Part 4

The next day her aunt came again and expostulated, and was just saying it was “an unheard-of thing” for a girl to leave her home as Ann Veronica had done, when her father arrived, and was shown in by the pleasant-faced landlady.

Her father had determined on a new line. He put down his hat and umbrella, rested his hands on his hips, and regarded Ann Veronica firmly.

“Now,” he said, quietly, “it’s time we stopped this nonsense.”

Ann Veronica was about to reply, when he went on, with a still more deadly quiet: “I am not here to bandy words with you. Let us have no more of this humbug. You are to come home.”

“I thought I explained—”

“I don’t think you can have heard me,” said her father; “I have told you to come home.”

“I thought I explained—”

“Come home!”

Ann Veronica shrugged her shoulders.

“Very well,” said her father.

“I think this ends the business,” he said, turning to his sister.

“It’s not for us to supplicate any more. She must learn wisdom—as God pleases.”

“But, my dear Peter!” said Miss Stanley.

“No,” said her brother, conclusively, “it’s not for a parent to go on persuading a child.”

Miss Stanley rose and regarded Ann Veronica fixedly. The girl stood with her hands behind her back, sulky, resolute, and intelligent, a strand of her black hair over one eye and looking more than usually delicate-featured, and more than ever like an obdurate child.

“She doesn’t know.”

“She does.”

“I can’t imagine what makes you fly out against everything like this,” said Miss Stanley to her niece.

“What is the good of talking?” said her brother. “She must go her own way. A man’s children nowadays are not his own. That’s the fact of the matter. Their minds are turned against him.... Rubbishy novels and pernicious rascals. We can’t even protect them from themselves.”

An immense gulf seemed to open between father and daughter as he said these words.

“I don’t see,” gasped Ann Veronica, “why parents and children... shouldn’t be friends.”

“Friends!” said her father. “When we see you going through disobedience to the devil! Come, Molly, she must go her own way. I’ve tried to use my authority. And she defies me. What more is there to be said? She defies me!”

It was extraordinary. Ann Veronica felt suddenly an effect of tremendous pathos; she would have given anything to have been able to frame and make some appeal, some utterance that should bridge this bottomless chasm that had opened between her and her father, and she could find nothing whatever to say that was in the least sincere and appealing.

“Father,” she cried, “I have to live!”

He misunderstood her. “That,” he said, grimly, with his hand on the door-handle, “must be your own affair, unless you choose to live at Morningside Park.”

Miss Stanley turned to her. “Vee,” she said, “come home. Before it is too late.”

“Come, Molly,” said Mr. Stanley, at the door.

“Vee!” said Miss Stanley, “you hear what your father says!”

Miss Stanley struggled with emotion. She made a curious movement toward her niece, then suddenly, convulsively, she dabbed down something lumpy on the table and turned to follow her brother. Ann Veronica stared for a moment in amazement at this dark-green object that clashed as it was put down. It was a purse. She made a step forward. “Aunt!” she said, “I can’t—”

Then she caught a wild appeal in her aunt’s blue eye, halted, and the door clicked upon them.

There was a pause, and then the front door slammed....

Ann Veronica realized that she was alone with the world. And this time the departure had a tremendous effect of finality. She had to resist an impulse of sheer terror, to run out after them and give in.

“Gods,” she said, at last, “I’ve done it this time!”

“Well!” She took up the neat morocco purse, opened it, and examined the contents.

It contained three sovereigns, six and fourpence, two postage stamps, a small key, and her aunt’s return half ticket to Morningside Park.

Part 5

After the interview Ann Veronica considered herself formally cut off from home. If nothing else had clinched that, the purse had.

Nevertheless there came a residuum of expostulations. Her brother Roddy, who was in the motor line, came to expostulate; her sister Alice wrote. And Mr. Manning called.

Her sister Alice seemed to have developed a religious sense away there in Yorkshire, and made appeals that had no meaning for Ann Veronica’s mind. She exhorted Ann Veronica not to become one of “those unsexed intellectuals, neither man nor woman.”

Ann Veronica meditated over that phrase. “That’s HIM,” said Ann Veronica, in sound, idiomatic English. “Poor old Alice!”

Her brother Roddy came to her and demanded tea, and asked her to state a case. “Bit thick on the old man, isn’t it?” said Roddy, who had developed a bluff, straightforward style in the motor shop.

“Mind my smoking?” said Roddy. “I don’t see quite what your game is, Vee, but I suppose you’ve got a game on somewhere.

“Rummy lot we are!” said Roddy. “Alice—Alice gone dotty, and all over kids. Gwen—I saw Gwen the other day, and the paint’s thicker than ever. Jim is up to the neck in Mahatmas and Theosophy and Higher Thought and rot—writes letters worse than Alice. And now YOU’RE on the war-path. I believe I’m the only sane member of the family left. The G.V.‘s as mad as any of you, in spite of all his respectability; not a bit of him straight anywhere, not one bit.”

“Straight?”

“Not a bit of it! He’s been out after eight per cent. since the beginning. Eight per cent.! He’ll come a cropper one of these days, if you ask me. He’s been near it once or twice

already. That's got his nerves to rags. I suppose we're all human beings really, but what price the sacred Institution of the Family! Us as a bundle! Eh?... I don't half disagree with you, Vee, really; only thing is, I don't see how you're going to pull it off. A home MAY be a sort of cage, but still—it's a home. Gives you a right to hang on to the old man until he busts—practically. Jolly hard life for a girl, getting a living. Not MY affair."

He asked questions and listened to her views for a time.

"I'd chuck this lark right off if I were you, Vee," he said. "I'm five years older than you, and no end wiser, being a man. What you're after is too risky. It's a damned hard thing to do. It's all very handsome starting out on your own, but it's too damned hard. That's my opinion, if you ask me. There's nothing a girl can do that isn't sweated to the bone. You square the G.V., and go home before you have to. That's my advice. If you don't eat humble-pie now you may live to fare worse later. *I* can't help you a cent. Life's hard enough nowadays for an unprotected male. Let alone a girl. You got to take the world as it is, and the only possible trade for a girl that isn't sweated is to get hold of a man and make him do it for her. It's no good flying out at that, Vee; *I* didn't arrange it. It's Providence. That's how things are; that's the order of the world. Like appendicitis. It isn't pretty, but we're made so. Rot, no doubt; but we can't alter it. You go home and live on the G.V., and get some other man to live on as soon as possible. It isn't sentiment but it's horse sense. All this Woman-who-Diddery—no damn good. After all, old P.—Providence, I mean—HAS arranged it so that men will keep you, more or less. He made the universe on those lines. You've got to take what you can get."

That was the quintessence of her brother Roddy.

He played variations on this theme for the better part of an hour.

"You go home," he said, at parting; "you go home. It's all very fine and all that, Vee, this freedom, but it isn't going to work. The world isn't ready for girls to start out on their own yet; that's the plain fact of the case. Babies and females have got to keep hold of somebody or go under—anyhow, for the next few generations. You go home and wait a century, Vee, and then try again. Then you may have a bit of a chance. Now you haven't the ghost of one—not if you play the game fair."

Part 6

It was remarkable to Ann Veronica how completely Mr. Manning, in his entirely different dialect, indorsed her brother Roddy's view of things. He came along, he said, just to call, with large, loud apologies, radiantly kind and good. Miss Stanley, it was manifest, had given him Ann Veronica's address. The kindly faced landlady had failed to catch his name, and said he was a tall, handsome gentleman with a great black mustache. Ann Veronica, with a sigh at the cost of hospitality, made a hasty negotiation for an extra tea and for a fire in the ground-floor apartment, and preened herself carefully for the interview. In the little apartment, under the gas chandelier, his inches and his stoop were certainly very effective. In the bad light he looked at once military and sentimental and studious, like one of Ouida's guardsmen revised by Mr. Haldane and the London School of Economics and finished in the Keltic school.

"It's unforgivable of me to call, Miss Stanley," he said, shaking hands in a peculiar, high, fashionable manner; "but you know you said we might be friends."

"It's dreadful for you to be here," he said, indicating the yellow presence of the first fog of the year without, "but your aunt told me something of what had happened. It's just like your Splendid Pride to do it. Quite!"

He sat in the arm-chair and took tea, and consumed several of the extra cakes which she had sent out for and talked to her and expressed himself, looking very earnestly at her with his deep-set eyes, and carefully avoiding any crumbs on his mustache the while. Ann Veronica sat firelit by her tea-tray with, quite unconsciously, the air of an expert hostess.

"But how is it all going to end?" said Mr. Manning.

"Your father, of course," he said, "must come to realize just how Splendid you are! He doesn't understand. I've seen him, and he doesn't a bit understand. *I* didn't understand before that letter. It makes me want to be just everything I CAN be to you. You're like some splendid Princess in Exile in these Dreadful Dingy apartments!"

"I'm afraid I'm anything but a Princess when it comes to earning a salary," said Ann Veronica. "But frankly, I mean to fight this through if I possibly can."

"My God!" said Manning, in a stage-aside. "Earning a salary!"

"You're like a Princess in Exile!" he repeated, overruling her. "You come into these sordid surroundings—you mustn't mind my calling them sordid—and it makes them seem as though they didn't matter.... I don't think they do matter. I don't think any surroundings could throw a shadow on you."

Ann Veronica felt a slight embarrassment. “Won’t you have some more tea, Mr. Manning?” she asked.

“You know—,” said Mr. Manning, relinquishing his cup without answering her question, “when I hear you talk of earning a living, it’s as if I heard of an archangel going on the Stock Exchange—or Christ selling doves…. Forgive my daring. I couldn’t help the thought.”

“It’s a very good image,” said Ann Veronica.

“I knew you wouldn’t mind.”

“But does it correspond with the facts of the case? You know, Mr. Manning, all this sort of thing is very well as sentiment, but does it correspond with the realities? Are women truly such angelic things and men so chivalrous? You men have, I know, meant to make us Queens and Goddesses, but in practice—well, look, for example, at the stream of girls one meets going to work of a morning, round-shouldered, cheap, and underfed! They aren’t queens, and no one is treating them as queens. And look, again, at the women one finds letting lodgings…. I was looking for rooms last week. It got on my nerves—the women I saw. Worse than any man. Everywhere I went and rapped at a door I found behind it another dreadful dingy woman—another fallen queen, I suppose—dingier than the last, dirty, you know, in grain. Their poor hands!”

“I know,” said Mr. Manning, with entirely suitable emotion.

“And think of the ordinary wives and mothers, with their anxiety, their limitations, their swarms of children!”

Mr. Manning displayed distress. He fended these things off from him with the rump of his fourth piece of cake. “I know that our social order is dreadful enough,” he said, “and sacrifices all that is best and most beautiful in life. I don’t defend it.”

“And besides, when it comes to the idea of queens,” Ann Veronica went on, “there’s twenty-one and a half million women to twenty million men. Suppose our proper place is a shrine. Still, that leaves over a million shrines short, not reckoning widows who re-marry. And more boys die than girls, so that the real disproportion among adults is even greater.”

“I know,” said Mr Manning, “I know these Dreadful Statistics. I know there’s a sort of right in your impatience at the slowness of Progress. But tell me one thing I don’t understand—tell me one thing: How can you help it by coming down into the battle and the mire? That’s the thing that concerns me.”

“Oh, I’m not trying to help it,” said Ann Veronica. “I’m only arguing against your position of what a woman should be, and trying to get it clear in my own mind. I’m in this apartment and looking for work because—Well, what else can I do, when my father practically locks me up?”

“I know,” said Mr. Manning, “I know. Don’t think I can’t sympathize and understand. Still, here we are in this dingy, foggy city. Ye gods! what a wilderness it is! Every one trying to get the better of every one, every one regardless of every one—it’s one of those days when every one bumps against you—every one pouring coal smoke into the air and making confusion worse confounded, motor omnibuses clattering and smelling, a horse down in the Tottenham Court Road, an old woman at the corner coughing dreadfully—all the painful sights of a great city, and here you come into it to take your chances. It’s too valiant, Miss Stanley, too valiant altogether!”

Ann Veronica meditated. She had had two days of employment-seeking now. “I wonder if it is.”

“It isn’t,” said Mr. Manning, “that I mind Courage in a Woman—I love and admire Courage. What could be more splendid than a beautiful girl facing a great, glorious tiger? Una and the Lion again, and all that! But this isn’t that sort of thing; this is just a great, ugly, endless wilderness of selfish, sweating, vulgar competition!”

“That you want to keep me out of?”

“Exactly!” said Mr. Manning.

“In a sort of beautiful garden-close—wearing lovely dresses and picking beautiful flowers?”

“Ah! If one could!”

“While those other girls trudge to business and those other women let lodgings. And in reality even that magic garden-close resolves itself into a villa at Morningside Park and my father being more and more cross and overbearing at meals—and a general feeling of insecurity and futility.”

Mr. Manning relinquished his cup, and looked meaningly at Ann Veronica. “There,” he said, “you don’t treat me fairly, Miss Stanley. My garden-close would be a better thing than that.”

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

IDEALS AND A REALITY

Part 1

And now for some weeks Ann Veronica was to test her market value in the world. She went about in a negligent November London that had become very dark and foggy and greasy and forbidding indeed, and tried to find that modest but independent employment she had so rashly assumed. She went about, intent-looking and self-possessed, trim and fine, concealing her emotions whatever they were, as the realities of her position opened out before her. Her little bed-sitting-room was like a lair, and she went out from it into this vast, dun world, with its smoke-gray houses, its glaring streets of shops, its dark streets of homes, its orange-lit windows, under skies of dull copper or muddy gray or black, much as an animal goes out to seek food. She would come back and write letters, carefully planned and written letters, or read some book she had fetched from Mudie's—she had invested a half-guinea with Mudie's—or sit over her fire and think.

Slowly and reluctantly she came to realize that Vivie Warren was what is called an "ideal." There were no such girls and no such positions. No work that offered was at all of the quality she had vaguely postulated for herself. With such qualifications as she possessed, two chief channels of employment lay open, and neither attracted her, neither seemed really to offer a conclusive escape from that subjection to mankind against which, in the person of her father, she was rebelling. One main avenue was for her to become a sort of salaried accessory wife or mother, to be a governess or an assistant schoolmistress, or a very high type of governess-nurse. The other was to go into business—into a photographer's reception-room, for example, or a costumer's or hat-shop. The first set of occupations seemed to her to be altogether too domestic and restricted; for the latter she was dreadfully handicapped by her want of experience. And also she didn't like them. She didn't like the shops, she didn't like the other women's faces; she thought the smirking men in frock-coats who dominated these establishments the most intolerable persons she had ever had to face. One called her very distinctly "My dear!"

Two secretarial posts did indeed seem to offer themselves in which, at least, there was no specific exclusion of womanhood; one was under a Radical Member of

Parliament, and the other under a Harley Street doctor, and both men declined her proffered services with the utmost civility and admiration and terror. There was also a curious interview at a big hotel with a middle-aged, white-powdered woman, all covered with jewels and reeking of scent, who wanted a Companion. She did not think Ann Veronica would do as her companion.

And nearly all these things were fearfully ill-paid. They carried no more than bare subsistence wages; and they demanded all her time and energy. She had heard of women journalists, women writers, and so forth; but she was not even admitted to the presence of the editors she demanded to see, and by no means sure that if she had been she could have done any work they might have given her. One day she desisted from her search and went unexpectedly to the Tredgold College. Her place was not filled; she had been simply noted as absent, and she did a comforting day of admirable dissection upon the tortoise. She was so interested, and this was such a relief from the trudging anxiety of her search for work, that she went on for a whole week as if she was still living at home. Then a third secretarial opening occurred and renewed her hopes again: a position as amanuensis—with which some of the lighter duties of a nurse were combined—to an infirm gentleman of means living at Twickenham, and engaged upon a great literary research to prove that the "Faery Queen" was really a treatise upon molecular chemistry written in a peculiar and picturesquely handled cipher.

Part 2

Now, while Ann Veronica was taking these soundings in the industrial sea, and measuring herself against the world as it is, she was also making extensive explorations among the ideas and attitudes of a number of human beings who seemed to be largely concerned with the world as it ought to be. She was drawn first by Miss Miniver, and then by her own natural interest, into a curious stratum of people who are busied with dreams of world progress, of great and fundamental changes, of a New Age that is to replace all the stresses and disorders of contemporary life.

