-eyed. ... You will suffer horribly. ... Ah! realize your youth while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days, listening to the tedious, trying to improve the hopeless labour,

"Yes," continued Lord Henry, "that is one of the great secrets of life is to cure the soul of the pains of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul. You are a wonderful creature. You know more than you think you know, just as you know less than you want to know."

Doran Gray frowned and raised his head away. He could not help liking the tall, graceful young man who was standing by him. His romantic olive-coloured face and open expression interested him. There was something in his long languid voice that was absolutely fascinating. His cool, white, flowerlike hands, even, had a curious charm. They moved, as for a spoke, like music, and seemed to have a language of their own. But he felt afraid of him, and ashamed of being afraid. Why had it been left for a stranger to reveal him to himself? He had known Basil Hawthorn for months, but the friendship between them had never been of any value. Suddenly there had come one across his life who seemed to have disclosed to him life's mystery. And, yet, what was that to be afraid of? He was not a schoolboy or a girl. It was absurd to be frightened.

"Let us go and sit in the shade," said Lord Henry. "There has brought out the drinks, and if you stay any longer in this glare, you will get quite spoiled, and Basil will never paint you again. You really must

are you?—you are finer than any of them!"

"I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If it were only your eyes, and I could be always what I am now. Why did you paint it? It will make me look like the noblest of men. The gods have smiled into his eyes, he tore his hand away and, flinging himself on the divan, he buried his face in the cushions, as though he were praying.

"This is your doing, Harry," said the painter bitterly.

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. "It is the real Doran Gray—that is who you have painted."

"It is not."

"It is not, what have I to do with it?"

"I should have gone away when I asked you," he muttered.

"I stayed when you asked me," was Lord Henry's answer.

"Harry, I can't quarrel with my two best friends at once, between you both you have made me hate the finest piece of work I have ever done, and I will destroy it. What is it but canvas and colour? I will not let it come across our three lives and mar them."

Doran Gray filled his golden head from the curtain, and with pallid face and hair starred eyes, looked at him as he walked over to the dead painting-table. He said he bent beneath the high painted windows. What he was doing there? His fingers were straying about among the titer on his table, as though he were looking for something. Yes, it was for the long palette-knife, with its thin blade of steel. He had found it at last. He was going to rip up the canvas.

When a soft sob had led him up to the couch, and, nothing over to his mother, but she took out of his hand the palette-knife, and he fled to the studio. "Don't, Basil, don't!" he cried. "It would be murder!"

or giving away your life to the ignorant, the common, and the vulgar. These are the souls among, the false ideals, of our age. Live! Live! Live! the words of life that is in you. Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing. ... A new Hedonism—that is what our century wants. You must be its stable symbol. With your personality there is nothing you could not do. The world belongs to you for a season. ... The moment I met you I saw that you were quite unconscious of what you really are, of what you really might be. There was so much in you that I chafed me that I felt I must give you something about yourself. I thought how tragic it would be if you were wasted. For there is such a little time that your youth will last—such a little time. The common half-floated youth, but they blossom again. The albumen will be as yellow next June as it is now. In a month there will be purple stars on the cereals, and year after year the green growth of its leaves will hold its purple stars. But we never get back our youth. The pulse of joy that beats in us at twenty becomes sluggish. Our limbs falter, our senses rot. We degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by the memory of the passions of which we were too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations that we had not the courage to yield to. Youth! Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the world but youth!"

Doran Gray frowned, open-eyed and wondering. The spray of fat fell from his hand upon the grate. A fury like a comet and buzzed round it for a moment. Then he began to scramble all over the oval studded globe of the tiny blossoms. He wretched it with that strange interest in trivial things that he try to develop when things of high import make us afraid, or when we are strobed by some new emotion for which we cannot find expression, or when some thought that terrifies us finds sudden space to the brain and calls on us to yield. After a time the globe flew away. He saw it creeping into the stunted trumpet of a Syrian convolvulus. The flower seemed to quiver, and then swung gently to and fro.

Suddenly the painter appeared at the door of the studio and made staccato signs for them to come in. They turned to each other and smiled.

"I am waiting," he cried. "Come in. The light is quite perfect, and you can bring your drinks."

"Let us go to the theatre to-night," said Lord Henry. "There is sure to be something on, somewhere. I have promised to dine at White's, but it is only with an old friend, so I can send him a wire to say that I can't go, if that is all I am prevented from coming to-night because of a subsequent engagement. I think that would be a rather nice excuse: it would have the surprise of duration."

"It is such a bore putting on one's dress-clothes," muttered Hawthorn. "And, when one has them on, they are so hot!"

"Yes," answered Lord Henry dreamily, "the costume of the nineteenth century is intolerable. It is so so, so depressing. So is the only real colour element left in modern life."

"You really must not say things like that before Doran, Harry."

"Before which Doran? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?"

"Before either."

"I should like to come to the theatre with you, Lord Henry," said the lad.

"Then you shall come, and you will come, too, Basil, won't you?"

"I can't, really, I would sooner not. I have a lot of work to do."

"Well, then, I will go and join me, Mr. Gray?"

"I should like that awfully."

"I shall bring his tip and walk over, cap in hand, to the picture. The painter will be so glad to see you. He has, sadly."

"Is the real Doran?" cried the original of the portrait, strolling across to him. "Am I really like that?"

"Yes, you are just like that."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

rose the watering wonder of his face. Taking his bow he was lying upon an exquisite velvet. He answered to every look and thrill of the bow. There was something terribly affecting about the manner of influence. No other activity was like it. To project one's soul into some graceful form, and to stay for a moment, to have one's own intellectual values echoed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth, to convey one's temperament into another as though it were a subtle breeze, that is what he had meant to do. There was a thrill about it that, perhaps the most satisfying joy left to us in an age so limited and vulgar as our own, on any grassy carpet or in any room with a view of the information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

"Where are you lunching, Harry?"

"At Aunt Agatha's. I have asked myself and Mr. Gray. He is the latest 'Dorant'."

"Humph! let you Aunt Agatha, Harry, not to bother me any more with your family affairs. I am going to stop any longer. Thanks for giving me that information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones."

They rose and scattered down the walk together. Two green and white butterflies fluttered past them, and in the pear-tree at the corner of the garden a pair of bluebirds were sitting.

"You are glad you have met me, Mr. Gray," said Lord Henry, looking at him.

"Yes, I am glad now. I wonder shall I always be glad?"

"Always! That is a dreadful word. It makes me shudder when I hear it. Women are so fond of using it. They spoil every romance by trying to make it last for ever. It is a meaningless word, too. The only difference between a captive and a fellow-passenger in the caprice lasts a little longer."

As they entered the studio, Doran Gray put his hand upon Lord Henry's arm. "In that case, let our friendship be a captive," he murmured, flinging at his two brothers, then stepped up on the platform and resumed his pose.

Lord Henry flung himself into a large wicker arm-chair and watched him. The sweep and dash of the brush on the canvas made the only sound that broke the silence, except when, now and then, Hawthorn stepped back to look at the work from a distance. In the glaring beams of the sun, and coloured, the stroke of his figure broken and deformed. The scarlet would pass away from his lips and the gold steal from his hair. The life that was to make his soul would mar his body. He would become dead, hideous, and uncouth.

As he thought of it, a sharp pang of pain struck through him like a knife and made each detail flash before his nature quiver. His eyes dimmed into amethyst, and across them came a mist of tears. He felt as if a hand of ice had been laid upon his heart.

"Don't you like it?" cried Hawthorn at last, sitting like a lion at the table's side, not understanding what it meant.

"Oh, course he likes it," said Lord Henry. "Why wouldn't he like it? It is one of the greatest things ever painted. I will give you anything you like to ask for it. I must have it."

The lad started, as if awakened from some dream.

"How wonderful, Basil!"

"At least you are like in appearance. But it will never sell," sighed Hawthorn. "That is something."

"It is a very funny people make to find it wonderful, Lord Henry. Why, even in love is purely a question of physiology. It has nothing to do with our own will. Young men want to be fat, fat, and are not old men want to be thin, and cannot that is all one can say."

"Don't go to the theatre to-night, Doran," said Hawthorn. "Stop and dine with me."

"I can't, Basil."

"Because I have promised Lord Henry Wotton to go with him."

"He won't give you the better for keeping your promises. He always breaks his own. I beg you not to go."

Doran Gray laughed and shook his head.

"I entreat you."

The lad hesitated, and looked over at Lord Henry, who was watching them from the tea-table with an amused smile.

"I must go, Basil," he answered.

"Very well," said Hawthorn, and went over and laid down his cup on the tray. "It is rather late, and, as you like to go, you had better be off. Good-bye, Harry, Good-bye, Doran. Come and see me soon. Come to-morrow."

"Certainly."

"You won't forget?"

"No, of course not," cried Doran.

"Is it really finished?" he murmured, stepping down to the platform.

"Quite finished," said the painter. "And you can see splendidly to-day. I am really obliged to you."

"That is entirely due to me," broke in Lord Henry. "Thank















waving grotesque, stiff-fingered hands in the air. He stabilized him twice more, but the man did not move. Something began to trickle on the floor. He waited for a moment, still pressing the head down. Then he threw the knife on the table, and listened.

He could hear nothing, but the drip, drip on the threeboard carpet. He moved and went out on to the landing. The house was absolutely quiet. He waited for a few seconds, the good landing over the balustrade and peering down into the black seething well of darkness. Then he took out the key and returned to the room, locking himself in as he did so.

The thing was still sealed in the chair, straining over the book with bowed head, and humped back, and long antlers hard. Had it been for the red jagged tear in the neck and the clotted black fluid that was seeping out of the tube, one would have said that the man was simply asleep.

How quickly it had all been done! He felt strangely calm, and walking over to the window, opened it and stepped out on to the balcony. The wind had blown about. For a few seconds the good landing over the balustrade and peering down into the black seething well of darkness. Then he took out the key and returned to the room, locking himself in as he did so.

Having reached the door, he turned the key and opened it. He did not even glance at the murdered man. He felt that the secret of the whole thing was not to realize the situation. The friend who had parried the fatal thrust with his wrist, and indeed, had saved the murderer's life. That was enough.