Miss Miniver learned of her flight and got her address from the Widgetts. She arrived about nine o'clock the next evening in a state of tremulous enthusiasm. She followed the landlady half way up-stairs, and called up to Ann Veronica, "May I come up? It's me! You know—Nettie Miniver!" She appeared before Ann Veronica could clearly recall who Nettie Miniver might be.

There was a wild light in her eye, and her straight hair was out demonstrating and suffragetting upon some independent notions of its own. Her fingers were bursting through her gloves, as if to get at once into touch with Ann Veronica. “You’re Glorious!” said Miss Miniver in tones of rapture, holding a hand in each of hers and peering up into Ann Veronica’s face. “Glorious! You’re so calm, dear, and so resolute, so serene!

“It’s girls like you who will show them what We are,” said Miss Miniver; “girls whose spirits have not been broken!”

Ann Veronica sunned herself a little in this warmth.

“I was watching you at Morningside Park, dear,” said Miss Miniver. “I am getting to watch all women. I thought then perhaps you didn’t care, that you were like so many of them. NOW it’s just as though you had grown up suddenly.”

She stopped, and then suggested: “I wonder—I should love—if it was anything *I* said.”

She did not wait for Ann Veronica’s reply. She seemed to assume that it must certainly be something she had said. “They all catch on,” she said. “It spreads like wildfire. This is such a grand time! Such a glorious time! There never was such a time as this! Everything seems so close to fruition, so coming on and leading on! The Insurrection of Women! They spring up everywhere. Tell me all that happened, one sister-woman to another.”

She chilled Ann Veronica a little by that last phrase, and yet the magnetism of her fellowship and enthusiasm was very strong; and it was pleasant to be made out a heroine after so much expostulation and so many secret doubts.

But she did not listen long; she wanted to talk. She sat, crouched together, by the corner of the hearthrug under the bookcase that supported the pig’s skull, and looked into the fire and up at Ann Veronica’s face, and let herself go. “Let us put the lamp out,” she said; “the flames are ever so much better for talking,” and Ann Veronica agreed. “You are coming right out into life—facing it all.”

Ann Veronica sat with her chin on her hand, red-lit and saying little, and Miss Miniver discoursed. As she talked, the drift and significance of what she was saying shaped itself slowly to Ann Veronica’s apprehension. It presented itself in the likeness of a great, gray, dull world—a brutal, superstitious, confused, and wrong-headed world, that hurt people and limited people unaccountably. In remote times and countries its evil tendencies had expressed themselves in the form of tyrannies, massacres, wars, and what not; but just at present in England they shaped as commercialism and competition, silk hats, suburban morals, the sweating system, and the subjection of

women. So far the thing was acceptable enough. But over against the world Miss Miniver assembled a small but energetic minority, the Children of Light—people she described as “being in the van,” or “altogether in the van,” about whom Ann Veronica’s mind was disposed to be more sceptical.

Everything, Miss Miniver said, was “working up,” everything was “coming on”—the Higher Thought, the Simple Life, Socialism, Humanitarianism, it was all the same really. She loved to be there, taking part in it all, breathing it, being it. Hitherto in the world’s history there had been precursors of this Progress at great intervals, voices that had spoken and ceased, but now it was all coming on together in a rush. She mentioned, with familiar respect, Christ and Buddha and Shelley and Nietzsche and Plato. Pioneers all of them. Such names shone brightly in the darkness, with black spaces of unilluminated emptiness about them, as stars shine in the night; but now—now it was different; now it was dawn—the real dawn.

“The women are taking it up,” said Miss Miniver; “the women and the common people, all pressing forward, all roused.”

Ann Veronica listened with her eyes on the fire.

“Everybody is taking it up,” said Miss Miniver. “YOU had to come in. You couldn’t help it. Something drew you. Something draws everybody. From suburbs, from country towns—everywhere. I see all the Movements. As far as I can, I belong to them all. I keep my finger on the pulse of things.”

Ann Veronica said nothing.

“The dawn!” said Miss Miniver, with her glasses reflecting the fire like pools of blood-red flame.

“I came to London,” said Ann Veronica, “rather because of my own difficulty. I don’t know that I understand altogether.”

“Of course you don’t,” said Miss Miniver, gesticulating triumphantly with her thin hand and thinner wrist, and patting Ann Veronica’s knee. “Of course you don’t. That’s the wonder of it. But you will, you will. You must let me take you to things—to meetings and things, to conferences and talks. Then you will begin to see. You will begin to see it all opening out. I am up to the ears in it all—every moment I can spare. I throw up work—everything! I just teach in one school, one good school, three days a week. All the rest—Movements! I can live now on fourpence a day. Think how free that leaves me to follow things up! I must take you everywhere. I must take you to the Suffrage people, and the Tolstoyans, and the Fabians.”

“I have heard of the Fabians,” said Ann Veronica.

“It’s THE Society!” said Miss Miniver. “It’s the centre of the intellectuals. Some of the meetings are wonderful! Such earnest, beautiful women! Such deep-browed men!... And to think that there they are making history! There they are putting together the plans of a new world. Almost light-heartedly. There is Shaw, and Webb, and Wilkins the author, and Toomer, and Doctor Tumpany—the most wonderful people! There you see them discussing, deciding, planning! Just think—THEY ARE MAKING A NEW WORLD!”

“But ARE these people going to alter everything?” said Ann Veronica.

“What else can happen?” asked Miss Miniver, with a little weak gesture at the glow. “What else can possibly happen—as things are going now?”

Part 3

Miss Miniver let Ann Veronica into her peculiar levels of the world with so enthusiastic a generosity that it seemed ingratitude to remain critical. Indeed, almost insensibly Ann Veronica became habituated to the peculiar appearance and the peculiar manners of the people “in the van.” The shock of their intellectual attitude was over, usage robbed it of the first quaint effect of deliberate unreason. They were in many respects so right; she clung to that, and shirked more and more the paradoxical conviction that they were also somehow, and even in direct relation to that rightness, absurd.

Very central in Miss Miniver’s universe were the Goopes. The Goopes were the oddest little couple conceivable, following a fruitarian career upon an upper floor in Theobald’s Road. They were childless and servantless, and they had reduced simple living to the finest of fine arts. Mr. Goopes, Ann Veronica gathered, was a mathematical tutor and visited schools, and his wife wrote a weekly column in New Ideas upon vegetarian cookery, vivisection, degeneration, the lacteal secretion, appendicitis, and the Higher Thought generally, and assisted in the management of a fruit shop in the Tottenham Court Road. Their very furniture had mysteriously a high-browed quality, and Mr. Goopes when at home dressed simply in a pajama-shaped suit of canvas sacking tied with brown ribbons, while his wife wore a purple djibbah with a richly embroidered yoke. He was a small, dark, reserved man, with a large inflexible-looking convex forehead, and his wife was very pink and high-spirited, with

one of those chins that pass insensibly into a full, strong neck. Once a week, every Saturday, they had a little gathering from nine till the small hours, just talk and perhaps reading aloud and fruitarian refreshments—chestnut sandwiches buttered with nut tose, and so forth—and lemonade and unfermented wine; and to one of these symposia Miss Miniver after a good deal of preliminary solicitude, conducted Ann Veronica.

She was introduced, perhaps a little too obviously for her taste, as a girl who was standing out against her people, to a gathering that consisted of a very old lady with an extremely wrinkled skin and a deep voice who was wearing what appeared to Ann Veronica's inexperienced eye to be an antimacassar upon her head, a shy, blond young man with a narrow forehead and glasses, two undistinguished women in plain skirts and blouses, and a middle-aged couple, very fat and alike in black, Mr. and Mrs. Alderman Dunstable, of the Borough Council of Marylebone. These were seated in an imperfect semicircle about a very copper-adorned fireplace, surmounted by a carved wood inscription:

"DO IT NOW."

And to them were presently added a roguish-looking young man, with reddish hair, an orange tie, and a fluffy tweed suit, and others who, in Ann Veronica's memory, in spite of her efforts to recall details, remained obstinately just "others."

The talk was animated, and remained always brilliant in form even when it ceased to be brilliant in substance. There were moments when Ann Veronica rather more than suspected the chief speakers to be, as school-boys say, showing off at her.

They talked of a new substitute for dripping in vegetarian cookery that Mrs. Goopes was convinced exercised an exceptionally purifying influence on the mind. And then they talked of Anarchism and Socialism, and whether the former was the exact opposite of the latter or only a higher form. The reddish-haired young man contributed allusions to the Hegelian philosophy that momentarily confused the discussion. Then Alderman Dunstable, who had hitherto been silent, broke out into speech and went off at a tangent, and gave his personal impressions of quite a number of his fellow-councillors. He continued to do this for the rest of the evening intermittently, in and out, among other topics. He addressed himself chiefly to Goopes, and spoke as if in reply to long-sustained inquiries on the part of Goopes into the personnel of the Marylebone Borough Council. "If you were to ask me," he would say, "I should say Blinders is straight. An ordinary type, of course—"

Mrs. Dunstable's contributions to the conversation were entirely in the form of nods; whenever Alderman Dunstable praised or blamed she nodded twice or thrice, according to the requirements of his emphasis. And she seemed always to keep one eye on Ann Veronica's dress. Mrs. Goopes disconcerted the Alderman a little by abruptly challenging the roguish-looking young man in the orange tie (who, it seemed, was the assistant editor of New Ideas) upon a critique of Nietzsche and Tolstoy that had appeared in his paper, in which doubts had been cast upon the perfect sincerity of the latter. Everybody seemed greatly concerned about the sincerity of Tolstoy.

Miss Miniver said that if once she lost her faith in Tolstoy's sincerity, nothing she felt would really matter much any more, and she appealed to Ann Veronica whether she did not feel the same; and Mr. Goopes said that we must distinguish between sincerity and irony, which was often indeed no more than sincerity at the sublimated level.

Alderman Dunstable said that sincerity was often a matter of opportunity, and illustrated the point to the fair young man with an anecdote about Blinders on the Dust Destructor Committee, during which the young man in the orange tie succeeded in giving the whole discussion a daring and erotic flavor by questioning whether any one could be perfectly sincere in love.

Miss Miniver thought that there was no true sincerity except in love, and appealed to Ann Veronica, but the young man in the orange tie went on to declare that it was quite possible to be sincerely in love with two people at the same time, although perhaps on different planes with each individual, and deceiving them both. But that brought Mrs. Goopes down on him with the lesson Titian teaches so beautifully in his "Sacred and Profane Love," and became quite eloquent upon the impossibility of any deception in the former.

Then they discoursed on love for a time, and Alderman Dunstable, turning back to the shy, blond young man and speaking in undertones of the utmost clearness, gave a brief and confidential account of an unfounded rumor of the bifurcation of the affections of Blinders that had led to a situation of some unpleasantness upon the Borough Council.

The very old lady in the antimacassar touched Ann Veronica's arm suddenly, and said, in a deep, arch voice:

"Talking of love again; spring again, love again. Oh! you young people!"

The young man with the orange tie, in spite of Sisyphus-like efforts on the part of Goopes to get the topic on to a higher plane, displayed great persistence in

speculating upon the possible distribution of the affections of highly developed modern types.

The old lady in the antimacassar said, abruptly, “Ah! you young people, you young people, if you only knew!” and then laughed and then mused in a marked manner; and the young man with the narrow forehead and glasses cleared his throat and asked the young man in the orange tie whether he believed that Platonic love was possible. Mrs. Goopes said she believed in nothing else, and with that she glanced at Ann Veronica, rose a little abruptly, and directed Goopes and the shy young man in the handing of refreshments.

But the young man with the orange tie remained in his place, disputing whether the body had not something or other which he called its legitimate claims. And from that they came back by way of the Kreutzer Sonata and Resurrection to Tolstoy again.

So the talk went on. Goopes, who had at first been a little reserved, resorted presently to the Socratic method to restrain the young man with the orange tie, and bent his forehead over him, and brought out at last very clearly from him that the body was only illusion and everything nothing but just spirit and molecules of thought. It became a sort of duel at last between them, and all the others sat and listened—every one, that is, except the Alderman, who had got the blond young man into a corner by the green-stained dresser with the aluminum things, and was sitting with his back to every one else, holding one hand over his mouth for greater privacy, and telling him, with an accent of confidential admission, in whispers of the chronic struggle between the natural modesty and general inoffensiveness of the Borough Council and the social evil in Marylebone.

So the talk went on, and presently they were criticising novelists, and certain daring essays of Wilkins got their due share of attention, and then they were discussing the future of the theatre. Ann Veronica intervened a little in the novelist discussion with a defence of Esmond and a denial that the Egoist was obscure, and when she spoke every one else stopped talking and listened. Then they deliberated whether Bernard Shaw ought to go into Parliament. And that brought them to vegetarianism and teetotalism, and the young man in the orange tie and Mrs. Goopes had a great set-to about the sincerity of Chesterton and Belloc that was ended by Goopes showing signs of resuming the Socratic method.

And at last Ann Veronica and Miss Miniver came down the dark staircase and out into the foggy spaces of the London squares, and crossed Russell Square, Woburn Square, Gordon Square, making an oblique route to Ann Veronica’s lodging. They trudged along a little hungry, because of the fruitarian refreshments, and mentally very active.

And Miss Miniver fell discussing whether Goopes or Bernard Shaw or Tolstoy or Doctor Tumpany or Wilkins the author had the more powerful and perfect mind in existence at the present time. She was clear there were no other minds like them in all the world.

Part 4

Then one evening Ann Veronica went with Miss Miniver into the back seats of the gallery at Essex Hall, and heard and saw the giant leaders of the Fabian Society who are re-making the world: Bernard Shaw and Toomer and Doctor Tumpany and Wilkins the author, all displayed upon a platform. The place was crowded, and the people about her were almost equally made up of very good-looking and enthusiastic young people and a great variety of Goopes-like types. In the discussion there was the oddest mixture of things that were personal and petty with an idealist devotion that was fine beyond dispute. In nearly every speech she heard was the same implication of great and necessary changes in the world—changes to be won by effort and sacrifice indeed, but surely to be won. And afterward she saw a very much larger and more enthusiastic gathering, a meeting of the advanced section of the woman movement in Caxton Hall, where the same note of vast changes in progress sounded; and she went to a soiree of the Dress Reform Association and visited a Food Reform Exhibition, where imminent change was made even alarmingly visible. The women's meeting was much more charged with emotional force than the Socialists'. Ann Veronica was carried off her intellectual and critical feet by it altogether, and applauded and uttered cries that subsequent reflection failed to endorse. "I knew you would feel it," said Miss Miniver, as they came away flushed and heated. "I knew you would begin to see how it all falls into place together."

It did begin to fall into place together. She became more and more alive, not so much to a system of ideas as to a big diffused impulse toward change, to a great discontent with and criticism of life as it is lived, to a clamorous confusion of ideas for reconstruction—reconstruction of the methods of business, of economic development, of the rules of property, of the status of children, of the clothing and feeding and teaching of every one; she developed a quite exaggerated consciousness of a multitude of people going about the swarming spaces of London with their minds full, their talk and gestures full, their very clothing charged with the suggestion of the urgency of this pervasive project of alteration. Some indeed carried themselves,

dressed themselves even, rather as foreign visitors from the land of “Looking Backward” and “News from Nowhere” than as the indigenous Londoners they were. For the most part these were detached people: men practising the plastic arts, young writers, young men in employment, a very large proportion of girls and women—self-supporting women or girls of the student class. They made a stratum into which Ann Veronica was now plunged up to her neck; it had become her stratum.

None of the things they said and did were altogether new to Ann Veronica, but now she got them massed and alive, instead of by glimpses or in books—alive and articulate and insistent. The London backgrounds, in Bloomsbury and Marylebone, against which these people went to and fro, took on, by reason of their gray facades, their implacably respectable windows and window-blinds, their reiterated unmeaning iron railings, a stronger and stronger suggestion of the flavor of her father at his most obdurate phase, and of all that she felt herself fighting against.

She was already a little prepared by her discursive reading and discussion under the Widgett influence for ideas and “movements,” though temperamentally perhaps she was rather disposed to resist and criticise than embrace them. But the people among whom she was now thrown through the social exertions of Miss Miniver and the Widgetts—for Teddy and Hetty came up from Morningside Park and took her to an eighteen-penny dinner in Soho and introduced her to some art students, who were also Socialists, and so opened the way to an evening of meandering talk in a studio—carried with them like an atmosphere this implication, not only that the world was in some stupid and even obvious way WRONG, with which indeed she was quite prepared to agree, but that it needed only a few pioneers to behave as such and be thoroughly and indiscriminately “advanced,” for the new order to achieve itself.

When ninety per cent. out of the ten or twelve people one meets in a month not only say but feel and assume a thing, it is very hard not to fall into the belief that the thing is so. Imperceptibly almost Ann Veronica began to acquire the new attitude, even while her mind still resisted the felted ideas that went with it. And Miss Miniver began to sway her.

The very facts that Miss Miniver never stated an argument clearly, that she was never embarrassed by a sense of self-contradiction, and had little more respect for consistency of statement than a washerwoman has for wisps of vapor, which made Ann Veronica critical and hostile at their first encounter in Morningside Park, became at last with constant association the secret of Miss Miniver’s growing influence. The brain tires of resistance, and when it meets again and again, incoherently active, the same phrases, the same ideas that it has already slain, exposed and dissected and

buried, it becomes less and less energetic to repeat the operation. There must be something, one feels, in ideas that achieve persistently a successful resurrection. What Miss Miniver would have called the Higher Truth supervenes.

Yet through these talks, these meetings and conferences, these movements and efforts, Ann Veronica, for all that she went with her friend, and at times applauded with her enthusiastically, yet went nevertheless with eyes that grew more and more puzzled, and fine eyebrows more and more disposed to knit. She was with these movements—akin to them, she felt it at times intensely—and yet something eluded her. Morningside Park had been passive and defective; all this rushed about and was active, but it was still defective. It still failed in something. It did seem germane to the matter that so many of the people "in the van" were plain people, or faded people, or tired-looking people. It did affect the business that they all argued badly and were egotistical in their manners and inconsistent in their phrases. There were moments when she doubted whether the whole mass of movements and societies and gatherings and talks was not simply one coherent spectacle of failure protecting itself from abjection by the glamour of its own assertions. It happened that at the extremest point of Ann Veronica's social circle from the Widgetts was the family of the Morningside Park horse-dealer, a company of extremely dressy and hilarious young women, with one equestrian brother addicted to fancy waistcoats, cigars, and facial spots. These girls wore hats at remarkable angles and bows to startle and kill; they liked to be right on the spot every time and up to everything that was it from the very beginning and they rendered their conception of Socialists and all reformers by the words "positively frightening" and "weird." Well, it was beyond dispute that these words did convey a certain quality of the Movements in general amid which Miss Miniver disported herself. They WERE weird. And yet for all that—

It got into Ann Veronica's nights at last and kept her awake, the perplexing contrast between the advanced thought and the advanced thinker. The general propositions of Socialism, for example, struck her as admirable, but she certainly did not extend her admiration to any of its exponents. She was still more stirred by the idea of the equal citizenship of men and women, by the realization that a big and growing organization of women were giving form and a generalized expression to just that personal pride, that aspiration for personal freedom and respect which had brought her to London; but when she heard Miss Miniver discoursing on the next step in the suffrage campaign, or read of women badgering Cabinet Ministers, padlocked to railings, or getting up in a public meeting to pipe out a demand for votes and be carried out kicking and screaming, her soul revolted. She could not part with dignity. Something

as yet unformulated within her kept her estranged from all these practical aspects of her beliefs.

“Not for these things, O Ann Veronica, have you revolted,” it said; “and this is not your appropriate purpose.”

It was as if she faced a darkness in which was something very beautiful and wonderful as yet unimagined. The little pucker in her brows became more perceptible.

Part 5

In the beginning of December Ann Veronica began to speculate privately upon the procedure of pawning. She had decided that she would begin with her pearl necklace. She spent a very disagreeable afternoon and evening—it was raining fast outside, and she had very unwisely left her soundest pair of boots in the boothole of her father’s house in Morningside Park—thinking over the economic situation and planning a course of action. Her aunt had secretly sent on to Ann Veronica some new warm underclothing, a dozen pairs of stockings, and her last winter’s jacket, but the dear lady had overlooked those boots.

These things illuminated her situation extremely. Finally she decided upon a step that had always seemed reasonable to her, but that hitherto she had, from motives too faint for her to formulate, refrained from taking. She resolved to go into the City to Ramage and ask for his advice. And next morning she attired herself with especial care and neatness, found his address in the Directory at a post-office, and went to him.

She had to wait some minutes in an outer office, wherein three young men of spirited costume and appearance regarded her with ill-concealed curiosity and admiration. Then Ramage appeared with effusion, and ushered her into his inner apartment. The three young men exchanged expressive glances.

The inner apartment was rather gracefully furnished with a thick, fine Turkish carpet, a good brass fender, a fine old bureau, and on the walls were engravings of two young girls’ heads by Greuze, and of some modern picture of boys bathing in a sunlit pool.

“But this is a surprise!” said Ramage. “This is wonderful! I’ve been feeling that you had vanished from my world. Have you been away from Morningside Park?”

“I’m not interrupting you?”

“You are. Splendidly. Business exists for such interruptions. There you are, the best client’s chair.”

Ann Veronica sat down, and Ramage’s eager eyes feasted on her.

“I’ve been looking out for you,” he said. “I confess it.”

She had not, she reflected, remembered how prominent his eyes were.

“I want some advice,” said Ann Veronica.

“Yes?”

“You remember once, how we talked—at a gate on the Downs? We talked about how a girl might get an independent living.”

“Yes, yes.”

“Well, you see, something has happened at home.”

She paused.

“Nothing has happened to Mr. Stanley?”

“I’ve fallen out with my father. It was about—a question of what I might do or might not do. He—In fact, he—he locked me in my room. Practically.”

Her breath left her for a moment.

“I SAY!” said Mr. Ramage.

“I wanted to go to an art-student ball of which he disapproved.”

“And why shouldn’t you?”

“I felt that sort of thing couldn’t go on. So I packed up and came to London next day.”

“To a friend?”

“To lodgings—alone.”

“I say, you know, you have some pluck. You did it on your own?”

Ann Veronica smiled. “Quite on my own,” she said.

“It’s magnificent!” He leaned back and regarded her with his head a little on one side. “By Jove!” he said, “there is something direct about you. I wonder if I should have locked you up if I’d been your father. Luckily I’m not. And you started out forthwith to

fight the world and be a citizen on your own basis?" He came forward again and folded his hands under him on his desk.

"How has the world taken it?" he asked. "If I was the world I think I should have put down a crimson carpet, and asked you to say what you wanted, and generally walk over me. But the world didn't do that."

"Not exactly."

"It presented a large impenetrable back, and went on thinking about something else."

"It offered from fifteen to two-and-twenty shillings a week—for drudgery."

"The world has no sense of what is due to youth and courage. It never has had."

"Yes," said Ann Veronica. "But the thing is, I want a job."

"Exactly! And so you came along to me. And you see, I don't turn my back, and I am looking at you and thinking about you from top to toe."

"And what do you think I ought to do?"

"Exactly!" He lifted a paper-weight and dabbed it gently down again. "What ought you to do?"

"I've hunted up all sorts of things."

"The point to note is that fundamentally you don't want particularly to do it."

"I don't understand."

"You want to be free and so forth, yes. But you don't particularly want to do the job that sets you free—for its own sake. I mean that it doesn't interest you in itself."

"I suppose not."

"That's one of our differences. We men are like children. We can get absorbed in play, in games, in the business we do. That's really why we do them sometimes rather well and get on. But women—women as a rule don't throw themselves into things like that. As a matter of fact it isn't their affair. And as a natural consequence, they don't do so well, and they don't get on—and so the world doesn't pay them. They don't catch on to discursive interests, you see, because they are more serious, they are concentrated on the central reality of life, and a little impatient of its—its outer aspects. At least that, I think, is what makes a clever woman's independent career so much more difficult than a clever man's."

“She doesn’t develop a specialty.” Ann Veronica was doing her best to follow him.

“She has one, that’s why. Her specialty is the central thing in life, it is life itself, the warmth of life, sex—and love.”

He pronounced this with an air of profound conviction and with his eyes on Ann Veronica’s face. He had an air of having told her a deep, personal secret. She winced as he thrust the fact at her, was about to answer, and checked herself. She colored faintly.

“That doesn’t touch the question I asked you,” she said. “It may be true, but it isn’t quite what I have in mind.”

“Of course not,” said Ramage, as one who rouses himself from deep preoccupations And he began to question her in a business-like way upon the steps she had taken and the inquiries she had made. He displayed none of the airy optimism of their previous talk over the downland gate. He was helpful, but gravely dubious. “You see,” he said, “from my point of view you’re grown up—you’re as old as all the goddesses and the contemporary of any man alive. But from the—the economic point of view you’re a very young and altogether inexperienced person.”

He returned to and developed that idea. “You’re still,” he said, “in the educational years. From the point of view of most things in the world of employment which a woman can do reasonably well and earn a living by, you’re unripe and half-educated. If you had taken your degree, for example.”

He spoke of secretarial work, but even there she would need to be able to do typing and shorthand. He made it more and more evident to her that her proper course was not to earn a salary but to accumulate equipment. “You see,” he said, “you are like an inaccessible gold-mine in all this sort of matter. You’re splendid stuff, you know, but you’ve got nothing ready to sell. That’s the flat business situation.”

He thought. Then he slapped his hand on his desk and looked up with the air of a man struck by a brilliant idea. “Look here,” he said, protruding his eyes; “why get anything to do at all just yet? Why, if you must be free, why not do the sensible thing? Make yourself worth a decent freedom. Go on with your studies at the Imperial College, for example, get a degree, and make yourself good value. Or become a thorough-going typist and stenographer and secretarial expert.”

“But I can’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“You see, if I do go home my father objects to the College, and as for typing—”

“Don’t go home.”

“Yes, but you forget; how am I to live?”

“Easily. Easily.... Borrow.... From me.”

“I couldn’t do that,” said Ann Veronica, sharply.

“I see no reason why you shouldn’t.”

“It’s impossible.”

“As one friend to another. Men are always doing it, and if you set up to be a man—”

“No, it’s absolutely out of the question, Mr. Ramage.” And Ann Veronica’s face was hot.

Ramage pursed his rather loose lips and shrugged his shoulders, with his eyes fixed steadily upon her. “Well anyhow—I don’t see the force of your objection, you know. That’s my advice to you. Here I am. Consider you’ve got resources deposited with me. Perhaps at the first blush—it strikes you as odd. People are brought up to be so shy about money. As though it was indelicate—it’s just a sort of shyness. But here I am to draw upon. Here I am as an alternative either to nasty work—or going home.”

“It’s very kind of you—” began Ann Veronica.

“Not a bit. Just a friendly polite suggestion. I don’t suggest any philanthropy. I shall charge you five per cent., you know, fair and square.”

Ann Veronica opened her lips quickly and did not speak. But the five per cent. certainly did seem to improve the aspect of Ramage’s suggestion.

“Well, anyhow, consider it open.” He dabbed with his paper-weight again, and spoke in an entirely indifferent tone. “And now tell me, please, how you eloped from Morningside Park. How did you get your luggage out of the house? Wasn’t it—wasn’t it rather in some respects—rather a lark? It’s one of my regrets for my lost youth. I never ran away from anywhere with anybody anywhen. And now—I suppose I should be considered too old. I don’t feel it.... Didn’t you feel rather EVENTFUL—in the train—coming up to Waterloo?”

Part 6

Before Christmas Ann Veronica had gone to Ramage again and accepted this offer she had at first declined.

Many little things had contributed to that decision. The chief influence was her awakening sense of the need of money. She had been forced to buy herself that pair of boots and a walking-skirt, and the pearl necklace at the pawnbrokers' had yielded very disappointingly. And, also, she wanted to borrow that money. It did seem in so many ways exactly what Ramage said it was—the sensible thing to do. There it was—to be borrowed. It would put the whole adventure on a broader and better footing; it seemed, indeed, almost the only possible way in which she might emerge from her rebellion with anything like success. If only for the sake of her argument with her home, she wanted success. And why, after all, should she not borrow money from Ramage?

It was so true what he said; middle-class people WERE ridiculously squeamish about money. Why should they be?

She and Ramage were friends, very good friends. If she was in a position to help him she would help him; only it happened to be the other way round. He was in a position to help her. What was the objection?

She found it impossible to look her own diffidence in the face. So she went to Ramage and came to the point almost at once.

"Can you spare me forty pounds?" she said.

Mr. Ramage controlled his expression and thought very quickly.

"Agreed," he said, "certainly," and drew a checkbook toward him.

"It's best," he said, "to make it a good round sum.

"I won't give you a check though—Yes, I will. I'll give you an uncrossed check, and then you can get it at the bank here, quite close by.... You'd better not have all the money on you; you had better open a small account in the post-office and draw it out a fiver at a time. That won't involve references, as a bank account would—and all that sort of thing. The money will last longer, and—it won't bother you."

He stood up rather close to her and looked into her eyes. He seemed to be trying to understand something very perplexing and elusive. "It's jolly," he said, "to feel you have come to me. It's a sort of guarantee of confidence. Last time—you made me feel snubbed."

He hesitated, and went off at a tangent. “There’s no end of things I’d like to talk over with you. It’s just upon my lunch-time. Come and have lunch with me.”

Ann Veronica fenced for a moment. “I don’t want to take up your time.”

“We won’t go to any of these City places. They’re just all men, and no one is safe from scandal. But I know a little place where we’ll get a little quiet talk.”

Ann Veronica for some indefinable reason did not want to lunch with him, a reason indeed so indefinable that she dismissed it, and Ramage went through the outer office with her, alert and attentive, to the vivid interest of the three clerks. The three clerks fought for the only window, and saw her whisked into a hansom. Their subsequent conversation is outside the scope of our story.

“Ritter’s!” said Ramage to the driver, “Dean Street.”

It was rare that Ann Veronica used hansoms, and to be in one was itself eventful and exhilarating. She liked the high, easy swing of the thing over its big wheels, the quick clatter-patter of the horse, the passage of the teeming streets. She admitted her pleasure to Ramage.

And Ritter’s, too, was very amusing and foreign and discreet; a little rambling room with a number of small tables, with red electric light shades and flowers. It was an overcast day, albeit not foggy, and the electric light shades glowed warmly, and an Italian waiter with insufficient English took Ramage’s orders, and waited with an appearance of affection. Ann Veronica thought the whole affair rather jolly. Ritter sold better food than most of his compatriots, and cooked it better, and Ramage, with a fine perception of a feminine palate, ordered Vero Capri. It was, Ann Veronica felt, as a sip or so of that remarkable blend warmed her blood, just the sort of thing that her aunt would not approve, to be lunching thus, tete-a-tete with a man; and yet at the same time it was a perfectly innocent as well as agreeable proceeding.

They talked across their meal in an easy and friendly manner about Ann Veronica’s affairs. He was really very bright and clever, with a sort of conversational boldness that was just within the limits of permissible daring. She described the Goopes and the Fabians to him, and gave him a sketch of her landlady; and he talked in the most liberal and entertaining way of a modern young woman’s outlook. He seemed to know a great deal about life. He gave glimpses of possibilities. He roused curiosities. He contrasted wonderfully with the empty showing-off of Teddy. His friendship seemed a thing worth having....

But when she was thinking it over in her room that evening vague and baffling doubts came drifting across this conviction. She doubted how she stood toward him and what the restrained gleam of his face might signify. She felt that perhaps, in her desire to play an adequate part in the conversation, she had talked rather more freely than she ought to have done, and given him a wrong impression of herself.

Part 7

That was two days before Christmas Eve. The next morning came a compact letter from her father.

“MY DEAR DAUGHTER,” it ran,—“Here, on the verge of the season of forgiveness I hold out a last hand to you in the hope of a reconciliation. I ask you, although it is not my place to ask you, to return home. This roof is still open to you. You will not be taunted if you return and everything that can be done will be done to make you happy.

“Indeed, I must implore you to return. This adventure of yours has gone on altogether too long; it has become a serious distress to both your aunt and myself. We fail altogether to understand your motives in doing what you are doing, or, indeed, how you are managing to do it, or what you are managing on. If you will think only of one trifling aspect—the inconvenience it must be to us to explain your absence—I think you may begin to realize what it all means for us. I need hardly say that your aunt joins with me very heartily in this request.

“Please come home. You will not find me unreasonable with you.

“Your affectionate

“FATHER.”

Ann Veronica sat over her fire with her father’s note in her hand. “Queer letters he writes,” she said. “I suppose most people’s letters are queer. Roof open—like a Noah’s Ark. I wonder if he really wants me to go home. It’s odd how little I know of him, and of how he feels and what he feels.”

“I wonder how he treated Gwen.”