Then he remembered the lamp. It was a rather curious one of Moorish workmanship, made of dull silver intaid with arabesques of burnished

steel, and studded with coarse turquoise. Perhaps it might be missed by his servant, and questions would be asked. He hesitated for a moment, then he turned, and took a look from the doorway. He could not help seeing the dead thing. How still it was! How horribly white the long hands looked! It was like a dreadful wax image.

Having looked the door behind him, he crept quietly downstairs. The woodwork created and seemed to cry out as if in pain. He stopped several times and waited. No: everything was still. It was merely the sound of his own footsteps.

When he reached the library, he saw the bag and coat in the corner. They must be hidden away somewhere. He unlocked a secret press that was in the wainscoting, a press in which he kept his own curious daggers, and put them into it. He could easily burn them afterwards. Then he pulled out his watch. It was heavily rimmed to two.

He sat down and began to think. Every year—every month, almost—men were strangled in England for what he had done. There had been a madness of murder in the air. Some not star had come too close to the earth. And yet, what evidence was there against him? Basil Hallward had held the house at eleven. No one had seen him come in again. Most of the servants were as Setty Royal. His valet had gone to bed—Pans! Yes, it was to Paris that Basil had gone, and by the midnight train, as had intended. With his curious reserved habits, it would be months before any suspicion would be raised. Months! Months could be destroyed long before then.

A sudden thought struck him. He put on his fur coat and went out into the hall. There he paused, hearing the slow heavy tread of the policeman on the pavement outside and seeing the flash of the bull's-eye reflected in the window. He walked and held his breath.

After a few moments he drew back the latch and slipped out, shutting the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

"I am sorry you had to wake up you, Francis," he said, stopping in; "but I had forgotten my latch-key. What time is it?"

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

"Ten minutes past two, sir," answered the man, looking at the clock and blinking.

"Ten minutes past two? How horribly late! You must wake me at nine to-morrow! I have some work to do."

"All right, sir."

"Did any one call this evening?"

"No, Hallward, sir. He stayed here till eleven, and then he went away to catch his train."

"Oh! I am sorry I didn't see him. Did he leave any message?"

"No, sir, except that he would write to you from Paris, if he did not find you at the club."

"That will do, Francis. Don't forget to call me at nine to-morrow."

"No, sir."

The man shutthedown the passage in his slipper.

Dorian Gray threw his hat and coat upon the table and passed into the library. For a quarter of an hour he walked up and down the room, biting his lip and thinking. Then he took down the Blue Book from one of the shelves and began to turn over the leaves. "Alan Campbell, 152, Hertford Street, Mayfair." Yes, that was the man he wanted.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

CHAPTER 14

At nine o'clock the next morning his servant came in with a cup of chocolate on a tray and opened the shutters. The door was being rattled by the door very gently behind him. He felt being ringing the bell, but after a few minutes his valet appeared, half-dressed and looking very uneasy.

had been lost in one delightful dream. He had not dreamed at all. His right hand had been introduced by any images of pleasure or pain. But he could not look from the doorway.

He turned round, and leaving signs on the wall, began to sip his chocolate. The mellow November sun came streaming into the room. The sky was bright, and there was a general warmth in the air. It was almost like a morning in May.

Casually the events of the preceding night crept with silent, blood-stained feet into his brain and reconstituted themselves there with terrible distinctness. He winced at the memory of all that he had suffered, and for a moment the same curious feeling came back to Basil Hallward that had made him kill him as he sat in the chair being called to him, and he grew cold with passion. The dead man was still sitting there, too, and in the sunlight now. How horrible that sight! Such hideous things were for the darkness, not for the day.

He felt that if he brooded over what he had gone through too wicked or grew mad. There were sins whose fascination was more in the memory than in the doing of them, strange fancies that gratified the pride more than the passions, and gave to the intellect a quickened sense of joy, greater than any joy brought, or could ever bring, to the senses. But this was not one of them. It was a thing to be driven out of the mind, to be dragged with violence, to be strangled lest it might strangle one itself.

When the hall door struck, he passed his hand across his forehead, and then he got up quickly and dressed himself with more than his usual care, giving a good deal of attention to the choice of his necktie and scarf-pin and changing his rings more than once. He spent a long time also over breakfast, tasting the various dishes, talking to his valet about some new linens that he was thinking of getting made for the servants at Selby, and pondering over the effect of each word upon the letters, he remembered. Three of them bored him. One he read several times over and over with a slight look of annoyance in his face.

"That awful thing, a woman's murder!" Lord Henry had once said. After he had touched his cup of black coffee, he wiped his lips slowly with a napkin, motioned his servant to wait, and going over to

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

table, sat down and wrote two letters. One he put in his pocket, the other he handed to the valet.

"Take this round to 152, Hertford Street, Francis, and if Mr. Campbell is out of town, get his address."

As soon as he was alone, he lit a cigarette and began sketching upon a piece of paper, drawing first flowers and bits of architecture, and then human faces. Suddenly he remarked that every face that he drew seemed to have a fantastic likeness to Basil Hallward. He frowned, and getting up, went over to the book-case and took out a volume at hazard. He was determined that he would not think about what had happened until it became absolutely necessary that he should do so.

When he had stretched himself on the sofa, he looked at the life-page of the book. It was Gustave Flaubert's and bits of architecture, and then human faces. Suddenly he remarked that every face that he drew seemed to have a fantastic likeness to Basil Hallward. He frowned, and getting up, went over to the book-case and took out a volume at hazard. He was determined that he would not think about what had happened until it became absolutely necessary that he should do so.

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

How exquisite they were! As one read them, one seemed to be floating down the green water-ways of the park and peering into a black gondola with silver and trailing curtains. The mere lines looked to him like those straight lines of turquoise-blue that follow one on one pushes out to the Lido. The sudden flashes of colour reminded him of the gleam of the opal-and-iris-throated birds that flutter the red of the humped Campanile, or stalk, with such stately grace, through the dense, dimly-stained woods. Learning back with half-closed eyes, he kept saying over and over to himself:

"Devenir une femme d'art!"

"See the lac de l'escalier."

The whole of Venice was in those two lines. He remembered the autumn that he had passed there, and a wonderful love that had stirred him to mad delightful follies. There was romance in every place. But Venice, like Oxford, had kept the background for romance, and, to the true romantic, background was everything, or almost everything. Basil had been with him part of the time, and had gone away over Trentino. Poor Basil! What a horrible way for a man to die!

He sighed, and took up the volume again, and tried to forget. He read of the wallows that fly in and out of the little "calle," at Strimay where the habits sit counting their amber beads and the tanned merchants smoke their long tassel-pipes and talk gravely to each other, the real of the Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde that weeps tears of granite in its lonely solitude and longs to be hazy by the hot, lute-covered Nile, where there are sphinxes, and rose-red sails, and white velours with gilded canes, and crocodiles with small beetle eyes that crawl over the green steaming mud; he began to brood over those verses which, drawing mud from his stained marble, tell of that curious statue that Gauleir compares to a contralto voice, the "monstrous charmer," that couches in the porphyry-room of the Louvre. But after a time the book fell from his hand, and he looked at his watch. The hour of came over him. What if Alan Campbell should be out of England? D'ya would like to be the justice to admit that. He went stern, his mouth rigid as stone. What would he do if there? Every moment was of vital importance.

They had been great friends once, five years before—but suddenly inseparable, indeed. Then the intimacy had come almost to an end.

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

"Is it true, Mr Gray?"

"She assures me so, Lady Narborough," said Doran. "I asked her whether, like Marguerite de Navarre, she had her hearts entrained and hung at her girdle. She told me she hadn't because none of them had had any hearts at all."

"Four husbands! Upon my word that is \_top\_ of the \_zede\_."

"\_Top\_ of \_fadec\_," I tell her," said Doran.

"Oh she is cautious enough for anything, my dear. And what is Ferral like? I don't know him."

"The husbands of my beautiful women belong to the criminal classes," said Lord Henry, sipping his wine.

Lady Narborough hit him with her fan. "Lord Henry, I am not at all surprised that the world says that you are extremely wicked."

"But what world says that?" asked Lord Henry, elevating his eyebrows. "It can only be the next world. This world is an excellent terms."

"Everybody knows says you are very wicked," cried the old lady, shaking her head.

Lord Henry looked serious for some moments. "It is perfectly monstrous," he said at last, "the way people go about nowadays saying things against one behind one's back that are absolutely and entirely true."

"Isn't he incorrigible?" cried Doran, leaning forward in his chair.

"I hope so," said his mistress, laughing. "But really, if you all worship Madame de Ferri in his ridiculous way, I shall have to marry again so as to be in the fashion."

"You will never marry again, Lady Narborough," broke in Lord Henry. "You were far too happy. When a woman marries again, it is because she

detested her first husband. When a man marries again, it is because he adored his first wife. Women try their luck; men risk theirs."

"Narborough wasn't perfect," cried the old lady.

"He had been, would he not have loved him, my dear lady," was the rejoinder. "Women love us for our defects. If we have enough of them, they will forgive us everything, even our misdeeds. You will never ask me to dinner again after saying this, I am afraid, Lady Narborough, but it is quite true."

"Oh come, is it true, Lord Henry. If we women did not love you for your defects, where would you be left? Not one of you would ever be married. You would be a set of unfortunate bachelors. Not, however, that that would alter you much. Nowadays all the married men live like bachelors, and all the bachelors like married men."

"\_Fin de siecle\_," murmured Lord Henry.

"\_Fin du globe\_," answered his hostess.

"I wish it were, \_fin du globe\_," said Doran with a sigh. "Life is a great disappointment."

"Ah, my dear," cried Lady Narborough, putting on her gloves, "don't tell me that you have exhausted life. When a man says that one knows that life has exhausted him, Lord Henry is very wicked, and it sometimes with that I had been, but you are made to be good—you look so good. I must find you a nice wife," said Henry, don't you think that Mr. Gray should get married?"

"I am always telling him no, Lady Narborough," said Lord Henry with a bow.

"Well, we must look out for a suitable match for him. I shall go through Debrett carefully to-night and draw out a list of all the eligible young men."