Her mind drifted into a speculation about her sister. “I ought to look up Gwen,” she said. “I wonder what happened.”

Then she fell to thinking about her aunt. “I would like to go home,” she cried, “to please her. She has been a dear. Considering how little he lets her have.”

The truth prevailed. “The unaccountable thing is that I wouldn’t go home to please her. She is, in her way, a dear. One OUGHT to want to please her. And I don’t. I don’t care. I can’t even make myself care.”

Presently, as if for comparison with her father’s letter, she got out Ramage’s check from the box that contained her papers. For so far she had kept it uncashed. She had not even endorsed it.

“Suppose I chuck it,” she remarked, standing with the mauve slip in her hand—“suppose I chuck it, and surrender and go home! Perhaps, after all, Roddy was right!

“Father keeps opening the door and shutting it, but a time will come—

“I could still go home!”

She held Ramage’s check as if to tear it across. “No,” she said at last; “I’m a human being—not a timid female. What could I do at home? The other’s a crumple-up—just surrender. Funk! I’ll see it out.”

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

BIOLOGY

Part 1

January found Ann Veronica a student in the biological laboratory of the Central Imperial College that towers up from among the back streets in the angle between Euston Road and Great Portland Street. She was working very steadily at the Advanced Course in Comparative Anatomy, wonderfully relieved to have her mind engaged upon one methodically developing theme in the place of the discursive uncertainties of the previous two months, and doing her utmost to keep right in the back of her mind and out of sight the facts, firstly, that she had achieved this haven of

satisfactory activity by incurring a debt to Ramage of forty pounds, and, secondly, that her present position was necessarily temporary and her outlook quite uncertain.

The biological laboratory had an atmosphere that was all its own.

It was at the top of the building, and looked clear over a clustering mass of inferior buildings toward Regent's Park. It was long and narrow, a well-lit, well-ventilated, quiet gallery of small tables and sinks, pervaded by a thin smell of methylated spirit and of a mitigated and sterilized organic decay. Along the inner side was a wonderfully arranged series of displayed specimens that Russell himself had prepared. The supreme effect for Ann Veronica was its surpassing relevance; it made every other atmosphere she knew seem discursive and confused. The whole place and everything in it aimed at one thing—to illustrate, to elaborate, to criticise and illuminate, and make ever plainer and plainer the significance of animal and vegetable structure. It dealt from floor to ceiling and end to end with the Theory of the Forms of Life; the very duster by the blackboard was there to do its share in that work, the very washers in the taps; the room was more simply concentrated in aim even than a church. To that, perhaps, a large part of its satisfyingness was due. Contrasted with the confused movement and presences of a Fabian meeting, or the inexplicable enthusiasm behind the suffrage demand, with the speeches that were partly egotistical displays, partly artful manoeuvres, and partly incoherent cries for unsoundly formulated ends, compared with the comings and goings of audiences and supporters that were like the eddy-driven drift of paper in the street, this long, quiet, methodical chamber shone like a star seen through clouds.

Day after day for a measured hour in the lecture-theatre, with elaborate power and patience, Russell pieced together difficulty and suggestion, instance and counter-instance, in the elaborate construction of the family tree of life. And then the students went into the long laboratory and followed out these facts in almost living tissue with microscope and scalpel, probe and microtome, and the utmost of their skill and care, making now and then a raid into the compact museum of illustration next door, in which specimens and models and directions stood in disciplined ranks, under the direction of the demonstrator Capes. There was a couple of blackboards at each end of the aisle of tables, and at these Capes, with quick and nervous speech that contrasted vividly with Russell's slow, definitive articulation, directed the dissection and made illuminating comments on the structures under examination. Then he would come along the laboratory, sitting down by each student in turn, checking the work and discussing its difficulties, and answering questions arising out of Russell's lecture.

Ann Veronica had come to the Imperial College obsessed by the great figure of Russell, by the part he had played in the Darwinian controversies, and by the resolute effect of the grim-lipped, yellow, leonine face beneath the mane of silvery hair. Capes was rather a discovery. Capes was something superadded. Russell burned like a beacon, but Capes illuminated by darting flashes and threw light, even if it was but momentary light, into a hundred corners that Russell left steadfastly in the shade.

Capes was an exceptionally fair man of two or three-and-thirty, so ruddily blond that it was a mercy he had escaped light eyelashes, and with a minor but by no means contemptible reputation of his own. He talked at the blackboard in a pleasant, very slightly lisping voice with a curious spontaneity, and was sometimes very clumsy in his exposition, and sometimes very vivid. He dissected rather awkwardly and hurriedly, but, on the whole, effectively, and drew with an impatient directness that made up in significance what it lacked in precision. Across the blackboard the colored chalks flew like flights of variously tinted rockets as diagram after diagram flickered into being.

There happened that year to be an unusual proportion of girls and women in the advanced laboratory, perhaps because the class as a whole was an exceptionally small one. It numbered nine, and four of these were women students. As a consequence of its small size, it was possible to get along with the work on a much easier and more colloquial footing than a larger class would have permitted. And a custom had grown up of a general tea at four o'clock, under the auspices of a Miss Garvice, a tall and graceful girl of distinguished intellectual incompetence, in whom the hostess instinct seemed to be abnormally developed.

Capes would come to these teas; he evidently liked to come, and he would appear in the doorway of the preparation-room, a pleasing note of shyness in his manner, hovering for an invitation.

From the first, Ann Veronica found him an exceptionally interesting man. To begin with, he struck her as being the most variable person she had ever encountered. At times he was brilliant and masterful, talked round and over every one, and would have been domineering if he had not been extraordinarily kindly; at times he was almost monosyllabic, and defeated Miss Garvice's most skilful attempts to draw him out. Sometimes he was obviously irritable and uncomfortable and unfortunate in his efforts to seem at ease. And sometimes he overflowed with a peculiarly malignant wit that played, with devastating effect, upon any topics that had the courage to face it. Ann Veronica's experiences of men had been among more stable types—Teddy, who was always absurd; her father, who was always authoritative and sentimental;

Manning, who was always Manning. And most of the others she had met had, she felt, the same steadfastness. Goopes, she was sure was always high-browed and slow and Socratic. And Ramage too—about Ramage there would always be that air of avidity, that air of knowledge and inquiry, the mixture of things in his talk that were rather good with things that were rather poor. But one could not count with any confidence upon Capes.

The five men students were a mixed company. There was a very white-faced youngster of eighteen who brushed back his hair exactly in Russell's manner, and was disposed to be uncomfortably silent when he was near her, and to whom she felt it was only Christian kindness to be consistently pleasant; and a lax young man of five-and-twenty in navy blue, who mingled Marx and Bebel with the more orthodox gods of the biological pantheon. There was a short, red-faced, resolute youth who inherited an authoritative attitude upon bacteriology from his father; a Japanese student of unassuming manners who drew beautifully and had an imperfect knowledge of English; and a dark, unwashed Scotchman with complicated spectacles, who would come every morning as a sort of volunteer supplementary demonstrator, look very closely at her work and her, tell her that her dissections were "fairish," or "very fairish indeed," or "high above the normal female standard," hover as if for some outbreak of passionate gratitude and with admiring retrospects that made the facetted spectacles gleam like diamonds, return to his own place.

The women, Ann Veronica thought, were not quite so interesting as the men. There were two school-mistresses, one of whom—Miss Klegg—might have been a first cousin to Miss Miniver, she had so many Miniver traits; there was a preoccupied girl whose name Ann Veronica never learned, but who worked remarkably well; and Miss Garvice, who began by attracting her very greatly—she moved so beautifully—and ended by giving her the impression that moving beautifully was the beginning and end of her being.

Part 2

The next few weeks were a time of the very liveliest thought and growth for Ann Veronica. The crowding impressions of the previous weeks seemed to run together directly her mind left the chaotic search for employment and came into touch again with a coherent and systematic development of ideas. The advanced work at the Central Imperial College was in the closest touch with living interests and current

controversies; it drew its illustrations and material from Russell's two great researches—upon the relation of the brachiopods to the echinodermata, and upon the secondary and tertiary mammalian and pseudo-mammalian factors in the free larval forms of various marine organisms. Moreover, a vigorous fire of mutual criticism was going on now between the Imperial College and the Cambridge Mendelians and echoed in the lectures. From beginning to end it was first-hand stuff.

But the influence of the science radiated far beyond its own special field—beyond those beautiful but highly technical problems with which we do not propose for a moment to trouble the naturally terrified reader. Biology is an extraordinarily digestive science. It throws out a number of broad experimental generalizations, and then sets out to bring into harmony or relation with these an infinitely multifarious collection of phenomena. The little streaks upon the germinating area of an egg, the nervous movements of an impatient horse, the trick of a calculating boy, the senses of a fish, the fungus at the root of a garden flower, and the slime upon a sea-wet rock—ten thousand such things bear their witness and are illuminated. And not only did these tentacular generalizations gather all the facts of natural history and comparative anatomy together, but they seemed always stretching out further and further into a world of interests that lay altogether outside their legitimate bounds.

It came to Ann Veronica one night after a long talk with Miss Miniver, as a sudden remarkable thing, as a grotesque, novel aspect, that this slowly elaborating biological scheme had something more than an academic interest for herself. And not only so, but that it was after all, a more systematic and particular method of examining just the same questions that underlay the discussions of the Fabian Society, the talk of the West Central Arts Club, the chatter of the studios and the deep, the bottomless discussions of the simple-life homes. It was the same Bios whose nature and drift and ways and methods and aspects engaged them all. And she, she in her own person too, was this eternal Bios, beginning again its recurrent journey to selection and multiplication and failure or survival.

But this was but a momentary gleam of personal application, and at this time she followed it up no further.

And now Ann Veronica's evenings were also becoming very busy. She pursued her interest in the Socialist movement and in the Suffragist agitation in the company of Miss Miniver. They went to various central and local Fabian gatherings, and to a number of suffrage meetings. Teddy Widgett hovered on the fringe of all these gatherings, blinking at Ann Veronica and occasionally making a wildly friendly dash at her, and carrying her and Miss Miniver off to drink cocoa with a choice diversity of

other youthful and congenial Fabians after the meetings. Then Mr. Manning loomed up ever and again into her world, full of a futile solicitude, and almost always declaring she was splendid, splendid, and wishing he could talk things out with her. Teas he contributed to the commissariat of Ann Veronica's campaign—quite a number of teas. He would get her to come to tea with him, usually in a pleasant tea-room over a fruit-shop in Tottenham Court Road, and he would discuss his own point of view and hint at a thousand devotions were she but to command him. And he would express various artistic sensibilities and aesthetic appreciations in carefully punctuated sentences and a large, clear voice. At Christmas he gave her a set of a small edition of Meredith's novels, very prettily bound in flexible leather, being guided in the choice of an author, as he intimated, rather by her preferences than his own.

There was something markedly and deliberately liberal-minded in his manner in all their encounters. He conveyed not only his sense of the extreme want of correctitude in their unsanctioned meetings, but also that, so far as he was concerned, this irregularity mattered not at all, that he had flung—and kept on flinging—such considerations to the wind.

And, in addition, she was now seeing and talking to Ramage almost weekly, on a theory which she took very gravely, that they were exceptionally friends. He would ask her to come to dinner with him in some little Italian or semi-Bohemian restaurant in the district toward Soho, or in one of the more stylish and magnificent establishments about Piccadilly Circus, and for the most part she did not care to refuse. Nor, indeed, did she want to refuse. These dinners, from their lavish display of ambiguous hors d'oeuvre to their skimpy ices in dishes of frilled paper, with their Chianti flasks and Parmesan dishes and their polyglot waiters and polyglot clientele, were very funny and bright; and she really liked Ramage, and valued his help and advice. It was interesting to see how different and characteristic his mode of approach was to all sorts of questions that interested her, and it was amusing to discover this other side to the life of a Morningside Park inhabitant. She had thought that all Morningside Park householders came home before seven at the latest, as her father usually did. Ramage talked always about women or some woman's concern, and very much about Ann Veronica's own outlook upon life. He was always drawing contrasts between a woman's lot and a man's, and treating her as a wonderful new departure in this comparison. Ann Veronica liked their relationship all the more because it was an unusual one.

After these dinners they would have a walk, usually to the Thames Embankment to see the two sweeps of river on either side of Waterloo Bridge; and then they would part at Westminster Bridge, perhaps, and he would go on to Waterloo. Once he suggested

they should go to a music-hall and see a wonderful new dancer, but Ann Veronica did not feel she cared to see a new dancer. So, instead, they talked of dancing and what it might mean in a human life. Ann Veronica thought it was a spontaneous release of energy expressive of well-being, but Ramage thought that by dancing, men, and such birds and animals as dance, come to feel and think of their bodies.

This intercourse, which had been planned to warm Ann Veronica to a familiar affection with Ramage, was certainly warming Ramage to a constantly deepening interest in Ann Veronica. He felt that he was getting on with her very slowly indeed, but he did not see how he could get on faster. He had, he felt, to create certain ideas and vivify certain curiosities and feelings in her. Until that was done a certain experience of life assured him that a girl is a locked coldness against a man's approach. She had all the fascination of being absolutely perplexing in this respect. On the one hand, she seemed to think plainly and simply, and would talk serenely and freely about topics that most women have been trained either to avoid or conceal; and on the other she was unconscious, or else she had an air of being unconscious—that was the riddle—to all sorts of personal applications that almost any girl or woman, one might have thought, would have made. He was always doing his best to call her attention to the fact that he was a man of spirit and quality and experience, and she a young and beautiful woman, and that all sorts of constructions upon their relationship were possible, trusting her to go on from that to the idea that all sorts of relationships were possible. She responded with an unfaltering appearance of insensibility, and never as a young and beautiful woman conscious of sex; always in the character of an intelligent girl student.

His perception of her personal beauty deepened and quickened with each encounter. Every now and then her general presence became radiantly dazzling in his eyes; she would appear in the street coming toward him, a surprise, so fine and smiling and welcoming was she, so expanded and illuminated and living, in contrast with his mere expectation. Or he would find something—a wave in her hair, a little line in the contour of her brow or neck, that made an exquisite discovery.

He was beginning to think about her inordinately. He would sit in his inner office and compose conversations with her, penetrating, illuminating, and nearly conclusive—conversations that never proved to be of the slightest use at all with her when he met her face to face. And he began also at times to wake at night and think about her.

He thought of her and himself, and no longer in that vein of incidental adventure in which he had begun. He thought, too, of the fretful invalid who lay in the next room to his, whose money had created his business and made his position in the world.

“I’ve had most of the things I wanted,” said Ramage, in the stillness of the night.

Part 3

For a time Ann Veronica’s family had desisted from direct offers of a free pardon; they were evidently waiting for her resources to come to an end. Neither father, aunt, nor brothers made a sign, and then one afternoon in early February her aunt came up in a state between expostulation and dignified resentment, but obviously very anxious for Ann Veronica’s welfare. “I had a dream in the night,” she said. “I saw you in a sort of sloping, slippery place, holding on by your hands and slipping. You seemed to me to be slipping and slipping, and your face was white. It was really most vivid, most vivid! You seemed to be slipping and just going to tumble and holding on. It made me wake up, and there I lay thinking of you, spending your nights up here all alone, and no one to look after you. I wondered what you could be doing and what might be happening to you. I said to myself at once, ‘Either this is a coincidence or the caper sauce.’ But I made sure it was you. I felt I MUST do something anyhow, and up I came just as soon as I could to see you.”

She had spoken rather rapidly. “I can’t help saying it,” she said, with the quality of her voice altering, “but I do NOT think it is right for an unprotected girl to be in London alone as you are.”

“But I’m quite equal to taking care of myself, aunt.”

“It must be most uncomfortable here. It is most uncomfortable for every one concerned.”

She spoke with a certain asperity. She felt that Ann Veronica had duped her in that dream, and now that she had come up to London she might as well speak her mind.

“No Christmas dinner,” she said, “or anything nice! One doesn’t even know what you are doing.”

“I’m going on working for my degree.”

“Why couldn’t you do that at home?”

“I’m working at the Imperial College. You see, aunt, it’s the only possible way for me to get a good degree in my subjects, and father won’t hear of it. There’d only be endless

rows if I was at home. And how could I come home—when he locks me in rooms and all that?"

"I do wish this wasn't going on," said Miss Stanley, after a pause. "I do wish you and your father could come to some agreement."

Ann Veronica responded with conviction: "I wish so, too."

"Can't we arrange something? Can't we make a sort of treaty?"

"He wouldn't keep it. He would get very cross one evening and no one would dare to remind him of it."

"How can you say such things?"

"But he would!"

"Still, it isn't your place to say so."

"It prevents a treaty."

"Couldn't *I* make a treaty?"

Ann Veronica thought, and could not see any possible treaty that would leave it open for her to have quasi-surreptitious dinners with Ramage or go on walking round the London squares discussing Socialism with Miss Miniver toward the small hours. She had tasted freedom now, and so far she had not felt the need of protection. Still, there certainly was something in the idea of a treaty.

"I don't see at all how you can be managing," said Miss Stanley, and Ann Veronica hastened to reply, "I do on very little." Her mind went back to that treaty.

"And aren't there fees to pay at the Imperial College?" her aunt was saying—a disagreeable question.

"There are a few fees."

"Then how have you managed?"

"Bother!" said Ann Veronica to herself, and tried not to look guilty. "I was able to borrow the money."

"Borrow the money! But who lent you the money?"

"A friend," said Ann Veronica.

She felt herself getting into a corner. She sought hastily in her mind for a plausible answer to an obvious question that didn't come. Her aunt went off at a tangent. "But my dear Ann Veronica, you will be getting into debt!"

Ann Veronica at once, and with a feeling of immense relief, took refuge in her dignity. "I think, aunt," she said, "you might trust to my self-respect to keep me out of that."

For the moment her aunt could not think of any reply to this counterstroke, and Ann Veronica followed up her advantage by a sudden inquiry about her abandoned boots.

But in the train going home her aunt reasoned it out.

"If she is borrowing money," said Miss Stanley, "she MUST be getting into debt. It's all nonsense...."

Part 4

It was by imperceptible degrees that Capes became important in Ann Veronica's thoughts. But then he began to take steps, and, at last, strides to something more and more like predominance. She began by being interested in his demonstrations and his biological theory, then she was attracted by his character, and then, in a manner, she fell in love with his mind.

One day they were at tea in the laboratory and a discussion sprang up about the question of women's suffrage. The movement was then in its earlier militant phases, and one of the women only, Miss Garvice, opposed it, though Ann Veronica was disposed to be lukewarm. But a man's opposition always inclined her to the suffrage side; she had a curious feeling of loyalty in seeing the more aggressive women through. Capes was irritatingly judicial in the matter, neither absurdly against, in which case one might have smashed him, or hopelessly undecided, but tepidly sceptical. Miss Klegg and the youngest girl made a vigorous attack on Miss Garvice, who had said she thought women lost something infinitely precious by mingling in the conflicts of life. The discussion wandered, and was punctuated with bread and butter. Capes was inclined to support Miss Klegg until Miss Garvice cornered him by quoting him against himself, and citing a recent paper in the Nineteenth Century, in which, following Atkinson, he had made a vigorous and damaging attack on Lester Ward's case for the primitive matriarchate and the predominant importance of the female throughout the animal kingdom.

Ann Veronica was not aware of this literary side of her teacher; she had a little tinge of annoyance at Miss Garvice's advantage. Afterwards she hunted up the article in question, and it seemed to her quite delightfully written and argued. Capes had the gift of easy, unaffected writing, coupled with very clear and logical thinking, and to follow his written thought gave her the sensation of cutting things with a perfectly new, perfectly sharp knife. She found herself anxious to read more of him, and the next Wednesday she went to the British Museum and hunted first among the half-crown magazines for his essays and then through various scientific quarterlies for his research papers. The ordinary research paper, when it is not extravagant theorizing, is apt to be rather sawdusty in texture, and Ann Veronica was delighted to find the same easy and confident luminosity that distinguished his work for the general reader. She returned to these latter, and at the back of her mind, as she looked them over again, was a very distinct resolve to quote them after the manner of Miss Garvice at the very first opportunity.

When she got home to her lodgings that evening she reflected with something like surprise upon her half-day's employment, and decided that it showed nothing more nor less than that Capes was a really very interesting person indeed.

And then she fell into a musing about Capes. She wondered why he was so distinctive, so unlike other men, and it never occurred to her for some time that this might be because she was falling in love with him.

Part 5

Yet Ann Veronica was thinking a very great deal about love. A dozen shynesses and intellectual barriers were being outflanked or broken down in her mind. All the influences about her worked with her own predisposition and against all the traditions of her home and upbringing to deal with the facts of life in an unabashed manner. Ramage, by a hundred skilful hints had led her to realize that the problem of her own life was inseparably associated with, and indeed only one special case of, the problems of any woman's life, and that the problem of a woman's life is love.

"A young man comes into life asking how best he may place himself," Ramage had said; "a woman comes into life thinking instinctively how best she may give herself."

She noted that as a good saying, and it germinated and spread tentacles of explanation through her brain. The biological laboratory, perpetually viewing life as

pairing and breeding and selection, and again pairing and breeding, seemed only a translated generalization of that assertion. And all the talk of the Miniver people and the Widgett people seemed always to be like a ship in adverse weather on the lee shore of love. “For seven years,” said Ann Veronica, “I have been trying to keep myself from thinking about love....

“I have been training myself to look askance at beautiful things.”

She gave herself permission now to look at this squarely. She made herself a private declaration of liberty. “This is mere nonsense, mere tongue-tied fear!” she said. “This is the slavery of the veiled life. I might as well be at Morningside Park. This business of love is the supreme affair in life, it is the woman’s one event and crisis that makes up for all her other restrictions, and I cower—as we all cower—with a blushing and paralyzed mind until it overtakes me!...

“I’ll be hanged if I do.”

But she could not talk freely about love, she found, for all that manumission.

Ramage seemed always fencing about the forbidden topic, probing for openings, and she wondered why she did not give him them. But something instinctive prevented that, and with the finest resolve not to be “silly” and prudish she found that whenever he became at all bold in this matter she became severely scientific and impersonal, almost entomological indeed, in her method; she killed every remark as he made it and pinned it out for examination. In the biological laboratory that was their invincible tone. But she disapproved more and more of her own mental austerity. Here was an experienced man of the world, her friend, who evidently took a great interest in this supreme topic and was willing to give her the benefit of his experiences! Why should not she be at her ease with him? Why should not she know things? It is hard enough anyhow for a human being to learn, she decided, but it is a dozen times more difficult than it need be because of all this locking of the lips and thoughts.

She contrived to break down the barriers of shyness at last in one direction, and talked one night of love and the facts of love with Miss Miniver.

But Miss Miniver was highly unsatisfactory. She repeated phrases of Mrs. Goopes’s: “Advanced people,” she said, with an air of great elucidation, “tend to GENERALIZE love. ‘He prayeth best who loveth best—all things both great and small.’ For my own part I go about loving.”

“Yes, but men;” said Ann Veronica, plunging; “don’t you want the love of men?”

For some seconds they remained silent, both shocked by this question.

Miss Miniver looked over her glasses at her friend almost balefully. “NO!” she said, at last, with something in her voice that reminded Ann Veronica of a sprung tennis-racket.

“I’ve been through all that,” she went on, after a pause.

She spoke slowly. “I have never yet met a man whose intellect I could respect.”

Ann Veronica looked at her thoughtfully for a moment, and decided to persist on principle.

“But if you had?” she said.

“I can’t imagine it,” said Miss Miniver. “And think, think”—her voice sank—“of the horrible coarseness!”

“What coarseness?” said Ann Veronica.

“My dear Vee!” Her voice became very low. “Don’t you know?”

“Oh! I know—”

“Well—” Her face was an unaccustomed pink.

Ann Veronica ignored her friend’s confusion.

“Don’t we all rather humbug about the coarseness? All we women, I mean,” said she. She decided to go on, after a momentary halt. “We pretend bodies are ugly. Really they are the most beautiful things in the world. We pretend we never think of everything that makes us what we are.”

“No,” cried Miss Miniver, almost vehemently. “You are wrong! I did not think you thought such things. Bodies! Bodies! Horrible things! We are souls. Love lives on a higher plane. We are not animals. If ever I did meet a man I could love, I should love him”—her voice dropped again—“platonically.”

She made her glasses glint. “Absolutely platonically,” she said.

“Soul to soul.”

She turned her face to the fire, gripped her hands upon her elbows, and drew her thin shoulders together in a shrug. “Ugh!” she said.

Ann Veronica watched her and wondered about her.

“We do not want the men,” said Miss Miniver; “we do not want them, with their sneers and loud laughter. Empty, silly, coarse brutes. Brutes! They are the brute still with us!

Science some day may teach us a way to do without them. It is only the women matter. It is not every sort of creature needs—these males. Some have no males."

"There's green-fly," admitted Ann Veronica. "And even then—"

The conversation hung for a thoughtful moment.

Ann Veronica readjusted her chin on her hand. "I wonder which of us is right," she said. "I haven't a scrap—of this sort of aversion."

"Tolstoy is so good about this," said Miss Miniver, regardless of her friend's attitude. "He sees through it all. The Higher Life and the Lower. He sees men all defiled by coarse thoughts, coarse ways of living cruelties. Simply because they are hardened by—by bestiality, and poisoned by the juices of meat slain in anger and fermented drinks—fancy! drinks that have been swarmed in by thousands and thousands of horrible little bacteria!"

"It's yeast," said Ann Veronica—"a vegetable."

"It's all the same," said Miss Miniver. "And then they are swollen up and inflamed and drunken with matter. They are blinded to all fine and subtle things—they look at life with bloodshot eyes and dilated nostrils. They are arbitrary and unjust and dogmatic and brutish and lustful."

"But do you really think men's minds are altered by the food they eat?"

"I know it," said Miss Miniver. "Experte credo. When I am leading a true life, a pure and simple life free of all stimulants and excitements, I think—I think—oh! with pellucid clearness; but if I so much as take a mouthful of meat—or anything—the mirror is all blurred."

Part 6

Then, arising she knew not how, like a new-born appetite, came a craving in Ann Veronica for the sight and sound of beauty.

It was as if her aesthetic sense had become inflamed. Her mind turned and accused itself of having been cold and hard. She began to look for beauty and discover it in unexpected aspects and places. Hitherto she had seen it chiefly in pictures and other

works of art, incidentally, and as a thing taken out of life. Now the sense of beauty was spreading to a multitude of hitherto unsuspected aspects of the world about her.

The thought of beauty became an obsession. It interwove with her biological work. She found herself asking more and more curiously, “Why, on the principle of the survival of the fittest, have I any sense of beauty at all?” That enabled her to go on thinking about beauty when it seemed to her right that she should be thinking about biology.

She was very greatly exercised by the two systems of values—the two series of explanations that her comparative anatomy on the one hand and her sense of beauty on the other, set going in her thoughts. She could not make up her mind which was the finer, more elemental thing, which gave its values to the other. Was it that the struggle of things to survive produced as a sort of necessary by-product these intense preferences and appreciations, or was it that some mystical outer thing, some great force, drove life beautyward, even in spite of expediency, regardless of survival value and all the manifest discretions of life? She went to Capes with that riddle and put it to him very carefully and clearly, and he talked well—he always talked at some length when she took a difficulty to him—and sent her to a various literature upon the markings of butterflies, the incomprehensible elaboration and splendor of birds of Paradise and humming-birds’ plumes, the patterning of tigers, and a leopard’s spots. He was interesting and inconclusive, and the original papers to which he referred her discursive were at best only suggestive. Afterward, one afternoon, he hovered about her, and came and sat beside her and talked of beauty and the riddle of beauty for some time. He displayed a quite unprofessional vein of mysticism in the matter. He contrasted with Russell, whose intellectual methods were, so to speak, sceptically dogmatic. Their talk drifted to the beauty of music, and they took that up again at tea-time.

But as the students sat about Miss Garvice’s tea-pot and drank tea or smoked cigarettes, the talk got away from Capes. The Scotchman informed Ann Veronica that your view of beauty necessarily depended on your metaphysical premises, and the young man with the Russell-like hair became anxious to distinguish himself by telling the Japanese student that Western art was symmetrical and Eastern art asymmetrical, and that among the higher organisms the tendency was toward an external symmetry veiling an internal want of balance. Ann Veronica decided she would have to go on with Capes another day, and, looking up, discovered him sitting on a stool with his hands in his pockets and his head a little on one side, regarding her with a thoughtful expression. She met his eye for a moment in curious surprise.

He turned his eyes and stared at Miss Garvice like one who wakes from a reverie, and then got up and strolled down the laboratory toward his refuge, the preparation-room.

Part 7

Then one day a little thing happened that clothed itself in significance.

She had been working upon a ribbon of microtome sections of the developing salamander, and he came to see what she had made of them. She stood up and he sat down at the microscope, and for a time he was busy scrutinizing one section after another. She looked down at him and saw that the sunlight was gleaming from his cheeks, and that all over his cheeks was a fine golden down of delicate hairs. And at the sight something leaped within her.

Something changed for her.

She became aware of his presence as she had never been aware of any human being in her life before. She became aware of the modelling of his ear, of the muscles of his neck and the textures of the hair that came off his brow, the soft minute curve of eyelid that she could just see beyond his brow; she perceived all these familiar objects as though they were acutely beautiful things. They WERE, she realized, acutely beautiful things. Her sense followed the shoulders under his coat, down to where his flexible, sensitive-looking hand rested lightly upon the table. She felt him as something solid and strong and trustworthy beyond measure. The perception of him flooded her being.

He got up. “Here’s something rather good,” he said, and with a start and an effort she took his place at the microscope, while he stood beside her and almost leaning over her.

She found she was trembling at his nearness and full of a thrilling dread that he might touch her. She pulled herself together and put her eye to the eye-piece.

“You see the pointer?” he asked.

“I see the pointer,” she said.

“It’s like this,” he said, and dragged a stool beside her and sat down with his elbow four inches from hers and made a sketch. Then he got up and left her.

She had a feeling at his departure as of an immense cavity, of something enormously gone; she could not tell whether it was infinite regret or infinite relief....

But now Ann Veronica knew what was the matter with her.

Part 8

And as she sat on her bed that night, musing and half-undressed, she began to run one hand down her arm and scrutinize the soft flow of muscle under her skin. She thought of the marvellous beauty of skin, and all the delightfulness of living texture. Oh the back of her arm she found the faintest down of hair in the world. "Etherialized monkey," she said. She held out her arm straight before her, and turned her hand this way and that.

"Why should one pretend?" she whispered. "Why should one pretend?

"Think of all the beauty in the world that is covered up and overlaid."

She glanced shyly at the mirror above her dressing-table, and then about her at the furniture, as though it might penetrate to the thoughts that peeped in her mind.

"I wonder," said Ann Veronica at last, "if I am beautiful? I wonder if I shall ever shine like a light, like a translucent goddess?—

"I wonder—

"I suppose girls and women have prayed for this, have come to this—In Babylon, in Nineveh.

"Why shouldn't one face the facts of one's self?"

She stood up. She posed herself before her mirror and surveyed herself with gravely thoughtful, gravely critical, and yet admiring eyes. "And, after all, I am just one common person!"

She watched the throb of the arteries in the stem of her neck, and put her hand at last gently and almost timidly to where her heart beat beneath her breast.

Part 9

The realization that she was in love flooded Ann Veronica's mind, and altered the quality of all its topics.

She began to think persistently of Capes, and it seemed to her now that for some weeks at least she must have been thinking persistently of him unawares. She was surprised to find how stored her mind was with impressions and memories of him, how vividly she remembered his gestures and little things that he had said. It occurred to her that it was absurd and wrong to be so continuously thinking of one engrossing topic, and she made a strenuous effort to force her mind to other questions.

But it was extraordinary what seemingly irrelevant things could restore her to the thought of Capes again. And when she went to sleep, then always Capes became the novel and wonderful guest of her dreams.

For a time it really seemed all-sufficient to her that she should love. That Capes should love her seemed beyond the compass of her imagination. Indeed, she did not want to think of him as loving her. She wanted to think of him as her beloved person, to be near him and watch him, to have him going about, doing this and that, saying this and that, unconscious of her, while she too remained unconscious of herself. To think of him as loving her would make all that different. Then he would turn his face to her, and she would have to think of herself in his eyes. She would become defensive—what she did would be the thing that mattered. He would require things of her, and she would be passionately concerned to meet his requirements. Loving was better than that. Loving was self-forgetfulness, pure delighting in another human being. She felt that with Capes near to her she would be content always to go on loving.