"With their ages, Lady Narborough?" asked Doran.

"Oh course, with their ages, slightly edited. But nothing must be done

in a hurry. I want it to be what "The Morning Post" calls a suitable alliance, and I want try you both to be happy."

"What nonsense people talk about happy marriage!" exclaimed Lord Henry. "A man can be happy with any woman, as long as he does not love her."

"And what a cynic you are!" cried the old lady, pushing back her chair and nodding to Lady Ruxton. "You must come and dine with me some again. You are really an admirable tonic, much better than what Dr. Acreux prescribes for me. You must tell me what people you would like to meet, though. I want it to be a delightful gathering."

"I like men who have a future and women who have a past," he answered. "Oh do you think that would make a fitting party?"

"I hear so," she said, laughing, as she stood up. "A thousand thanks, my dear Lady Ruxton," she added, "I don't see to have finished your cigarette."

"Never mind, Lady Narborough. I smoke a great deal too much. I am going to limit myself, for the future."

"Pray don't, Lady Ruxton," said Lord Henry. "Moderation is a fatal thing. Enough is as bad as a meal. More than enough is as good as a feast."

Lady Ruxton glanced at him curiously. "You must come and explain that to me some afternoon, Lord Henry. It sounds a fascinating theory. She murmured, as she swept out of the room.

"Now, mind you don't stay too long over your politics and scandals," cried Lady Narborough from the door. "If you do, we are sure to squabble upstairs."

The men laughed, and Mr. Charnon got up solemnly from the foot of the table and came to the top. Doran Gray changed his seat and went and sat by Lord Henry. Mr. Charnon began to talk in a loud voice about the situation in the House of Commons. He spoke of his adventures.

The word "doctrine,"—word full of terror to the British mind—reappeared from time to time between his explosions. An

affairative prefix served as an ornament of oratory. He hoisted the Union Jack on the pinnacles of rhetoric. The inherited quality of the rare-sounding English common sense he jealously termed it—was shown to be the proper bulwark for society.

A smile cured Lord Henry's lips, and he turned round and looked at Doran.

"Are you better, my dear fellow?" he asked. "You seemed rather of sorts at dinner."

"I am quite well, Harry. I am tired. That is all."

"You were charming last night. The little duchess is quite devoted to you. She tells me she is going down to Seely."

"She has promised to come on the twelfth."

"Is Monmouth to be there, too?"

"Oh, yes, Harry."

"She seems me dreadfully, almost as much as she seems her. She is very clever, too clever for a woman. She lacks the indefinable charm of weakness. It is the feat of duty that makes the gift of the image precious. Her feet are very pretty, but they are not feet of clay. White porcelain feet, you like. They have been through the fire, and what fire does not destroy, it hardens. She has had experiences?"

"How long has she been married?" asked Doran.

"An eternity, she tells me. I believe, according to the peerage, it is ten years, but ten years with Monmouth must have been, Geoffrey, with broken in. Who were they?"

"Oh, the Wilbongs, Lord Rugby and his wife, our hostess, Geoffrey Chouart, the usual set. I have asked Lord Doran."

"I like him," said Lord Henry. "A great many people don't, but I find him charming. He abuses for being occasionally somewhat overpressed by being always absolutely over-educated. He is a very modern type."

haggard women, mocking an old man who was brushing the sleeve of his coat with an expression of disgust. "He thinks he's got out back of the door," laughed one of them, as Doran passed by. The man looked at her in terror and began to whimper:

At the end of the room there was a little staircase, leading to a darkened chamber. As Doran hurried up its three rocky steps, the young couple of whom met him. He heard a deep breath, and the nostrils quivered with pleasure. When he entered, a young man with smooth yellow hair, who was bending over a lamp lighting a long thin pipe, looked up at him and nudged in a hesitating manner.

"Where else should I be?" he answered, listlessly. "None of the chaps will speak to me now."

"I thought you had left England."

"Darling! is not going to do anything. My brother paid the bill at last. George doesn't speak to me either. I don't care," he added with a sigh. "As long as I am his stuff, one doesn't want friends. I think I have had too many friends."

Doran winced and looked round at the grotesque things that lay in such fantastic postures on the ragged mattresses. The twisted limbs, the gaping mouths, the staring lustreless eyes, fascinated him. He knew in what strange heavens they were suffering, and what dull hell were teaching them the secret of some new joy. They were better off than he was.

He was looking in thought. Memory, like a horrible malady, was eating his soul away. From time to time he seemed to see the eyes of Basil Hathaway loomed at him. Yet he felt he could not rest. The presence of Adrian Singleton troubled him. He wanted to be where no one would know who he was. He wanted to be alone with himself.

"I'm going on to the other place," he said after a pause.

"On the what?"

"Yes."

and the mellow light of the huge, lace-covered lamp that stood on the table lit up the delicate china and hammered silver of the service at which the duchess was presiding. Her white hands were moving daintly among the cups, and her red lips were smiling at something that Doran had whispered to her.

"What are you two talking about?" said Lord Henry, strolling over to the table and putting his cup down. "I hope Doran has told you about my plan for rectifying every body. It is a delightful idea."

"But I don't want to be rechristened, Harry," rejoined the duchess, looking up at him with her wonderful eyes. "I am quite satisfied with my own name, and I am sure Mr. Gray should be satisfied with his."

"My dear Gladys, I would not alter either name for the world. They are both good. You are thinking chiefly of flowers. Yesterday I cut an orchid, for your garden. It was a marvellous spotted thing, as effective as the seven deadly sins. In a thoughtless moment I asked one of my butlers what it was called. He told me it was a fine specimen of "Robinsoniana," or something dreadful of that kind. It is a sad truth, but we have lost the faculty of giving lovely names to things. Names are everything. I never quarrel with actions. My one quarrel is with words. That is the reason I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing that is fit for."

"Then what should we call you, Harry?" she asked.

"His name is Prince Parados," said Doran.

"I recognize him in a flash," exclaimed the duchess.

"I won't hear of it," laughed Lord Henry, sinking into a chair. "From a label there is no escape! I refuse the title."

"I don't know if he will be able to come, Harry. He may have to go to Monte Carlo with his father."

"All what a nuisance people's people are! Try and make him come. By the way, Doran, you ran off very early last night, and you left before home. What did you do afterwards?" Did you go straight home?"

Doran glanced at him humbly and nodded.

"No, Harry," he said at last, "I did not get home till nearly three."

"Did you go to the club?"

"Yes," he answered. "Then he bit his lip. "No, I don't mean that. I don't go to the club. I walked about. I forgot what I did. How invidious you are, Harry! You always want to know what I have been doing. I always want to forget what I have been doing. I came in at half-past two, if you wish to know the exact time. I had left my latch-key at home, and my servant had to let me in. If you want any combative evidence on the subject, you can ask me."

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. "My dear fellow, if I care! Let us go up to the drawing room. My servant tells me, Mr. Chapman. Something has happened to you, Doran. Tell me what it is. You don't seem yourself tonight."

"Don't mind me, Harry. I am irritable, and out of temper. I shall come round and see you tomorrow, or on day. Make my excuses to Lady Narborough. I shall go upstairs. I shall go home. I must go home."

"All right, Doran. I dare say I shall see you to-morrow at tea-time. The duchess is coming."

"I will try to be there, Harry," he said, leaving the room. As he drove back to his own house, he was conscious that the sense of terror he thought he had strangled had come back to him. Lord Henry's casual questioning had made him lose his nerve for the moment, and he wanted his nerve still. Things that were impossible to be destroyed. He winced. He hated the idea of even slouching them.

"There is a sovereign for you," said Doran. "You shall have another if

Yel it had to be done. He realized that, and when he had locked the door of his library, he opened the secret press into which he had thrust Basil Hathaway's coat and bag. A huge fire was blazing. He piled another log on it. The smell of the smoldering clothes and burning leather was horrible. It took him three-quarters of an hour to consume everything. At the end he felt faint and sick, and having to some Algerian passibles in a piercer copper carver, he bathed his hands and forehead with a cool muscadine-scented vinegar.

Suddenly he started. His eyes grew strangely bright, and he gazed nervously at his lamp. Between two of the windows stood a large Florentine cabinet, made out of ebony and inlaid with ivory and blue lapis. He watched it as though it were a thing that could fascinate and make afraid, as though it held something that he longed for far yet almost hidden. His breath quickened. A mad craving came over him. He lit a cigarette and then threw it away. His eyelids dropped ill the long fringed lashes almost touched his cheek. But he still watched the cabinet. At last he got up from the sofa on which he had been lying, went over to it, and having unlocked it, he opened his hidden spring. A triangular drawer passed slowly out. His fingers moved instinctively towards it, dipped in, and closed on something. It was a small Chinese box of black and gold-leaf lacquer, elaborately wrought, the sides patterned with curved waves, and the silver corners hung with round crystals and tassels in gilded wire threads. He opened it. Inside was a green paste, away in a latrine, the odor curiously heavy and persistent.

He hesitated for some moments, with a strangely immobile smile upon his face. Then slouching through the atmosphere of the room was lamely hot, he drew himself up and glanced at the clock. It was twenty minutes to twelve. He put the box down, shutting the cabinet doors as he did so, and went into his bedroom.

As midnight was striking bronze blows upon the dusky air, Lord Gray dressed calmly, and with a muffer wrapped round his throat, crept quietly out of his house. In Bond Street he found a hansom with a good horse. He habited the driver, and he drove to his own address.

The man shook his head. "It is too far for me," he muttered.

"Here is a sovereign for you," said Doran. "You shall have another if

"Good night, then."

"Good night," answered the young man, passing up the steps and wiping his parched mouth with a handkerchief.

Doran walked to the door with a look of pain in his face. As he drew the curtain back, he saw a shadowy figure, the same as that of the woman who had taken his house. "There goes the devil's bargain!" she hiccoughed, in a hoarse voice.

"Curse you!" he answered, "don't call me that!"

She snapped her fingers. "Prince Charming is what you like to be called, ain't it?" she yelled after him.

The drowsy sailor leaped to his feet and spoke, and looked wildly round. The sound of the shutting of the shut door fell on his ear. He rushed out as if in pursuit.

Doran Gray hummed along the gangway through the drizzling rain. His meeting with Adrian Singleton had strangely moved him, and he wondered if the rain of that night was really to be had at his door. As Basil Hathaway had said to him with such infamy of ruin. He bit his lip, and for a few seconds his eyes grew sad. "Yet after all, what did it matter to him?" One's sins were too broad to take the burden of another's errors on one's shoulders. Each man lives his own life and paid his own price for living. The only pity was one had to pay so often for a single fault. One had to pay over and over again, indeed, in her dealings with man, destiny never closed her account.

There are moments, psychologists tell us, when the passion fits in, or for what the world calls sin, so dominates a nature that every fibre of the body, as every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with dark impulses. Men and women at such moments lose the freedom of their will. They move to their terrible end as automations more. Choice is taken from them, and conscience is either killed, or, if we will at all, lives but to give rebellion its bastion and disobedience its charm. For such are, as theologians very not of reminding us, the sins of disobedience. When that high spirit, that storming star of sin, fell from heaven, it was as a rebel that he fell.

you drive fast."

"All right, sir," answered the man, "you will be there in an hour," and after his fare had got in he turned his horse round and drove rapidly towards the river.

CHAPTER 16

A cold rain began to fall, and the blurred street lamps looked ghastly in the dripping mist. The public-houses were just closing, and dim men and women were clustering in broken groups round their doors. From some of the bars came the sound of hoarse laughter. In others, drunkards bawled and screamed.

Lying back in the hansom, with his hat pulled over his forehead, Doran Gray watched with listless eyes the sordid shame of the great city, and now and then he repeated to himself the words that Lord Henry had said to him on the first day they had met. "To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul." "Yes, that was the secret. He had often tried it, and would try it again now. There were three opera seats where one could buy oblivion, dens of horror where the memory of its sins could be destroyed by the madness of sins that were new.

The moon hung low in the sky like a yellow skull. From time to time a huge mistlepane cloud stretched a long arm across and hid it. The gas-lamps grew fewer, and the streets more narrow and gloomy. Once the man lost his way and had to drive back half a mile. A steam rose from the horse as it splashed up the puddles. The sidewalks of the hansom were dogged with a grey fannel mist.

"To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul!" He who words rang in his ear! His soul, silently, was sick to death. Was it true that that forgiveness could cure it? Impossible! Blood had been spilled. What could store for that? And for that there was no atonement, but through forgiveness was innocent, forgiveness was possible still, and he was determined to fight, to stamp the thing out, to crush it as one would crush the adder that has hurt one. Indeed, what right would Basil to have spoken to him as he had done? Who

had made him a judge over others? He had said things that were dreadful, horrible, not to be endured.

On and on plodded the hansom, glow slower. It seemed to him, at each step, like the top and bottom of the stairs. The hideous hunger for optimism began to gnaw at him. His throat burned and his delicate hands twitched nervously together. He struck at the horse madly with the whip. The driver laughed and whipped up. He laughed in answer, and the man was silent.

The way seemed interminable, and the streets like the back of one's sprawling spool. The monarchy became unbearable, and as the mist increased, he felt afraid.

Then they passed by lonely brickfields. The fog was lighter here, and he could see the strange, lute-shaped hills with their orange fanlike tongues of fire. A dog barked as they went by, and there were three or four lantern gleamed at the stem of some huge merchantman. The light shone and splintered in the puddles. A red game came from an upward bound steamer that was cooking. The slim pavilion looked like a wet wackintosh.

Doran started and peered round. "This will do," he answered, and having got out hastily and given the driver the extra fare he had promised him, he waded quickly in the direction of the quay. Here and there a lantern gleamed at the stem of some huge merchantman. The light shone and splintered in the puddles. A red game came from an upward bound steamer that was cooking. The slim pavilion looked like a wet wackintosh.

He hurried on towards the left, glancing back now and then to see if he was being followed. Most of about seven or eight minutes he reached a small shoply house that was wedged in between two giant factories. In one of the top windows stood a lamp. He stopped and gave a peculiar knock.

After a little time he heard steps in the passage and the chain being unhooked. The door opened quietly, and he went in without saying a word to the squat misshapen figure that fattened itself into the shadow as he passed. At the end of the hall hung a latticed green curtain that swayed and shook in the gusty wind which had followed him from the street. He dragged it aside and entered a long low room which looked as if it had once been a third-rate dancing-saloon. Still flaring gas pipes, dulled and distorted in the fly-down mirrors that hung from the ceiling, were ranged round the walls. Gray reflections of ribbed in backed them, making quivering disks of light. The floor was covered with soiled-coloured sawdust, trampled here and there into mud, and stained with dark rings of spilled liquor. Some Malay were crouching by a little circle of pavement, playing with bone counters and showing their white teeth and their very red eyes.

The head buried in his arms, a sailor sprawled over a table, and the white painted bar that ran across one complete side stood two

It said that passion makes one think in a circle. Certainly with hideous iteration the latter tip of Doran Gray whirled and rebound those whose skulls that death with soul and sense, still he had found in them the full expression, as a wire, of his mood, and justified, by their own, were ranged round the walls. Gray reflections of ribbed still have dominated his temper. From cell to cell of his brain crept the one thought, and he wail desire to live, most terrible of all.

And he started with dark rings of spilled liquor. Some Malay were crouching by a little circle of pavement, playing with bone counters and showing their white teeth and their very red eyes. Ugliness was the one reality. The coarse brawl, the lathsome den, the crude violence of disordered life, the very wilderness of thief and outcast, were more

"Eighteen years," said the man. "Why do you ask me? What do years matter?"

"Eighteen years," laughed Doran Gray, with a touch of triumph in his voice. "Eighteen years! Set me under the lamp and look at my face!"

James Vane hesitated for a moment, not understanding what was meant. Then he seized Doran Gray and dragged him from the doorway.

Doran and screaming as he went the wind-blown light, yet it seemed to glow him the hideous error, as it seemed, into which he had fallen, for the face of the man he had sought to kill had of the blood of boyhood, all the unshared glory of youth. He seemed little more than a lad of twenty summers, hardy, older, if older indeed at all, than his sister had been when they had parted so many years ago. It was obvious that this was not the man who had destroyed her life.

He loosened his hold and reeled back. "My God! my God!" he cried, "and I would have murdered you?"

Doran Gray drew a long breath. "You have been on the brink of committing a terrible crime, my man," he said, looking at him sternly. "It did be a warning to you not to take vengeance into your own hands."

"Forgive me, sir," muttered James Vane. "I was deceived. A chance word I heard in that damned den set me on the wrong track."

"You had better go home and put that pistol away, if you may get into trouble," said Doran, turning on his heel and going slowly down the street.

James Vane stood on the pavement in horror. He was trembling from head to foot. After a little while, a black shadow that had been creeping along the dripping wall moved out into the light and came close to him with stealthy footsteps. He let a hand land on his arm and looked round with a start. It was the man who had destroyed her life.

"Why didn't you kill him?" she hissed out, putting haggard face close to his. "I knew you were following him when you rushed out from

Daly's, you fool! You should have killed him. He has lots of money, and he's as bad as I am."

"He is not the man I am looking for," he answered, "and I want no man's money. I want a man's life. The man whose life I want must be really forty now. This one is a little more than a boy. Thank God, I have not got his blood upon my hands."

The woman gave a bitter laugh. "Little more than a boy?" she sneered. "Why, yes, it's nigh on eighteen years since Prince Charming made me what I am!"

"You lie!" cried James Vane.

She raised her hand up to heaven. "Before God I am telling the truth," not the man who had destroyed her life.

"Before God?"

"Strike me dumb if I am not. He is the worst one that comes here. They say he has sold himself to the devil for a pretty price. It's nigh on eighteen years since I met him. He hasn't changed much since then. I have, though," she added, with a sickly leer.

"You swear that?"

"I swear it," came in hoarse echo from her fat mouth. "But don't give me away to the law," she whined, "I am afraid of him. Let me have some money for my night's lodging."

He broke from her with an oath and rushed to the corner of the street, but Doran Gray had disappeared. When he looked back, the woman had vanished also.

CHAPTER 17

A week later Doran Gray was sitting in the conservatory at Selby Royal, talking to the pretty Duchess of Monmouth, who with her husband, a jaded-looking man of sixty, was amongst his guests. It was tea-time,

"That mad cat is sure to be there. They won't have her in this place now."

Doran shrugged his shoulders. "I am sick of your brother, the one is better. Women who hate one are most of most interesting. Besides, she will be better."

"Much the same."

"I like to better. Come and have something to drink. I must have something."

"I don't want anything," murmured the young man.

"Never mind."

Adrian Singleton rose up wearily and followed Doran to the bar. A half-crown in a ragged turban, a shabby waist, grinned a hideous greeting as he thrust a bottle of brandy and two tumblers in front of them. The women smiled and began to chatter. Doran turned his back on them and said something in a low voice to Adrian Singleton.

A crooked smile, like a Malay smile, crept across the face of one of the women. "We are very proud to-night," she sneered.

"For God's sake don't talk to me," cried Doran, stamping the floor of the garden. "What do you want? Money? Here it is. Don't ever talk to me again."

Two red sparks flashed for a moment in the woman's sudden eyes, then flickered out and left them dead and glazed. She tossed her head and raked the coils of the counter with greedy fingers. Her companion watched her enviously.

"It's no use," sighed Adrian Singleton. "I don't care to go back. What does it matter? I am quite happy here."

"Oh you will write to me, you will write anything, won't you?" said Doran, after a pause.

"Perhaps."

"Royalties may not abdicate," fell as a warning from pretty lips.

"You will be to defend my throne, then."

"Yes."

"I give the mistakes of to-day."

"I prefer the blunders of to-morrow," she answered.

"You disdain me, Gladys," he cried, catching the willfulness of her mood.

"Oh your shield, Harry, not of your spear?"

"I never lit against beauty," he said, with a wave of his hand.

"But I don't want to be rechristened, Harry," rejoined the duchess, looking up at him with her wonderful eyes. "I am quite satisfied with my own name, and I am sure Mr. Gray should be satisfied with his."