She went next day to the schools, and her world seemed all made of happiness just worked up roughly into shapes and occasions and duties. She found she could do her microscope work all the better for being in love. She winced when first she heard the preparation-room door open and Capes came down the laboratory; but when at last he reached her she was self-possessed. She put a stool for him at a little distance from her own, and after he had seen the day's work he hesitated, and then plunged into a resumption of their discussion about beauty.

"I think," he said, "I was a little too mystical about beauty the other day."

"I like the mystical way," she said.

“Our business here is the right way. I’ve been thinking, you know—I’m not sure that primarily the perception of beauty isn’t just intensity of feeling free from pain; intensity of perception without any tissue destruction.”

“I like the mystical way better,” said Ann Veronica, and thought.

“A number of beautiful things are not intense.”

“But delicacy, for example, may be intensely perceived.”

“But why is one face beautiful and another not?” objected Ann Veronica; “on your theory any two faces side by side in the sunlight ought to be equally beautiful. One must get them with exactly the same intensity.”

He did not agree with that. “I don’t mean simply intensity of sensation. I said intensity of perception. You may perceive harmony, proportion, rhythm, intensely. They are things faint and slight in themselves, as physical facts, but they are like the detonator of a bomb: they let loose the explosive. There’s the internal factor as well as the external.... I don’t know if I express myself clearly. I mean that the point is that vividness of perception is the essential factor of beauty; but, of course, vividness may be created by a whisper.”

“That brings us back,” said Ann Veronica, “to the mystery. Why should some things and not others open the deeps?”

“Well, that might, after all, be an outcome of selection—like the preference for blue flowers, which are not nearly so bright as yellow, of some insects.”

“That doesn’t explain sunsets.”

“Not quite so easily as it explains an insect alighting on colored paper. But perhaps if people didn’t like clear, bright, healthy eyes—which is biologically understandable—they couldn’t like precious stones. One thing may be a necessary collateral of the others. And, after all, a fine clear sky of bright colors is the signal to come out of hiding and rejoice and go on with life.”

“H’m!” said Ann Veronica, and shook her head.

Capes smiled cheerfully with his eyes meeting hers. “I throw it out in passing,” he said. “What I am after is that beauty isn’t a special inserted sort of thing; that’s my idea. It’s just life, pure life, life nascent, running clear and strong.”

He stood up to go on to the next student.

“There’s morbid beauty,” said Ann Veronica.

“I wonder if there is!” said Capes, and paused, and then bent down over the boy who wore his hair like Russell.

Ann Veronica surveyed his sloping back for a moment, and then drew her microscope toward her. Then for a time she sat very still. She felt that she had passed a difficult corner, and that now she could go on talking with him again, just as she had been used to do before she understood what was the matter with her....

She had one idea, she found, very clear in her mind—that she would get a Research Scholarship, and so contrive another year in the laboratory.

“Now I see what everything means,” said Ann Veronica to herself; and it really felt for some days as though the secret of the universe, that had been wrapped and hidden from her so obstinately, was at last altogether displayed.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

DISCORDS

Part 1

One afternoon, soon after Ann Veronica’s great discovery, a telegram came into the laboratory for her. It ran:

Bored	*and*	*nothing*	*to*	*do*
will	*you*	*dine*	*with*	*me*
to-night	*somewhere*	*and*	*talk*	*I*
shall	*be*	*grateful*	*Ramage*	

———————————————————————————————————-

Ann Veronica was rather pleased by this. She had not seen Ramage for ten or eleven days, and she was quite ready for a gossip with him. And now her mind was so full of the thought that she was in love—in love!—that marvellous state! that I really believe she had some dim idea of talking to him about it. At any rate, it would be good to hear him saying the sort of things he did—perhaps now she would grasp them better—with this world-shaking secret brandishing itself about inside her head within a yard of him.

She was sorry to find Ramage a little disposed to be melancholy.

“I have made over seven hundred pounds in the last week,” he said.

“That’s exhilarating,” said Ann Veronica.

“Not a bit of it,” he said; “it’s only a score in a game.”

“It’s a score you can buy all sorts of things with.”

“Nothing that one wants.”

He turned to the waiter, who held a wine-card. “Nothing can cheer me,” he said, “except champagne.” He meditated. “This,” he said, and then: “No! Is this sweeter? Very well.”

“Everything goes well with me,” he said, folding his arms under him and regarding Ann Veronica with the slightly projecting eyes wide open. “And I’m not happy. I believe I’m in love.”

He leaned back for his soup.

Presently he resumed: “I believe I must be in love.”

“You can’t be that,” said Ann Veronica, wisely.

“How do you know?”

“Well, it isn’t exactly a depressing state, is it?”

“YOU don’t know.”

“One has theories,” said Ann Veronica, radiantly.

“Oh, theories! Being in love is a fact.”

“It ought to make one happy.”

“It’s an unrest—a longing—What’s that?” The waiter had intervened. “Parmesan—take it away!”

He glanced at Ann Veronica’s face, and it seemed to him that she really was exceptionally radiant. He wondered why she thought love made people happy, and began to talk of the smilax and pinks that adorned the table. He filled her glass with champagne. “You MUST,” he said, “because of my depression.”

They were eating quails when they returned to the topic of love. “What made you think” he said, abruptly, with the gleam of avidity in his face, “that love makes people happy?”

“I know it must.”

“But how?”

He was, she thought, a little too insistent. “Women know these things by instinct,” she answered.

“I wonder,” he said, “if women do know things by instinct? I have my doubts about feminine instinct. It’s one of our conventional superstitions. A woman is supposed to know when a man is in love with her. Do you think she does?”

Ann Veronica picked among her salad with a judicial expression of face. “I think she would,” she decided.

“Ah!” said Ramage, impressively.

Ann Veronica looked up at him and found him regarding her with eyes that were almost woebegone, and into which, indeed, he was trying to throw much more expression than they could carry. There was a little pause between them, full for Ann Veronica of rapid elusive suspicions and intimations.

“Perhaps one talks nonsense about a woman’s instinct,” she said. “It’s a way of avoiding explanations. And girls and women, perhaps, are different. I don’t know. I don’t suppose a girl can tell if a man is in love with her or not in love with her.” Her mind went off to Capes. Her thoughts took words for themselves. “She can’t. I suppose it depends on her own state of mind. If one wants a thing very much, perhaps one is inclined to think one can’t have it. I suppose if one were to love some one, one would feel doubtful. And if one were to love some one very much, it’s just so that one would be blindest, just when one wanted most to see.”

She stopped abruptly, afraid that Ramage might be able to infer Capes from the things she had said, and indeed his face was very eager.

“Yes?” he said.

Ann Veronica blushed. “That’s all,” she said “I’m afraid I’m a little confused about these things.”

Ramage looked at her, and then fell into deep reflection as the waiter came to paragraph their talk again.

“Have you ever been to the opera, Ann Veronica?” said Ramage.

“Once or twice.”

“Shall we go now?”

“I think I would like to listen to music. What is there?”

“Tristan.”

“I’ve never heard Tristan and Isolde.”

“That settles it. We’ll go. There’s sure to be a place somewhere.”

“It’s rather jolly of you,” said Ann Veronica.

“It’s jolly of you to come,” said Ramage.

So presently they got into a hansom together, and Ann Veronica sat back feeling very luxurious and pleasant, and looked at the light and stir and misty glitter of the street traffic from under slightly drooping eyelids, while Ramage sat closer to her than he need have done, and glanced ever and again at her face, and made to speak and said nothing. And when they got to Covent Garden Ramage secured one of the little upper boxes, and they came into it as the overture began.

Ann Veronica took off her jacket and sat down in the corner chair, and leaned forward to look into the great hazy warm brown cavity of the house, and Ramage placed his chair to sit beside her and near her, facing the stage. The music took hold of her slowly as her eyes wandered from the indistinct still ranks of the audience to the little busy orchestra with its quivering violins, its methodical movements of brown and silver instruments, its brightly lit scores and shaded lights. She had never been to the opera before except as one of a congested mass of people in the cheaper seats, and with backs and heads and women’s hats for the frame of the spectacle; there was by contrast a fine large sense of space and ease in her present position. The curtain rose out of the concluding bars of the overture and revealed Isolde on the prow of the barbaric ship. The voice of the young seaman came floating down from the masthead, and the story of the immortal lovers had begun. She knew the story only imperfectly,

and followed it now with a passionate and deepening interest. The splendid voices sang on from phase to phase of love's unfolding, the ship drove across the sea to the beating rhythm of the rowers. The lovers broke into passionate knowledge of themselves and each other, and then, a jarring intervention, came King Mark amidst the shouts of the sailormen, and stood beside them.

The curtain came festooning slowly down, the music ceased, the lights in the auditorium glowed out, and Ann Veronica woke out of her confused dream of involuntary and commanding love in a glory of sound and colors to discover that Ramage was sitting close beside her with one hand resting lightly on her waist. She made a quick movement, and the hand fell away.

"By God! Ann Veronica," he said, sighing deeply. "This stirs one."

She sat quite still looking at him.

"I wish you and I had drunk that love potion," he said.

She found no ready reply to that, and he went on: "This music is the food of love. It makes me desire life beyond measure. Life! Life and love! It makes me want to be always young, always strong, always devoting my life—and dying splendidly."

"It is very beautiful," said Ann Veronica in a low tone.

They said no more for a moment, and each was now acutely aware of the other. Ann Veronica was excited and puzzled, with a sense of a strange and disconcerting new light breaking over her relations with Ramage. She had never thought of him at all in that way before. It did not shock her; it amazed her, interested her beyond measure. But also this must not go on. She felt he was going to say something more—something still more personal and intimate. She was curious, and at the same time clearly resolved she must not hear it. She felt she must get him talking upon some impersonal theme at any cost. She snatched about in her mind. "What is the exact force of a motif?" she asked at random. "Before I heard much Wagnerian music I heard enthusiastic descriptions of it from a mistress I didn't like at school. She gave me an impression of a sort of patched quilt; little bits of patterned stuff coming up again and again."

She stopped with an air of interrogation.

Ramage looked at her for a long and discriminating interval without speaking. He seemed to be hesitating between two courses of action. "I don't know much about the technique of music," he said at last, with his eyes upon her. "It's a matter of feeling with me."

He contradicted himself by plunging into an exposition of motifs.

By a tacit agreement they ignored the significant thing between them, ignored the slipping away of the ground on which they had stood together hitherto....

All through the love music of the second act, until the hunting horns of Mark break in upon the dream, Ann Veronica's consciousness was flooded with the perception of a man close beside her, preparing some new thing to say to her, preparing, perhaps, to touch her, stretching hungry invisible tentacles about her. She tried to think what she should do in this eventuality or that. Her mind had been and was full of the thought of Capes, a huge generalized Capes-lover. And in some incomprehensible way, Ramage was confused with Capes; she had a grotesque disposition to persuade herself that this was really Capes who surrounded her, as it were, with wings of desire. The fact that it was her trusted friend making illicit love to her remained, in spite of all her effort, an insignificant thing in her mind. The music confused and distracted her, and made her struggle against a feeling of intoxication. Her head swam. That was the inconvenience of it; her head was swimming. The music throbbed into the warnings that preceded the king's irruption.

Abruptly he gripped her wrist. "I love you, Ann Veronica. I love you—with all my heart and soul."

She put her face closer to his. She felt the warm nearness of his. "DON'T!" she said, and wrenched her wrist from his retaining hand.

"My God! Ann Veronica," he said, struggling to keep his hold upon her; "my God! Tell me—tell me now—tell me you love me!"

His expression was as it were rapaciously furtive. She answered in whispers, for there was the white arm of a woman in the next box peeping beyond the partition within a yard of him.

"My hand! This isn't the place."

He released her hand and talked in eager undertones against an auditory background of urgency and distress.

"Ann Veronica," he said, "I tell you this is love. I love the soles of your feet. I love your very breath. I have tried not to tell you—tried to be simply your friend. It is no good. I want you. I worship you. I would do anything—I would give anything to make you mine.... Do you hear me? Do you hear what I am saying?... Love!"

He held her arm and abandoned it again at her quick defensive movement. For a long time neither spoke again.

She sat drawn together in her chair in the corner of the box, at a loss what to say or do—afraid, curious, perplexed. It seemed to her that it was her duty to get up and clamor to go home to her room, to protest against his advances as an insult. But she did not in the least want to do that. These sweeping dignities were not within the compass of her will; she remembered she liked Ramage, and owed things to him, and she was interested—she was profoundly interested. He was in love with her! She tried to grasp all the welter of values in the situation simultaneously, and draw some conclusion from their disorder.

He began to talk again in quick undertones that she could not clearly hear.

“I have loved you,” he was saying, “ever since you sat on that gate and talked. I have always loved you. I don’t care what divides us. I don’t care what else there is in the world. I want you beyond measure or reckoning....”

His voice rose and fell amidst the music and the singing of Tristan and King Mark, like a voice heard in a badly connected telephone. She stared at his pleading face.

She turned to the stage, and Tristan was wounded in Kurvenal’s arms, with Isolde at his feet, and King Mark, the incarnation of masculine force and obligation, the masculine creditor of love and beauty, stood over him, and the second climax was ending in wreaths and reek of melodies; and then the curtain was coming down in a series of short rushes, the music had ended, and the people were stirring and breaking out into applause, and the lights of the auditorium were resuming. The lighting-up pierced the obscurity of the box, and Ramage stopped his urgent flow of words abruptly and sat back. This helped to restore Ann Veronica’s self-command.

She turned her eyes to him again, and saw her late friend and pleasant and trusted companion, who had seen fit suddenly to change into a lover, babbling interesting inacceptable things. He looked eager and flushed and troubled. His eyes caught at hers with passionate inquiries. “Tell me,” he said; “speak to me.” She realized it was possible to be sorry for him—acutely sorry for the situation. Of course this thing was absolutely impossible. But she was disturbed, mysteriously disturbed. She remembered abruptly that she was really living upon his money. She leaned forward and addressed him.

“Mr. Ramage,” she said, “please don’t talk like this.”

He made to speak and did not.

“I don’t want you to do it, to go on talking to me. I don’t want to hear you. If I had known that you had meant to talk like this I wouldn’t have come here.”

“But how can I help it? How can I keep silence?”

“Please!” she insisted. “Please not now.”

“I MUST talk with you. I must say what I have to say!”

“But not now—not here.”

“It came,” he said. “I never planned it—And now I have begun—”

She felt acutely that he was entitled to explanations, and as acutely that explanations were impossible that night. She wanted to think.

“Mr. Ramage,” she said, “I can’t—Not now. Will you please—Not now, or I must go.”

He stared at her, trying to guess at the mystery of her thoughts.

“You don’t want to go?”

“No. But I must—I ought—”

“I MUST talk about this. Indeed I must.”

“Not now.”

“But I love you. I love you—unendurably.”

“Then don’t talk to me now. I don’t want you to talk to me now. There is a place—This isn’t the place. You have misunderstood. I can’t explain—”

They regarded one another, each blinded to the other. “Forgive me,” he decided to say at last, and his voice had a little quiver of emotion, and he laid his hand on hers upon her knee. “I am the most foolish of men. I was stupid—stupid and impulsive beyond measure to burst upon you in this way. I—I am a love-sick idiot, and not accountable for my actions. Will you forgive me—if I say no more?”

She looked at him with perplexed, earnest eyes.

“Pretend,” he said, “that all I have said hasn’t been said. And let us go on with our evening. Why not? Imagine I’ve had a fit of hysteria—and that I’ve come round.”

“Yes,” she said, and abruptly she liked him enormously. She felt this was the sensible way out of this oddly sinister situation.

He still watched her and questioned her.

“And let us have a talk about this—some other time. Somewhere, where we can talk without interruption. Will you?”

She thought, and it seemed to him she had never looked so self-disciplined and deliberate and beautiful. “Yes,” she said, “that is what we ought to do.” But now she doubted again of the quality of the armistice they had just made.

He had a wild impulse to shout. “Agreed,” he said with queer exaltation, and his grip tightened on her hand. “And to-night we are friends?”

“We are friends,” said Ann Veronica, and drew her hand quickly away from him.

“To-night we are as we have always been. Except that this music we have been swimming in is divine. While I have been pestering you, have you heard it? At least, you heard the first act. And all the third act is love-sick music. Tristan dying and Isolde coming to crown his death. Wagner had just been in love when he wrote it all. It begins with that queer piccolo solo. Now I shall never hear it but what this evening will come pouring back over me.”