"My dear Gladys, I would not alter either name for the world. They are both good. You are thinking chiefly of flowers. Yesterday I cut an orchid, for your garden. It was a marvellous spotted thing, as effective as the seven deadly sins. In a thoughtless moment I asked one of my butlers what it was called. He told me it was a fine specimen of "Robinsoniana," or something dreadful of that kind. It is a sad truth, but we have lost the faculty of giving lovely names to things. Names are everything. I never quarrel with actions. My one quarrel is with words. That is the reason I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing that is fit for."

"Then what should we call you, Harry?" she asked.

"His name is Prince Parados," said Doran.

"I recognize him in a flash," exclaimed the duchess.

"I won't hear of it," laughed Lord Henry, sinking into a chair. "From a label there is no escape! I refuse the title."

"There goes the devil's bargain!" she hiccoughed, in a hoarse voice.

"Curse you!" he answered, "don't call me that!"

She snapped her fingers. "Prince Charming is what you like to be called, ain't it?" she yelled after him.

The drowsy sailor leaped to his feet and spoke, and looked wildly round. The sound of the shutting of the shut door fell on his ear. He rushed out as if in pursuit.

Doran Gray hummed along the gangway through the drizzling rain. His meeting with Adrian Singleton had strangely moved him, and he wondered if the rain of that night was really to be had at his door. As Basil Hathaway had said to him with such infamy of ruin. He bit his lip, and for a few seconds his eyes grew sad. "Yet after all, what did it matter to him?" One's sins were too broad to take the burden of another's errors on one's shoulders. Each man lives his own life and paid his own price for living. The only pity was one had to pay so often for a single fault. One had to pay over and over again, indeed, in her dealings with man, destiny never closed her account.

There are moments, psychologists tell us, when the passion fits in, or for what the world calls sin, so dominates a nature that every fibre of the body, as every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with dark impulses. Men and women at such moments lose the freedom of their will. They move to their terrible end as automations more. Choice is taken from them, and conscience is either killed, or, if we will at all, lives but to give rebellion its bastion and disobedience its charm. For such are, as theologians very not of reminding us, the sins of disobedience. When that high spirit, that storming star of sin, fell from heaven, it was as a rebel that he fell.

"Good night, then."

"You are a septic."

"Never! Scorpionism is the beginning of faith."

"What are you?"

"To define is to limit."

"Give me a clue."

"Threads snap. You would lose your way in the labyrinth."

"You bewilder me. Let us talk of some one else."

"Our host is a delightful topic. Years ago he was christened Prince Charming."

"Ah! don't remind me of that," cried Doran Gray.

"Our host is after hound this evening," answered the duchess, colouring. "I believe he thinks that Monmouth married me on purely scientific principles as the best specimen he could find of a modern butlerfy."

"Well, I hope he won't stick pins into you, Duchess," laughed Doran.

"Oh! my maid does that already, Mr. Gray, when she is annoyed with me."

"And what does she get annoyed with you about, Duchess?"

"You the most trivial things, Mr. Gray. I assure you. Usually because I come in at ten minutes to nine and tell her that I must be dressed by half-past eight."

"How unreasonable of her! You should give her warning."

"I daresay, Mr. Gray, why she invents hats for you. You remember the one I wore at Lady Hilsdon's garden-party? You don't, but it is nice in your opinion. I made it myself, and she made it out of nothing. All good hats are made out of nothing."

"I have never searched for happiness. Who wants happiness? I have searched for pleasure."

"Ah! found it, Mr. Gray?"

"Often. Too often."

The duchess sighed. "I am searching for peace," she said, "and I don't go and dress, I shall have none this evening."

"Let me love you some orchids, Duchess," Doran, starting to lift his feet and walking down the conservatory.

"You are flirting disgracefully with him," said Lord Henry to his cousin. "You had better take care. He is very fascinating."

"If he were not, there would be no battle."

"Greek meets Greek, then?"

"I am on the side of the Trojans. They fought for a woman."

"They were defeated."

"There are worse things than capture," she answered.

"You gallop with a loose rein."

"Pace gives life," was the riposte.

"I shall write it in my diary to-night."

"What?"

"That a burnt child loves the fire."

"I am not even singed. My wings are untouched."

"You use them for everything, except flight."

"Courage has passed from men to women. It is a new experience for us."

"You have a rival."

"Who?"

He laughed. "Lady Nabothurgh;" he whispered. "She perfectly adores me."

"You fill me with apprehension. The appeal to antiquity is fatal to us who are romanticists."

"Romanticists! You have all the methods of science."

"Have you educated us?"

"But not explored us."

"Describe us as a sex," was her challenge.

"Sphinxes without secrets."

"I am on the side of the Trojans," "How long Mr. Gray sit?" she said. "Let us go and help me. I have not had a moment of my frock."

"Ah! you must sit your frock to the flowers, Glady."

"That would be a premature surrender."

"Romantic art begins with its climax."

"I must keep an opportunity for retreat."

"In the Parthian manner?"

"They found safety in the desert. I could not do that."

"Women are not always allowed a choice," he answered, but hardly had he finished the sentence before the far end of the conservatory came a filled group, followed by the dull sound of a heavy fall. Everybody started up. The duchess stood motionless in horror. And with fear in her eyes, Lord Henry rushed towards the flagstones and began to scold Doran Gray lying face downwards on the floor flat in a damask cushion.

He was called at once into the blue drawing-room and laid upon one of the sofas. After a short time, he came to himself and looked round with a dazed expression.

"What has happened?" he asked. "Oh! I remember. Am I safe here, Harry?" He began to tremble.

"My dear Doran," answered Lord Henry, "you merely fainted. That was all. Let me come over to you. You had better not come down to dinner. I will take your place."

"No, I will come down," he said, struggling to his feet. "I would rather come down. I must not be absent."

He went to his room and dressed. There was a wild recklessness of gaiety in his manner. He was not to be seen by the servants of the keepers. Had any foot had been found on the flower beds, the gardeners would have reported it. Yes, it had been merely fancy. Gray's lover's brother had not come such a full time. He had sailed away in his ship to founder in some winter sea. From him, at any rate, he was safe. Why, the man did not know who he could, not know who he was. The mask of mystery had fallen.

And yet it had been merely an illusion, how terrible it was to think that coincidence could raise such fearful phantoms, and give them visible form, and make them move before one! What sort of life would his be if day and night shadows of his crime were to peer at him from silent corners, to mock him from secret places, to whisper in his ear as he sat at the table, to wake him with icy fingers as he lay asleep! As the thought crept through his brain, he grew pale with terror, and he air seemed to him to have become suddenly colder. Oh! in what a wild hour of madness he had killed his friend! How ghastly the mere memory of the scene! He saw it all again. Each hideous detail came back to him with added horror. Out of the black cave of time, terrible and swathed in scarlet, rose the image of his sin. When Lord Henry came in at six o'clock, he found him crying as one whose heart will break.

It was not till the third day that he ventured to go out. There was something in his eyes, pine-crusted since that first winter morning that seemed to bring him back his joyousness and his ardour for life. But it was not merely the physical condition of environment that had caused the change. His own nature had revolved against the excess of anguish that had sought to maim and mar the perfection of his calm. With saddle and freely wrought temperance it is always so. That strong passions must either bruise or bend. They either slay the man, or themselves die. Shadow sorrow and shallow losses live on. The loves and sorrows that are great are destroyed by their own grandeur. Besides, he had convinced himself that he had been the victim of a terror-dichoid imagination, and looked back now on his fears with something of pity and not without contempt.

After breakfast, he walked with the duchess for an hour in the garden and then drove across the park to join the shooting-party. The crisp frost lay like dew upon the grass. The sky was an inverted cup of

CHAPTER 18

The next day he did not leave the house, and, indeed, spent most of the time in his own room, sick with a wild terror of dying, and yet indifferent to life itself. The consciousness of being hunted, snared, tracked down, had begun to dominate him. If the pestery did not tremble in the wind, he shook. The dead leaves that were blown against the leaded panes seemed to him like his own wasted resolutions and wild regrets. When he closed his eyes, he saw again the sailor's face peering through the mist-stained glass, and horror seemed once more to lay its hand upon his heart.

But perhaps it had been only his fancy that had called vengeance out of the night and set the hideous shapes of punishment before him. Actual life was close, but he was feeling something altogether like the imagination. It was the imagination that set me none to dog the feet of sin. It was the imagination that made each corner an armed and brood. In the common world of fact the wicked were not punished, nor the good rewarded. Success was given to the strong, failure trust, nor

upon the weak. That was all. Besides, had any stranger been prowling round the house, he would have been seen by the servants of the keepers. Had any foot had been found on the flower beds, the gardeners would have reported it. Yes, it had been merely fancy. Gray's lover's brother had not come such a full time. He had sailed away in his ship to founder in some winter sea. From him, at any rate, he was safe. Why, the man did not know who he could, not know who he was. The mask of mystery had fallen.

And yet it had been merely an illusion, how terrible it was to think that coincidence could raise such fearful phantoms, and give them visible form, and make them move before one! What sort of life would his be if day and night shadows of his crime were to peer at him from silent corners, to mock him from secret places, to whisper in his ear as he sat at the table, to wake him with icy fingers as he lay asleep! As the thought crept through his brain, he grew pale with terror, and he air seemed to him to have become suddenly colder. Oh! in what a wild hour of madness he had killed his friend! How ghastly the mere memory of the scene! He saw it all again. Each hideous detail came back to him with added horror. Out of the black cave of time, terrible and swathed in scarlet, rose the image of his sin. When Lord Henry came in at six o'clock, he found him crying as one whose heart will break.

It was not till the third day that he ventured to go out. There was something in his eyes, pine-crusted since that first winter morning that seemed to bring him back his joyousness and his ardour for life. But it was not merely the physical condition of environment that had caused the change. His own nature had revolved against the excess of anguish that had sought to maim and mar the perfection of his calm. With saddle and freely wrought temperance it is always so. That strong passions must either bruise or bend. They either slay the man, or themselves die. Shadow sorrow and shallow losses live on. The loves and sorrows that are great are destroyed by their own grandeur. Besides, he had convinced himself that he had been the victim of a terror-dichoid imagination, and looked back now on his fears with something of pity and not without contempt.