The lights sank, the prelude to the third act was beginning, the music rose and fell in crowded intimations of lovers separated—lovers separated with scars and memories between them, and the curtain went reefing up to display Tristan lying wounded on his couch and the shepherd crouching with his pipe.

Part 2

They had their explanations the next evening, but they were explanations in quite other terms than Ann Veronica had anticipated, quite other and much more startling and illuminating terms. Ramage came for her at her lodgings, and she met him graciously and kindly as a queen who knows she must needs give sorrow to a faithful liege. She was unusually soft and gentle in her manner to him. He was wearing a new silk hat, with a slightly more generous brim than its predecessor, and it suited his type of face, robbed his dark eyes a little of their aggressiveness and gave him a solid and dignified and benevolent air. A faint anticipation of triumph showed in his manner and a subdued excitement.

“We’ll go to a place where we can have a private room,” he said. “Then—then we can talk things out.”

So they went this time to the Rococo, in Germain Street, and up-stairs to a landing upon which stood a bald-headed waiter with whiskers like a French admiral and discretion beyond all limits in his manner. He seemed to have expected them. He ushered them with an amiable flat hand into a minute apartment with a little gas-stove, a silk crimson-covered sofa, and a bright little table, gay with napery and hot-house flowers.

“Odd little room,” said Ann Veronica, dimly apprehending that obtrusive sofa.

“One can talk without undertones, so to speak,” said Ramage. “It’s—private.” He stood looking at the preparations before them with an unusual preoccupation of manner, then roused himself to take her jacket, a little awkwardly, and hand it to the waiter who hung it in the corner of the room. It appeared he had already ordered dinner and wine, and the whiskered waiter waved in his subordinate with the soup forthwith.

“I’m going to talk of indifferent themes,” said Ramage, a little fussily, “until these interruptions of the service are over. Then—then we shall be together.... How did you like Tristan?”

Ann Veronica paused the fraction of a second before her reply came.

“I thought much of it amazingly beautiful.”

“Isn’t it. And to think that man got it all out of the poorest little love-story for a respectable titled lady! Have you read of it?”

“Never.”

“It gives in a nutshell the miracle of art and the imagination. You get this queer irascible musician quite impossibly and unfortunately in love with a wealthy patroness, and then out of his brain comes THIS, a tapestry of glorious music, setting out love to lovers, lovers who love in spite of all that is wise and respectable and right.”

Ann Veronica thought. She did not want to seem to shrink from conversation, but all sorts of odd questions were running through her mind. “I wonder why people in love are so defiant, so careless of other considerations?”

“The very hares grow brave. I suppose because it IS the chief thing in life.” He stopped and said earnestly: “It is the chief thing in life, and everything else goes down before it. Everything, my dear, everything!... But we have got to talk upon indifferent themes until we have done with this blond young gentleman from Bavaria....”

The dinner came to an end at last, and the whiskered waiter presented his bill and evacuated the apartment and closed the door behind him with an almost ostentatious

discretion. Ramage stood up, and suddenly turned the key in the door in an off-hand manner. “Now,” he said, “no one can blunder in upon us. We are alone and we can say and do what we please. We two.” He stood still, looking at her.

Ann Veronica tried to seem absolutely unconcerned. The turning of the key startled her, but she did not see how she could make an objection. She felt she had stepped into a world of unknown usages.

“I have waited for this,” he said, and stood quite still, looking at her until the silence became oppressive.

“Won’t you sit down,” she said, “and tell me what you want to say?” Her voice was flat and faint. Suddenly she had become afraid. She struggled not to be afraid. After all, what could happen?

He was looking at her very hard and earnestly. “Ann Veronica,” he said.

Then before she could say a word to arrest him he was at her side. “Don’t!” she said, weakly, as he had bent down and put one arm about her and seized her hands with his disengaged hand and kissed her—kissed her almost upon her lips. He seemed to do ten things before she could think to do one, to leap upon her and take possession.

Ann Veronica’s universe, which had never been altogether so respectful to her as she could have wished, gave a shout and whirled head over heels. Everything in the world had changed for her. If hate could kill, Ramage would have been killed by a flash of hate. “Mr. Ramage!” she cried, and struggled to her feet.

“My darling!” he said, clasping her resolutely in his arms, “my dearest!”

“Mr. Ramage!” she began, and his mouth sealed hers and his breath was mixed with her breath. Her eye met his four inches away, and his was glaring, immense, and full of resolution, a stupendous monster of an eye.

She shut her lips hard, her jaw hardened, and she set herself to struggle with him. She wrenched her head away from his grip and got her arm between his chest and hers. They began to wrestle fiercely. Each became frightfully aware of the other as a plastic energetic body, of the strong muscles of neck against cheek, of hands gripping shoulder-blade and waist. “How dare you!” she panted, with her world screaming and grimacing insult at her. “How dare you!”

They were both astonished at the other’s strength. Perhaps Ramage was the more astonished. Ann Veronica had been an ardent hockey player and had had a course of jiu-jitsu in the High School. Her defence ceased rapidly to be in any sense ladylike,

and became vigorous and effective; a strand of black hair that had escaped its hairpins came athwart Ramage's eyes, and then the knuckles of a small but very hardly clinched fist had thrust itself with extreme effectiveness and painfulness under his jawbone and ear.

"Let go!" said Ann Veronica, through her teeth, strenuously inflicting agony, and he cried out sharply and let go and receded a pace.

"NOW!" said Ann Veronica. "Why did you dare to do that?"

Part 3

Each of them stared at the other, set in a universe that had changed its system of values with kaleidoscopic completeness. She was flushed, and her eyes were bright and angry; her breath came sobbing, and her hair was all abroad in wandering strands of black. He too was flushed and ruffled; one side of his collar had slipped from its stud and he held a hand to the corner of his jaw.

"You vixen!" said Mr. Ramage, speaking the simplest first thought of his heart.

"You had no right—" panted Ann Veronica.

"Why on earth," he asked, "did you hurt me like that?"

Ann Veronica did her best to think she had not deliberately attempted to cause him pain. She ignored his question.

"I never dreamt!" she said.

"What on earth did you expect me to do, then?" he asked.

Part 4

Interpretation came pouring down upon her almost blindingly; she understood now the room, the waiter, the whole situation. She understood. She leaped to a world of shabby knowledge, of furtive base realizations. She wanted to cry out upon herself for the uttermost fool in existence.

“I thought you wanted to have a talk to me,” she said.

“I wanted to make love to you.

“You knew it,” he added, in her momentary silence.

“You said you were in love with me,” said Ann Veronica; “I wanted to explain—”

“I said I loved and wanted you.” The brutality of his first astonishment was evaporating. “I am in love with you. You know I am in love with you. And then you go—and half throttle me.... I believe you’ve crushed a gland or something. It feels like it.”

“I am sorry,” said Ann Veronica. “What else was I to do?”

For some seconds she stood watching him and both were thinking very quickly. Her state of mind would have seemed altogether discreditable to her grandmother. She ought to have been disposed to faint and scream at all these happenings; she ought to have maintained a front of outraged dignity to veil the sinking of her heart. I would like to have to tell it so. But indeed that is not at all a good description of her attitude. She was an indignant queen, no doubt she was alarmed and disgusted within limits; but she was highly excited, and there was something, some low adventurous strain in her being, some element, subtle at least if base, going about the rioting ways and crowded insurgent meeting-places of her mind declaring that the whole affair was after all—they are the only words that express it—a very great lark indeed. At the bottom of her heart she was not a bit afraid of Ramage. She had unaccountable gleams of sympathy with and liking for him. And the grotesquest fact was that she did not so much loathe, as experience with a quite critical condemnation this strange sensation of being kissed. Never before had any human being kissed her lips....

It was only some hours after that these ambiguous elements evaporated and vanished and loathing came, and she really began to be thoroughly sick and ashamed of the whole disgraceful quarrel and scuffle.

He, for his part, was trying to grasp the series of unexpected reactions that had so wrecked their tete-a-tete. He had meant to be master of his fate that evening and it had escaped him altogether. It had, as it were, blown up at the concussion of his first step. It dawned upon him that he had been abominably used by Ann Veronica.

“Look here,” he said, “I brought you here to make love to you.”

“I didn’t understand—your idea of making love. You had better let me go again.”

“Not yet,” he said. “I do love you. I love you all the more for the streak of sheer devil in you.... You are the most beautiful, the most desirable thing I have ever met in this

world. It was good to kiss you, even at the price. But, by Jove! you are fierce! You are like those Roman women who carry stilettos in their hair."

"I came here to talk reasonably, Mr. Ramage. It is abominable—"

"What is the use of keeping up this note of indignation, Ann Veronica? Here I am! I am your lover, burning for you. I mean to have you! Don't frown me off now. Don't go back into Victorian respectability and pretend you don't know and you can't think and all the rest of it. One comes at last to the step from dreams to reality. This is your moment. No one will ever love you as I love you now. I have been dreaming of your body and you night after night. I have been imaging—"

"Mr. Ramage, I came here—I didn't suppose for one moment you would dare—"

"Nonsense! That is your mistake! You are too intellectual. You want to do everything with your mind. You are afraid of kisses. You are afraid of the warmth in your blood. It's just because all that side of your life hasn't fairly begun."

He made a step toward her.

"Mr. Ramage," she said, sharply, "I have to make it plain to you. I don't think you understand. I don't love you. I don't. I can't love you. I love some one else. It is repulsive. It disgusts me that you should touch me."

He stared in amazement at this new aspect of the situation. "You love some one else?" he repeated.

"I love some one else. I could not dream of loving you."

And then he flashed his whole conception of the relations of men and women upon her in one astonishing question. His hand went with an almost instinctive inquiry to his jawbone again. "Then why the devil," he demanded, "do you let me stand you dinners and the opera—and why do you come to a cabinet particuliar with me?"

He became radiant with anger. "You mean to tell me" he said, "that you have a lover? While I have been keeping you! Yes—keeping you!"

This view of life he hurled at her as if it were an offensive missile. It stunned her. She felt she must fly before it and could no longer do so. She did not think for one moment what interpretation he might put upon the word "lover."

"Mr. Ramage," she said, clinging to her one point, "I want to get out of this horrible little room. It has all been a mistake. I have been stupid and foolish. Will you unlock that door?"

“Never!” he said. “Confound your lover! Look here! Do you really think I am going to run you while he makes love to you? No fear! I never heard of anything so cool. If he wants you, let him get you. You’re mine. I’ve paid for you and helped you, and I’m going to conquer you somehow—if I have to break you to do it. Hitherto you’ve seen only my easy, kindly side. But now confound it! how can you prevent it? I will kiss you.”

“You won’t!” said Ann Veronica; with the clearest note of determination.

He seemed to be about to move toward her. She stepped back quickly, and her hand knocked a wine-glass from the table to smash noisily on the floor. She caught at the idea. “If you come a step nearer to me,” she said, “I will smash every glass on this table.”

“Then, by God!” he said, “you’ll be locked up!”

Ann Veronica was disconcerted for a moment. She had a vision of policemen, reproving magistrates, a crowded court, public disgrace. She saw her aunt in tears, her father white-faced and hard hit. “Don’t come nearer!” she said.

There was a discreet knocking at the door, and Ramage’s face changed.

“No,” she said, under her breath, “you can’t face it.” And she knew that she was safe.

He went to the door. “It’s all right,” he said, reassuringly to the inquirer without.

Ann Veronica glanced at the mirror to discover a flushed and dishevelled disorder. She began at once a hasty readjustment of her hair, while Ramage parleyed with inaudible interrogations. “A glass slipped from the table,” he explained…. “Non. Fas du tout. Non…. Niente…. Bitte!… Oui, dans la note…. Presently. Presently.” That conversation ended and he turned to her again.

“I am going,” she said grimly, with three hairpins in her mouth.

She took her hat from the peg in the corner and began to put it on. He regarded that perennial miracle of pinning with wrathful eyes.

“Look here, Ann Veronica,” he began. “I want a plain word with you about all this. Do you mean to tell me you didn’t understand why I wanted you to come here?”

“Not a bit of it,” said Ann Veronica stoutly.

“You didn’t expect that I should kiss you?”

“How was I to know that a man would—would think it was possible—when there was nothing—no love?”

“How did I know there wasn’t love?”

That silenced her for a moment. “And what on earth,” he said, “do you think the world is made of? Why do you think I have been doing things for you? The abstract pleasure of goodness? Are you one of the members of that great white sisterhood that takes and does not give? The good accepting woman! Do you really suppose a girl is entitled to live at free quarters on any man she meets without giving any return?”

“I thought,” said Ann Veronica, “you were my friend.”

“Friend! What have a man and a girl in common to make them friends? Ask that lover of yours! And even with friends, would you have it all Give on one side and all Take on the other?... Does HE know I keep you?... You won’t have a man’s lips near you, but you’ll eat out of his hand fast enough.”

Ann Veronica was stung to helpless anger.

“Mr. Ramage,” she cried, “you are outrageous! You understand nothing. You are—horrible. Will you let me go out of this room?”

“No,” cried Ramage; “hear me out! I’ll have that satisfaction, anyhow. You women, with your tricks of evasion, you’re a sex of swindlers. You have all the instinctive dexterity of parasites. You make yourself charming for help. You climb by disappointing men. This lover of yours—”

“He doesn’t know!” cried Ann Veronica.

“Well, you know.”

Ann Veronica could have wept with vexation. Indeed, a note of weeping broke her voice for a moment as she burst out, “You know as well as I do that money was a loan!”

“Loan!”

“You yourself called it a loan!”

“Euphuism. We both understood that.”

“You shall have every penny of it back.”

“I’ll frame it—when I get it.”

“I’ll pay you if I have to work at shirt-making at threepence an hour.”

“You’ll never pay me. You think you will. It’s your way of glossing over the ethical position. It’s the sort of way a woman always does gloss over her ethical positions. You’re all dependents—all of you. By instinct. Only you good ones—shirk. You shirk a straightforward and decent return for what you get from us—taking refuge in purity and delicacy and such-like when it comes to payment.”

“Mr. Ramage,” said Ann Veronica, “I want to go—NOW!”

Part 5

But she did not get away just then.

Ramage’s bitterness passed as abruptly as his aggression. “Oh, Ann Veronica!” he cried, “I cannot let you go like this! You don’t understand. You can’t possibly understand!”

He began a confused explanation, a perplexing contradictory apology for his urgency and wrath. He loved Ann Veronica, he said; he was so mad to have her that he defeated himself, and did crude and alarming and senseless things. His vicious abusiveness vanished. He suddenly became eloquent and plausible. He did make her perceive something of the acute, tormenting desire for her that had arisen in him and possessed him. She stood, as it were, directed doorward, with her eyes watching every movement, listening to him, repelled by him and yet dimly understanding.

At any rate he made it very clear that night that there was an ineradicable discord in life, a jarring something that must shatter all her dreams of a way of living for women that would enable them to be free and spacious and friendly with men, and that was the passionate predisposition of men to believe that the love of women can be earned and won and controlled and compelled.

He flung aside all his talk of help and disinterested friendship as though it had never been even a disguise between them, as though from the first it was no more than a fancy dress they had put quite understandingly upon their relationship. He had set out to win her, and she had let him start. And at the thought of that other lover—he was convinced that that beloved person was a lover, and she found herself unable to say a word to explain to him that this other person, the person she loved, did not even know of her love—Ramage grew angry and savage once more, and returned suddenly to gibe and insult. Men do services for the love of women, and the woman who takes must

pay. Such was the simple code that displayed itself in all his thoughts. He left that arid rule clear of the least mist of refinement or delicacy.

That he should pay forty pounds to help this girl who preferred another man was no less in his eyes than a fraud and mockery that made her denial a maddening and outrageous disgrace to him. And this though he was evidently passionately in love with her.

For a while he threatened her. “You have put all your life in my hands,” he declared. “Think of that check you endorsed. There it is—against you. I defy you to explain it away. What do you think people will make of that? What will this lover of yours make of that?”

At intervals Ann Veronica demanded to go, declaring her undying resolve to repay him at any cost, and made short movements doorward.

But at last this ordeal was over, and Ramage opened the door. She emerged with a white face and wide-open eyes upon a little, red-lit landing. She went past three keenly observant and ostentatiously preoccupied waiters down the thick-carpeted staircase and out of the Hotel Rococo, that remarkable laboratory of relationships, past a tall porter in blue and crimson, into a cool, clear night.

Part 6

When Ann Veronica reached her little bed-sitting-room again, every nerve in her body was quivering with shame and self-disgust.