After breakfast, he walked with the duchess for an hour in the garden and then drove across the park to join the shooting-party. The crisp frost lay like dew upon the grass. The sky was an inverted cup of

blue meat. A thin film of ice bordered the flat, red-ground lake.

At the corner of the pine-wood he caught sight of Sir Geoffrey Clouston, the duchess's brother, jolking two stout cartidges out of his gun. He jumped from the cart, and having told the groom to take the mare home, made his way towards his guest through the withered bracken and rough undergrowth.

"Have you had good sport, Harry?" he asked.

"Not very good, Doran. I think most of the birds have gone to the ground. I dare say it will be better after lunch, when we get to new ground."

Doran strolled along by his side. The keen aromatic air, the brown and red lights that glistened in the wood, the hoarse cries of the breeds ringing out from time to time, and the sharp snaps of the guns that followed, fascinated him and filled him with a sense of delightful freedom. He was dominated by the carelessness of happiness, by the high intelligence of joy.

Suddenly from a lumpy tussock of old grass some twenty yards in front of them, with black-tipped ears erect and long slender limbs throwing it forward, started a hare. It hopped for a trifle of adance. Sir Geoffrey put his gun to his shoulder, but there was something in the animal's graceful movement that strangely charmed Doran Gray, and he cried out at once, "Don't shoot it, Geoffrey. Let it live."

"What nonsense, Doran!" laughed his companion, and as she ha bounded into the thicket, he fired. There were two cries heard, the cry of a hare in pain, which is dreadful, the cry of a man in agony, which is worse.

"Good heaven! I have hit a beater!" exclaimed Sir Geoffrey. "What an ass the man was to get in front of the guns! Stop shooting!" he called out to the top of his voice. "A man is hurt."

The head-keeper came running up with a stick in his hand.

"Where, sir? Where is he?" he shouted. At the same time, the firing ceased along the line.

right at Selby Royal. I was an ill-omened place. Death walked there in the sunlight. The grass of the forest had been spotted with blood ever since."

Then he wrote a note to Lord Henry, telling him that he was going up to his gun to see to the man who had been shot, and to get the guests at his absence. As he was putting it into the envelope, a knock came to the door, and his valet informed him that the head-keeper wished to see him at once and to let him up. "Send him in," he muttered, after some moment's reflection.

As soon as the man entered, Doran pulled his chequebook out of a drawer and spread it out before him.

"I suppose you have come about the unfortunate accident of this morning, Thornton?" he said, taking up a pen.

"Yes, sir," answered the gamekeeper.

"The poor fellow fell from the park? Had he any people dependent on him?" asked Doran, looking bored. "I do so, should not like them to be left in want, and will send them any sum of money you may think necessary."

"Don't know who he is, sir. That is what I took the liberty of coming to you about."

"Don't know who he is?" said Doran, listlessly. "What do you mean? Wasn't he one of your men?"

"No, sir. Never saw him before. Seems like a sailor, sir."

The pen dropped from Doran Gray's hand, and he felt as if his heart had suddenly stopped beating. "A sailor?" he cried out. "What is that a sailor?"

"Yes, sir. He looks as if he had been a sort of sailor; tattooed on both arms, and that kind of thing."

"Was there anything found on him?" said Doran, leaning forward and looking at the man with startled eyes. "Anything that would let his name?"

"Yes," answered Sir Geoffrey angrily, hurrying towards the shooting. "Who on earth don't you keep your men back? Spotted my thicket for the day."

Doran watched them as they plunged into the alder-clump, bushing the live swinging branches aside. In a few moments they emerged, dragging a body after them into the sunlight. He turned away in horror. It seemed to him that misfortune followed wherever he went. He heard Sir Geoffrey say that the man was really dead, and the affirmative answer of the keeper. The wood seemed to him to have become suddenly alive with fear. There was the tramping of myriad feet and the low buzz of voices. A great copper-breasted peasant came beating through the boughs overhead.

After a few moments that were to him, in his perturbed state, like endless hours of pain—he felt a hand laid on his shoulder. He started and looked round.

"Doran," said Lord Henry, "I had better tell them that the shooting is stopped for to-day. It would not look well to go on."

"I wish to were stopped for ever," Harry, he answered bitterly. "The whole thing is hideous and cruel. Is the man—?"

"I am afraid so," rejoined Lord Henry. "He got the whole charge of shot in the chest. He must have died almost instantaneously. Come, let us go home."

They walked side by side in the direction of the avenue for nearly fifty yards without speaking. Then Doran looked at Lord Henry and said, with a heavy sigh, "It is a sad man, Harry, a very sad man."

"What if?" asked Lord Henry. "Oh! this accident, I suppose. My dear fellow, it can't be helped. It was the man's own fault. Why did he get in front of the guns? Besides, it is nothing of us. It is rather awkward for Geoffrey, of course. It does not seem very good business."

"Where, sir? Where is he?" he shouted. At the same time, the firing ceased along the line.

Doran shook his head. "It is a bad omen, Harry. I feel as if something horrible were going to happen to me. To myself, perhaps," he added, passing his hand over his eyes, with a gesture of pain.

The elder man laughed. "The only horrible thing in the world is 'chatter', Doran. That is the one evil for which there is no forgiveness. But we are not likely to suffer from it unless these fellows keep uttering about a fellow-guns, followed by the dull sound of a heavy fall. Everybody started up. The duchess stood motionless in horror. And with fear in her eyes, Lord Henry rushed towards the flagstones and began to scold Doran Gray lying face downwards on the floor flat in a damask cushion."

"There is no one with whom I would not change places," Harry. Don't laugh like that. I am telling you the truth. The wretched peasant who has just died is better off than I am. I have no terror of death. It is the coming of death that terrifies me. Its monstrous wings seem to wheel in the ledges around me. Good heaven! don't you see a man moving behind the trees there, watching me, waiting for me?"

Lord Henry looked in the direction in which the trembling gloved hand was pointing. "Yes," he said, smiling. "I see the gardener waiting for you. I suppose he wants to ask you what flowers you wish to have on the table to-night? How absurdly nervous you are, my dear fellow! You must come and see my doctor, when we get back to town."

Doran heaved a sigh of relief as he saw the gardener approaching. The man touched his hat, glanced for a moment at Lord Henry in a halting manner, and then produced a letter, which he handed to his master.

"Mr. Grace told me to wait for you," he murmured.

Doran put the letter into his pocket. "Tell her Grace that I am coming," he said, calmly. "The man turned round and went rapidly in the direction of the house."

"How fond women are of doing dangerous things!" laughed Lord Henry. "It is one of the qualities in them that I admire most. A woman will flirt with anybody in the world so long as other people are looking on."

"How fond you are of saying dangerous things, Harry. By the present instance, you are quite very much, but she likes you less, so you are excellently managed."

"And the duchess loves you very much, but she likes you less, so you are excellently managed."

"You are talking scandal, Harry, and there is never any basis for scandal."

"The basis of every scandal is an immoral certainty," said Lord Henry, lighting a cigarette.

"You would sacrifice anybody, Harry, for the sake of an engraving."

"The world goes to the altar of its own accord," was the answer.

"I wish I could love," cried Doran Gray with a deep note of pathos in his voice. "But I seem to have lost the passion and forgotten the desire. I am too much concentrated on myself. My own personality has become a burden to me. I want to escape, to go away, to forget. It was silly of me to come down here at all. I think I shall send my wife to Henry to have the yacht got ready. On a yacht one is safe."

"Safe from what, Doran? You are in some trouble. Why not tell me what it is? You know I would help you."

"I can't tell you, Harry," he answered sadly. "And I dare say it is only a fancy of mine. This unfortunate accident has upset me. I have a horrible presentiment that something of the kind may happen to me."

"What nonsense!"

"I hope it is, but I can't help feeling it. Ah! here is the duchess, looking like Artemis in a tailor-made gown. You see we have come back, Duchess."

"I have heard all about it, Mr. Gray," he answered. "Poor Geoffrey is terribly upset. And it seems that you asked him not to shoot the hare. How curious!"

"Yes, it was very curious. I don't know what made me say it. Some man, I suppose. I looked the hideous life of lies. But I am sorry they told you about the man. It is a hideous subject."

"It is an annoying subject," broke in Lord Henry. "It has no psychological value at all. Now, if Geoffrey had done the thing on purpose, how interesting it would be! I should like to see some one who had committed a real murder."

"How horrid of you, Harry!" cried the duchess. "Isn't it, Mr. Gray? Harry, Mr. Gray is ill again. He is going to France."

Doran drew himself up with an effort and smiled. "It is nothing, Duchess," he murmured. "My nerves are dreadfully out of order. That is all. I am afraid I walked too far this evening, my dear friend. I don't know what Harry said. Was I very bad? You must set me some other time. I think I must go and lie down. You will excuse me, won't you?"

They had reached the great flight of steps that led from the conservatory on to the terrace. As the glass door closed behind Doran, Lord Henry turned and looked at the duchess with his slumberous eyes. "Are you very much in love with him?" he asked.

She did not answer for some time, but stooging again at the landscape: "I wish I knew," she said at last.

He shook his head. "Knowledge would be fatal. It is the uncertainty that charms one. A mist makes things wonderful."

"One may lose one's way."

"All ways end at the same point, my dear Glady."

"What that?"

"Disillusion."

"It was my 'debut' in life," she sighed.

"It came to you too soon."

what you say to me. I know I was right in acting as I did. Poor Harry! As I hold past the farm this morning, I saw her white coat at the window, like the spray of a parrot. Don't let me say about it any more, and don't try to persuade me that the first good action I have done for years, the first little bit of self-sacrifice that I have ever known, is really a sort of sin. I want to be better. I am going to be better. Tell me something about yourself. What is going on in town? I have not been in the club."

"The people are still discussing poor Basil's disappearance."

"I should have thought they had got tired of that by this time," said Doran, pouring himself out some wine and lowering his glass.

"My dear boy, they have only been talking about it for six weeks, and the British public are never really tired of anything so long as it brings more than one topic every three months. They have been very unfortunate lately, however. They have had my own dear Basil's disappearance and that was when he told me, yesterday, that he had had a sudden accident for you and that you were the dominant motive of his art."

"I was very fond of the paper, too. It does not seem to me to be at all probable. I know there are dreadful places in Paris, but Basil was not the sort of man to have gone to them. He had no curiosity. It was his chief defect."

"What would you say, Harry, if I told you that I had murdered Basil?" said the younger man. He watched him intently after he had spoken.

"I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn't suit you. All crime is vulgar. It is not you, Doran, to commit a murder. I am sorry if that you vary by saying so, but I assure you it is true. Crime brings exclusively to the lower order of intellect a more or less of a vulgar degree. I should say that crime was to them what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations."

"Because," said Lord Henry, passing beneath his nostrils the gilt trails of an open vinaigrette box, "on a purely artistic point of view, nowadays except that. Death and vulgarity are the only two factors in the nineteenth century that can not explain away. Let us dig them out

"I am tired of strawberry leaves."

"They become you."

"Only in pain."

"You would miss them," said Lord Henry.

"I will not part with a petal."

"Mormonath has ears."

"Old age is dull of hearing."

"His hair never been polished?"

"I wish he had been."

He glanced about as if in search of something. "What are you looking for in your pocket, Harry?"

"The button from my frock," he answered. "I have dropped it."

"You laugh. I have still the man."

"He buttoned his eyes level," was his reply.

"She laughed again. Her teeth showed like white seeds in a scarlet foam."

Uphairs, in his own room, Doran Gray was lying on a sofa, with terror in every tingling fibre of his body. Life had suddenly become too hideous a burden for his own strength. He had been struck down by the uncertainty, man in the thicket like a wild animal, had seemed to him to be a creature more farthest lost. All he had really noticed at what Lord Henry had said in a phrase model of correct phrasing.

For five clicks he rang his bell for his servant and gave him orders to pack his things for the night-express to town, and to have the brougham at the door by eight-thirty. He was determined not to sleep another

CHAPTER 19

"There is no use your telling me that you are going to be good," cried Lord Henry, dipping his white fingers into a red copper bowl filled with rose-water. "You are quite perfect. Pray, don't change."

"I should think the novelty of the emotion must have given you a trill of real pleasure, Doran," interrupted Lord Henry. "But I can't resist your sly for you. You gave her good advice and broke her heart. That was the beginning of your edification."

"Harry, you are horrid! You must advise these dreadful things. Harry's heart is not broken. Of course, she cried and all that. But there is no disgrace upon her. She can go, like the Perdita, and in her garden of rain and mangoes."

"And weep over a faithless Florizel," said Lord Henry, laughing, as he leaned back in his chair. "My dear Doran, you had the most curiously boyish mood. Do you think this girl will ever be really content with any one of her own kind? I suppose she will be married some day to a rough center or a grinning ploughman. Well, the fact of having met you, and loved you, will teach her to despise her husband, and she will be wretched. From a moral point of view, I cannot say that I think much of your first renunciation. Even an abnegation, it is not pure. Besides, how do you know that Henry isn't floating at the present moment in some shaft of mist, with lovely water-lilies round her, like Ophelia?"

"I can't bear this, Harry! You mock at everything, and then suggest the most serious tragedies. I am sorry I told you now. I don't care

"I had more than one?" asked his companion as he stepped into his plate a little crimson pyramid of soaked strawberries and, through a perforated, chisel-shaped spoon, poured a sugar-syrup.

"I can tell you, Harry. It is not a story I could tell to any one else. I spared someone's feelings, but you understand what I mean. She was quite beautiful and wonderfully like Lily Vane."

"I was very fond of the paper, too. It does not seem to me to be at all probable. I know there are dreadful places in Paris, but Basil was not the sort of man to have gone to them. He had no curiosity. It was his chief defect."

"What would you say, Harry, if I told you that I had murdered Basil?" said the younger man. He watched him intently after he had spoken.

"I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn't suit you. All crime is vulgar. It is not you, Doran, to commit a murder. I am sorry if that you vary by saying so, but I assure you it is true. Crime brings exclusively to the lower order of intellect a more or less of a vulgar degree. I should say that crime was to them what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations."

"Because," said Lord Henry, passing beneath his nostrils the gilt trails of an open vinaigrette box, "on a purely artistic point of view, nowadays except that. Death and vulgarity are the only two factors in the nineteenth century that can not explain away. Let us dig them out

has once committed a murder could possibly do the same crime again? Don't tell me that."

"Oh! anything becomes a pleasure if one does it too often," cried Lord Henry laughing. "That is one of the most important secrets of life. I should fancy, however, that murder is always a mistake. One should never do anything that one cannot talk about after dinner. But let us pass from poor Basil. I wish I could believe that he had come to such a really romantic end as you suggest, but I can't. I dare say he fell into the Seine off an omnibus and that the conductor heeled up the scandals. Yes, I should fancy that was his end. I see him lying now on his back under those dull green waters, with the heavy barges floating over him and long weeds catching in his hair. Do you know, I don't think he would have done much more good. During the last ten years his painting had gone off very much."

Lord Henry heard a sigh, and Lord Henry strolled across the room and began to stroke the head of a curious animal painted a large, grey-plumaged bird with pink crest and tail, that was balancing itself upon a bamboo perch. As his pointed fingers touched it, it dropped the white surt of crinkled iris back, glasslike eyes began to sway backwards and forwards.

"Yes," he continued, turning round and taking his handkerchief out of his pocket. "his painting had quite gone off. It seemed to me to have lost something. I had lost an ideal. When you and he ceased to be great friends, he ceased to be a great artist. What was I separated you? I suppose he bored you. If so, he never forgave you. It's a hardores face. By the way, what has happened that wonderful portrait he did of you? I don't think I have ever seen it since he finished it. Oh! I remember your letting me see years ago how you had sent it down to Selby, and that it had got mistaid or stolen on the way. You never got it back? What a pity! it was really a masterpiece. I remember I wanted to buy it. I wish I had now. It belonged to Basil's best period. Since then, his work was that curious mixture of bad painting and good intentions that always entices a man to be called a representative British artist. Did you ever see it?"

"I told you," said Doran. "I suppose I did. But I never really liked it. I am sorry I sat for it. The memory of the thing is hateful to me."

The curiously carved mirror that Lord Henry had given to him, so many years ago now, was standing on the table, and the white-lipped Cupids laughed round it as of old. He took it up, as he had done on that night of horror when he had first noted the change in the face, picture, and with wild, fear-dimmed eyes looked into its polished shell. Once, some one who had tentily loved him had written to him a mad letter, ending with these obstinate words: "The world is changed because you are made of ivory and gold. The curves of your lips resemble ivory." The phrases came back to his memory, and he repeated them over and over to himself. Then he heathised his own beauty, and flung the mirror on the floor, crushed it into silver splinters beneath his heel. It was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for. But for those two things, his life might have been free from stain. His beauty had been him but a mask, his youth but a mockery. What was youth at best? A green, an urbane time, a time of shallow moods, and sickly thoughts. Why had he worn it away? Youth had spoiled him.

It was better not to think of the past. Nothing could alter that. It was of himself, and of his own future, that he had to think. James Vane was hidden in a nameless grave in Selby churchyard. Alan Campbell had shed himself one night in his laboratory, but had not revealed the secret that he had been forced to know. The excitement, such as it was, over Basil Hallward's disappearance would soon pass away. It was already passing. He was perfectly safe there. Nor, indeed, was it the death of Basil Hallward that weighed most upon his mind. It was the living death of his own soul that troubled him. Basil had painted the portrait that had ruined his life. He could not forgive him that. It was the portrait that had done everything. Basil had said things to him that were unbearable, and that he had yet borne with patience. The murder had been simply the madness of a moment. As for Alan Campbell, his suicide had been his own act. He had chosen to do it. It was nothing to him.

A new life? That was what he wanted. That was what he was waiting for. Surely he had begun already. He had spared one innocent thing, at any rate. He would never again tempt innocence. He would be good.

As he thought of Hetty Merton, he began to wonder if the portrait in

me. Why do you talk of it? It used to remind me of those curious lines in some play-Hamlet. I think how do they run!--

"Like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart."  
Yes, that was what it was like."

Lord Henry laughed. "If a man treats life artistically, his brain is his heart," he answered, sinking into an arm-chair.

Doran gazed at his head and struck some soft chords on the piano. "Like the painting of a sorrow," he repeated, "a face without a heart."

The elder man lay back and looked at him with half-closed eyes. "By the way, Doran," he said after a pause, "what does a profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses-how does the quotation run?--his own soul?"

The music jelled, and Doran Gray started and stared at his friend. "Why do you ask me that, Harry?"

"My dear fellow," said Lord Henry, elevating his eyebrows in surprise. "I asked you because I thought you might be able to give me an answer. That's all. I was going through the park last Sunday, and close by the Marble Arch there stood a little crowd of shabby-looking people listening to some vulgar street preacher. As I passed by, I heard the man yelling out that question to his audience. It struck me as being rather dramatic. London is very rich in curious effects of that kind. A wet Sunday, an uncouth Christian in a marketplace, a lot of sickly white faces under a broken roof of dripping umbrellas, and a wonderful phrase flung into the air by shrill hysterical lips--it was really very interesting in its way, quite a suggestion of letting the prophet that art had a soul, but that man had not. I am afraid, however, he would not have understood me."

"Don't, Harry. The soul is a terrible thing. It can be bought, and sold, and bartered away like any other commodity, and made perfect. There is a soul in each one of us. I know it."

The locked room had changed. Surely it was not still so horrible as it had been? Perhaps if his life became pure, he would be able to cope with every sort of evil passion from the face. Perhaps the signs of evil had already gone away. He would go and look.

He took the lamp from the table and crept upstairs. As he unbarred the door, a smile of joy flitted across his strangely young-looking face and lingered for a moment about his lips. Yes, he would be good, and the hideous thing that he had hidden away would no longer be a terror to him. He felt as if the load had been lifted from him already.

He went in quietly, locking the door behind him, as was his custom, and dragged the purple hanging from the portrait. Any of pain and indignation broke from him. He could see no change, save that in the eyes there was a look of cunning and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite. The thing was still loathsome, more loathsome, if possible, than before--and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilled. Then he trembled. Had it been merely vanity that had made him do his one good deed? Or the desire for a new sensation, as Lord Henry had hinted, with his mocking laugh? Or that passion to act a part that sometimes makes us do things first for we are ourselves? Or, perhaps, all these? And why was the red stain larger than it had been? It seemed to have crept like a horrible disease over the wrinkled fingers. There was blood on the painted feet, as though the thing had dropped--blood even on the hand that had not held the knife. Confess! Did it mean that he was to confess? To give himself up and be put to death? He laughed. He felt that the idea was monstrous. Besides, even if he did confess, who would believe him? There was no trace of the murdered man anywhere. Everything belonging to him had been destroyed. He himself had burned what had not been below-stairs. The world would simply say that he was mad. They would shut him up if he persisted in his story. "Yet it was his duty to confess, to suffer public shame, and to make public amonement. There was a God who called upon men to tell their sins to earth as well as to heaven. Nothing that he could do would cleanse him till he had told his own sin. His sin? He shuddered his shoulders.

The death of Basil Hallward seemed very little to him. He was thinking of Hetty Merton. For it was an unjust mirror, this mirror of his soul that he was looking at. Vandy? Custody? Hypocrisy? Had there been nothing more in his renunciation than that? There had been something more. At least he thought so. But who could help?--No.

"Do you feel quite sure of that, Doran?"

"Quite sure."

"Ah! then it must be an illusion. The things one feels absolutely certain about are never true. That is the fatality of faith, and the lesson of romance. How grave you are! Don't be so serious. What have you or I to do with the superstitions of our age?" "No, we have given up our belief in the soul. Play me something. Play me a nocturne, Doran, and, as you play, tell me, in a low voice, how you have kept your youth. You must have some secret. I am only ten years older than you are, and I am wrinkled, and worn, and yellow. You are really wonderful, Doran. You have never looked more charming than you do to-night. You remind me of the day I saw you first. You were rather cheekily, very shy, and absolutely extraordinary. You have changed, of course, but not in appearance. I wish you would tell me your secret. To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early or be respectable. Youth! There is nothing like it. It's absurd to talk of the ignorance of youth. The only people to whose opinions I listen now with any respect are people much younger than myself. They seem in front of me. Life has revealed to them her latest wonder. As for the aged, I always contradict the aged. I do it on principle. If you ask them their opinion on something that happened yesterday, they solemnly give you the opinions current in 1820, when people wore high stocks, believed in everything, and knew absolutely nothing. How lovely that thing you are playing of! I wonder, did Chopin write it at Majorca, with the sea weeping round the villa and the salt spray dashing against the panes? It is marvellously romantic. What a blessing, it is that there is one art left to us that is not imitated! Don't stop. I want music to-night. It seems to me that you are the young Apollo and that I am Marley's looking to you."

I have sorrows, Doran, of my own, that even you know nothing of. The tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young. I am ashamed sometimes at my own sincerity. Ah, Doran, how happy you are! What an exquisite life you have had! You have drunk deeply of everything. You have crushed the grapes against your palate. Nothing has been hidden from you. And it has all been to you no more than the sound of music: it has not murred you. You are still the same."

"I am the same, Harry."

There had been nothing more. Though vanity he had spared her, in hypocrisy he had worn the mask of goodness. For curiosity's sake he had tried the denial of self. He recognized that now.

But this murder--was it to dog him all his life? Was he always to be burdened by his past? Was he really to confess? Never. There was only one bit of evidence left against him. The picture itself--that was evidence. He would destroy it. Why had he kept it so long? It had given him pleasure to watch it changing and growing old. Of late he had felt no such pleasure. It had kept him awake at night. When he had been away, he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it. It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had maimed many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it.

He looked round and saw the knife that had stabbed Basil Hallward. He had cleaned it many times, all there was no stain left upon it. It was bright, and glistening. As he had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work, and all that that meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead, he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-like, and without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it.

There was a cry heard, and a crash. The cry was so horrible in its agony that the frightened servants woke and crept out of their rooms. Two gentlemen, who were passing in the square below, stopped and looked up at the great house. They walked on till they met a policeman and brought him back. The man rang the bell several times, but there was no answer. Except for a light in one of the top windows, the house was all dark. After a time, he went away and stood in an adjoining portico and watched.

"Whose house is that, Constable?" asked the elder of the two gentlemen.

"Mr. Doran Gray's, sir," answered the policeman.

They looked at each other, as they walked away, and sneered. One of them was Sir Henry Antrobus's uncle.

Inside, in the servants' part of the house, the half-clad domestics were talking in low whispers to each other. Old Mrs. Leaf was crying

"Yes, you are the same. I wonder what the rest of your life will be. Don't spoil it by reminiscences. At present you are a perfect type. Don't make yourself inconspicuous. You are quite flawless now. You need not shake your head: you know you are. Besides, Doran, don't deceive yourself! Life is not governed by will or restraint. Life is a question of nerves, and fibres, and slowly built-up cells which thought holes itself and passion has its dreams. You may fancy yourself safe and think yourself strong. But a chance tone of colour in a room or a morning sky, a particular perfume that you had once loved and that brings subtle memories with it, a line from a forgotten poem that you had come across again, a cadence from a piece of music that you had ceased to play--I tell you, Doran, that it is on things like these that our lives depend. Blowing wires about that someone; but our own senses will imagine them for us. There are moments when the odour of lilac blazes, passes suddenly across me, and I have to live the strangest month of my life over again. I wish I could change places with you, Doran. The world has cried out against us both, but it has always wronged you. I always will worship you. You are the type of what the age is searching for, and what it is afraid it has found. I am so glad that you have never done anything, never carved a statue, or painted a picture, or produced anything outside of yourself! Life has been your art. You have set yourself to music. Your days are your poems."

Doran rose up from the piano and passed his hand through his hair. "Yes, he has been exquisite," he murmured, "but I am not going to have the same life. Harry, And you must not say these extravagant things to me. You don't know everything about me. I think that if you did, even you would turn from me. You laugh. Don't laugh."

"Why have you stopped playing, Doran?" Go back and give me the nocturne over again. Look at that great, honey-coloured moon that hangs in the dusky air. She is waiting for you to charm her, and if you play she will come closer to the earth. You won't? Let us go to the club, then. It has been a charming evening, and we must end it charmingly. There is some one on White's who wants immensely to know you--young Lord Poole, Bournemouth's eldest son. He has already copied your noekies, and has begged me to introduce him to you. He is quite delighted and rather reminds me of you."

"I hope not," said Doran with a sad look in his eyes. "But I am tired

and wringing her hands. Francis was as pale as death.

After about a quarter of an hour, he got the coachman and one of the footmen and crept upstairs. They knocked, but there was no reply. They called out. Everything was still. Finally, after vainly trying to force the door, they got on the roof and dropped down on to the balcony. The windows yielded easily--their bolts were old.

When they entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.

to-night. Harry, I shan't go to the club. It is nearly eleven, and I want to go to bed early."

"Do stay. You have never played so well as to-night. There was something in your touch that was wonderful. It had more expression than I had ever heard from it before."

"It is because I am going to be good," he answered, smiling. "I am a little changed already."

"You cannot change me, Doran," said Lord Henry. "You and I will always be friends."

"Yet you poisoned me with a book once. I should not forgive that. Harry, promise me that you will never lend that book to any one. It does harm."

"My dear boy, you are really beginning to moralize. You will soon be going about like the converted, and the revivalist, warning people against all the sins of which you have grown tired. You are much too dignified to do that. Besides, it is no use. You and I are what we are, and will be what we will be. As for being possessed by a book, there is no such thing as that. Art has no influence upon action. It annihilates the desire to act. It is superbly sterile. The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame. That is all. But we won't discuss literature. Come round to-morrow. I am going to ride at eleven. We might go together, and I will take you to lunch afterwards with Lady Blankensome. She is a charming woman, and wants to consult you about some tapestries she is thinking of buying. Mind you come. Or shall we lunch with our little duchess? She says she never sees you now. Perhaps you are tired of Gladys? I thought you would be. Her clever tongue gets on one's nerves. Well, in any case, be there at eleven."

"Must I really come, Harry?"

"Certainly. The park is quite lovely now. I don't think there have been such lincs since the year I met you."

"Very well. I shall be here at eleven," said Doran. "Good night, Harry." As he reached the door, he hesitated for a moment, as if he

had something more to say. Then he sighed and went out.

CHAPTER 20

It was a lovely night, so warm that he threw his coat over his arm and did not even put his silk scarf round his throat. As he strolled home, smoking his cigarette, two young men in evening dress passed him. He heard one of them whisper to the other: "That is Doran Gray." He remembered how pleased he used to be when he pointed out, or stared at, or talked about. He was tired of hearing his own name now. Half the charm of the little village where he had been so often lately was that no one knew who he was. He had then told the girl whom he had loved to love him that he was poor, and she had believed him. He had told her once that he was wicked, and she had laughed at him and answered that wicked people were always very old and very ugly. What a laugh she had--just like a thrush singing. And how pretty she had been in her cotton dresses and her large hair! She knew nothing, but she had everything that he had lost.

When he reached home, he found his servant waiting up for him. He sent him to bed, and threw himself down on the sofa in his library, and began to think over some of the things that Lord Henry had said to him. Was it really true that one could never change? He felt a wild longing for the uncertain purity of his boyhood--his rose-white boyhood, as Lord Henry had once called it. He knew that he had tarnished himself. Basil his mind with corruption and given horror to his fancy; he had been an evil influence to others, and had experienced a terrible joy in being so; and that of the lies that had crossed his own, it had been the fairest and the most full of promise that he had brought to shine. But was it all retrievable? Was there no hope for him?

Ah! in what a monstrous moment of pride and passion he had prayed that the portrait should bear the burden of his days, and he keep the unaltered splendour of eternal youth! All his failure had been due to that. Better for him that each sin of his life had brought its sure and penalty along with it. There was purification in punishment. Not "Forgive us our sins" but "Smit us for our iniquities" should be the prayer of man to a most just God.