She threw hat and coat on the bed and sat down before the fire.

“And now,” she said, splintering the surviving piece of coal into indignant flame-spurting fragments with one dexterous blow, “what am I to do?

“I’m in a hole!—mess is a better word, expresses it better. I’m in a mess—a nasty mess! a filthy mess! Oh, no end of a mess!

“Do you hear, Ann Veronica?—you’re in a nasty, filthy, unforgivable mess!

“Haven’t I just made a silly mess of things?

“Forty pounds! I haven’t got twenty!”

She got up, stamped with her foot, and then, suddenly remembering the lodger below, sat down and wrenched off her boots.

“This is what comes of being a young woman up to date. By Jove! I’m beginning to have my doubts about freedom!

“You silly young woman, Ann Veronica! You silly young woman! The smeariness of the thing!

“The smeariness of this sort of thing!... Mauled about!”

She fell to rubbing her insulted lips savagely with the back of her hand. “Ugh!” she said.

“The young women of Jane Austen’s time didn’t get into this sort of scrape! At least—one thinks so.... I wonder if some of them did—and it didn’t get reported. Aunt Jane had her quiet moments. Most of them didn’t, anyhow. They were properly brought up, and sat still and straight, and took the luck fate brought them as gentlewomen should. And they had an idea of what men were like behind all their nicety. They knew they were all Bogey in disguise. I didn’t! I didn’t! After all—”

For a time her mind ran on daintiness and its defensive restraints as though it was the one desirable thing. That world of fine printed cambrics and escorted maidens, of delicate secondary meanings and refined allusiveness, presented itself to her imagination with the brightness of a lost paradise, as indeed for many women it is a lost paradise.

“I wonder if there is anything wrong with my manners,” she said. “I wonder if I’ve been properly brought up. If I had been quite quiet and white and dignified, wouldn’t it have been different? Would he have dared?...”

For some creditable moments in her life Ann Veronica was utterly disgusted with herself; she was wrung with a passionate and belated desire to move gently, to speak softly and ambiguously—to be, in effect, prim.

Horrible details recurred to her.

“Why, among other things, did I put my knuckles in his neck—deliberately to hurt him?”

She tried to sound the humorous note.

“Are you aware, Ann Veronica, you nearly throttled that gentleman?”

Then she reviled her own foolish way of putting it.

“You ass and imbecile, Ann Veronica! You female cad! Cad! Cad!... Why aren’t you folded up clean in lavender—as every young woman ought to be? What have you been doing with yourself?...”

She raked into the fire with the poker.

“All of which doesn’t help me in the slightest degree to pay back that money.”

That night was the most intolerable one that Ann Veronica had ever spent. She washed her face with unwonted elaboration before she went to bed. This time, there was no doubt, she did not sleep. The more she disentangled the lines of her situation the deeper grew her self-disgust. Occasionally the mere fact of lying in bed became unendurable, and she rolled out and marched about her room and whispered abuse of herself—usually until she hit against some article of furniture.

Then she would have quiet times, in which she would say to herself, “Now look here! Let me think it all out!”

For the first time, it seemed to her, she faced the facts of a woman’s position in the world—the meagre realities of such freedom as it permitted her, the almost unavoidable obligation to some individual man under which she must labor for even a foothold in the world. She had flung away from her father’s support with the finest assumption of personal independence. And here she was—in a mess because it had been impossible for her to avoid leaning upon another man. She had thought—What had she thought? That this dependence of women was but an illusion which needed only to be denied to vanish. She had denied it with vigor, and here she was!

She did not so much exhaust this general question as pass from it to her insoluble individual problem again: “What am I to do?”

She wanted first of all to fling the forty pounds back into Ramage’s face. But she had spent nearly half of it, and had no conception of how such a sum could be made good again. She thought of all sorts of odd and desperate expedients, and with passionate petulance rejected them all.

She took refuge in beating her pillow and inventing insulting epithets for herself. She got up, drew up her blind, and stared out of window at a dawn-cold vision of chimneys for a time, and then went and sat on the edge of her bed. What was the alternative to going home? No alternative appeared in that darkness.

It seemed intolerable that she should go home and admit herself beaten. She did most urgently desire to save her face in Morningside Park, and for long hours she

could think of no way of putting it that would not be in the nature of unconditional admission of defeat.

“I’d rather go as a chorus-girl,” she said.

She was not very clear about the position and duties of a chorus-girl, but it certainly had the air of being a last desperate resort. There sprang from that a vague hope that perhaps she might extort a capitulation from her father by a threat to seek that position, and then with overwhelming clearness it came to her that whatever happened she would never be able to tell her father about her debt. The completest capitulation would not wipe out that trouble. And she felt that if she went home it was imperative to pay. She would always be going to and fro up the Avenue, getting glimpses of Ramage, seeing him in trains....

For a time she promenaded the room.

“Why did I ever take that loan? An idiot girl in an asylum would have known better than that!

“Vulgarity of soul and innocence of mind—the worst of all conceivable combinations. I wish some one would kill Ramage by accident!...

“But then they would find that check endorsed in his bureau....

“I wonder what he will do?” She tried to imagine situations that might arise out of Ramage’s antagonism, for he had been so bitter and savage that she could not believe that he would leave things as they were.

The next morning she went out with her post-office savings bank-book, and telegraphed for a warrant to draw out all the money she had in the world. It amounted to two-and-twenty pounds. She addressed an envelope to Ramage, and scrawled on a half-sheet of paper, “The rest shall follow.” The money would be available in the afternoon, and she would send him four five-pound notes. The rest she meant to keep for her immediate necessities. A little relieved by this step toward reinstatement, she went on to the Imperial College to forget her muddle of problems for a time, if she could, in the presence of Capes.

Part 7

For a time the biological laboratory was full of healing virtue. Her sleepless night had left her languid but not stupefied, and for an hour or so the work distracted her altogether from her troubles.

Then, after Capes had been through her work and had gone on, it came to her that the fabric of this life of hers was doomed to almost immediate collapse; that in a little while these studies would cease, and perhaps she would never set eyes on him again. After that consolations fled.

The overnight nervous strain began to tell; she became inattentive to the work before her, and it did not get on. She felt sleepy and unusually irritable. She lunched at a creamery in Great Portland Street, and as the day was full of wintry sunshine, spent the rest of the lunch-hour in a drowsy gloom, which she imagined to be thought upon the problems of her position, on a seat in Regent's Park. A girl of fifteen or sixteen gave her a handbill that she regarded as a tract until she saw "Votes for Women" at the top. That turned her mind to the more generalized aspects of her perplexities again. She had never been so disposed to agree that the position of women in the modern world is intolerable.

Capes joined the students at tea, and displayed himself in an impish mood that sometimes possessed him. He did not notice that Ann Veronica was preoccupied and heavy-eyed. Miss Klegg raised the question of women's suffrage, and he set himself to provoke a duel between her and Miss Garvice. The youth with the hair brushed back and the spectacled Scotchman joined in the fray for and against the women's vote.

Ever and again Capes appealed to Ann Veronica. He liked to draw her in, and she did her best to talk. But she did not talk readily, and in order to say something she plunged a little, and felt she plunged. Capes scored back with an uncompromising vigor that was his way of complimenting her intelligence. But this afternoon it discovered an unusual vein of irritability in her. He had been reading Belfort Bax, and declared himself a convert. He contrasted the lot of women in general with the lot of men, presented men as patient, self-immolating martyrs, and women as the pampered favorites of Nature. A vein of conviction mingled with his burlesque.

For a time he and Miss Klegg contradicted one another.

The question ceased to be a tea-table talk, and became suddenly tragically real for Ann Veronica. There he sat, cheerfully friendly in his sex's freedom—the man she loved, the one man she cared should unlock the way to the wide world for her imprisoned feminine possibilities, and he seemed regardless that she stifled under his

eyes; he made a jest of all this passionate insurgence of the souls of women against the fate of their conditions.

Miss Garvice repeated again, and almost in the same words she used at every discussion, her contribution to the great question.

She thought that women were not made for the struggle and turmoil of life—their place was the little world, the home; that their power lay not in votes but in influence over men and in making the minds of their children fine and splendid.

“Women should understand men’s affairs, perhaps,” said Miss Garvice, “but to mingle in them is just to sacrifice that power of influencing they can exercise now.”

“There IS something sound in that position,” said Capes, intervening as if to defend Miss Garvice against a possible attack from Ann Veronica. “It may not be just and so forth, but, after all, it is how things are. Women are not in the world in the same sense that men are—fighting individuals in a scramble. I don’t see how they can be. Every home is a little recess, a niche, out of the world of business and competition, in which women and the future shelter.”

“A little pit!” said Ann Veronica; “a little prison!”

“It’s just as often a little refuge. Anyhow, that is how things are.”

“And the man stands as the master at the mouth of the den.”

“As sentinel. You forget all the mass of training and tradition and instinct that go to make him a tolerable master. Nature is a mother; her sympathies have always been feminist, and she has tempered the man to the shorn woman.”

“I wish,” said Ann Veronica, with sudden anger, “that you could know what it is to live in a pit!”

She stood up as she spoke, and put down her cup beside Miss Garvice’s. She addressed Capes as though she spoke to him alone.

“I can’t endure it,” she said.

Every one turned to her in astonishment.

She felt she had to go on. “No man can realize,” she said, “what that pit can be. The way—the way we are led on! We are taught to believe we are free in the world, to think we are queens.... Then we find out. We find out no man will treat a woman fairly as man to man—no man. He wants you—or he doesn’t; and then he helps some other woman against you.... What you say is probably all true and necessary.... But think of

the disillusionment! Except for our sex we have minds like men, desires like men. We come out into the world, some of us—"

She paused. Her words, as she said them, seemed to her to mean nothing, and there was so much that struggled for expression. "Women are mocked," she said. "Whenever they try to take hold of life a man intervenes."

She felt, with a sudden horror, that she might weep. She wished she had not stood up. She wondered wildly why she had stood up. No one spoke, and she was impelled to flounder on. "Think of the mockery!" she said. "Think how dumb we find ourselves and stifled! I know we seem to have a sort of freedom.... Have you ever tried to run and jump in petticoats, Mr. Capes? Well, think what it must be to live in them—soul and mind and body! It's fun for a man to jest at our position."

"I wasn't jesting," said Capes, abruptly.

She stood face to face with him, and his voice cut across her speech and made her stop abruptly. She was sore and overstrung, and it was intolerable to her that he should stand within three yards of her unsuspectingly, with an incalculably vast power over her happiness. She was sore with the perplexities of her preposterous position. She was sick of herself, of her life, of everything but him; and for him all her masked and hidden being was crying out.

She stopped abruptly at the sound of his voice, and lost the thread of what she was saying. In the pause she realized the attention of the others converged upon her, and that the tears were brimming over her eyes. She felt a storm of emotion surging up within her. She became aware of the Scotch student regarding her with stupendous amazement, a tea-cup poised in one hairy hand and his faceted glasses showing a various enlargement of segments of his eye.

The door into the passage offered itself with an irresistible invitation—the one alternative to a public, inexplicable passion of weeping.

Capes flashed to an understanding of her intention, sprang to his feet, and opened the door for her retreat.

Part 8

"Why should I ever come back?" she said to herself, as she went down the staircase.

She went to the post-office and drew out and sent off her money to Ramage. And then she came out into the street, sure only of one thing—that she could not return directly to her lodgings. She wanted air—and the distraction of having moving and changing things about her. The evenings were beginning to draw out, and it would not be dark for an hour. She resolved to walk across the Park to the Zoological gardens, and so on by way of Primrose Hill to Hampstead Heath. There she would wander about in the kindly darkness. And think things out....

Presently she became aware of footsteps hurrying after her, and glanced back to find Miss Klegg, a little out of breath, in pursuit.

Ann Veronica halted a pace, and Miss Klegg came alongside.

"Do YOU go across the Park?"

"Not usually. But I'm going to-day. I want a walk."

"I'm not surprised at it. I thought Mr. Capes most trying."

"Oh, it wasn't that. I've had a headache all day."

"I thought Mr. Capes most unfair," Miss Klegg went on in a small, even voice; "MOST unfair! I'm glad you spoke out as you did."

"I didn't mind that little argument."

"You gave it him well. What you said wanted saying. After you went he got up and took refuge in the preparation-room. Or else *I* would have finished him."

Ann Veronica said nothing, and Miss Klegg went on: "He very often IS—most unfair. He has a way of sitting on people. He wouldn't like it if people did it to him. He jumps the words out of your mouth; he takes hold of what you have to say before you have had time to express it properly."

Pause.

"I suppose he's frightfully clever," said Miss Klegg.

"He's a Fellow of the Royal Society, and he can't be much over thirty," said Miss Klegg.

"He writes very well," said Ann Veronica.

"He can't be more than thirty. He must have married when he was quite a young man."

"Married?" said Ann Veronica.

“Didn’t you know he was married?” asked Miss Klegg, and was struck by a thought that made her glance quickly at her companion.

Ann Veronica had no answer for a moment. She turned her head away sharply. Some automaton within her produced in a quite unfamiliar voice the remark, “They’re playing football.”

“It’s too far for the ball to reach us,” said Miss Klegg.

“I didn’t know Mr. Capes was married,” said Ann Veronica, resuming the conversation with an entire disappearance of her former lassitude.

“Oh yes,” said Miss Klegg; “I thought every one knew.”

“No,” said Ann Veronica, offhandedly. “Never heard anything of it.”

“I thought every one knew. I thought every one had heard about it.”

“But why?”

“He’s married—and, I believe, living separated from his wife. There was a case, or something, some years ago.”

“What case?”

“A divorce—or something—I don’t know. But I have heard that he almost had to leave the schools. If it hadn’t been for Professor Russell standing up for him, they say he would have had to leave.”

“Was he divorced, do you mean?”

“No, but he got himself mixed up in a divorce case. I forget the particulars, but I know it was something very disagreeable. It was among artistic people.”

Ann Veronica was silent for a while.

“I thought every one had heard,” said Miss Klegg. “Or I wouldn’t have said anything about it.”

“I suppose all men,” said Ann Veronica, in a tone of detached criticism, “get some such entanglement. And, anyhow, it doesn’t matter to us.” She turned abruptly at right angles to the path they followed. “This is my way back to my side of the Park,” she said.

“I thought you were coming right across the Park.”

“Oh no,” said Ann Veronica; “I have some work to do. I just wanted a breath of air. And they’ll shut the gates presently. It’s not far from twilight.”

Part 9

She was sitting brooding over her fire about ten o’clock that night when a sealed and registered envelope was brought up to her.

She opened it and drew out a letter, and folded within it were the notes she had sent off to Ramage that day. The letter began:

“MY DEAREST GIRL,—I cannot let you do this foolish thing—”

She crumpled notes and letter together in her hand, and then with a passionate gesture flung them into the fire. Instantly she seized the poker and made a desperate effort to get them out again. But she was only able to save a corner of the letter. The twenty pounds burned with avidity.

She remained for some seconds crouching at the fender, poker in hand.

“By Jove!” she said, standing up at last, “that about finishes it, Ann Veronica!”

CHAPTER THE TENTH

THE SUFFRAGETTES

Part 1

“There is only one way out of all this,” said Ann Veronica, sitting up in her little bed in the darkness and biting at her nails.

“I thought I was just up against Morningside Park and father, but it’s the whole order of things—the whole blessed order of things....”

She shivered. She frowned and gripped her hands about her knees very tightly. Her mind developed into savage wrath at the present conditions of a woman's life.

"I suppose all life is an affair of chances. But a woman's life is all chance. It's artificially chance. Find your man, that's the rule. All the rest is humbug and delicacy. He's the handle of life for you. He will let you live if it pleases him....

"Can't it be altered?

"I suppose an actress is free?..."

She tried to think of some altered state of affairs in which these monstrous limitations would be alleviated, in which women would stand on their own feet in equal citizenship with men. For a time she brooded on the ideals and suggestions of the Socialists, on the vague intimations of an Endowment of Motherhood, of a complete relaxation of that intense individual dependence for women which is woven into the existing social order. At the back of her mind there seemed always one irrelevant qualifying spectator whose presence she sought to disregard. She would not look at him, would not think of him; when her mind wavered, then she muttered to herself in the darkness so as to keep hold of her generalizations.

"It is true. It is no good waiving the thing; it is true. Unless women are never to be free, never to be even respected, there must be a generation of martyrs.... Why shouldn't we be martyrs? There's nothing else for most of us, anyhow. It's a sort of blacklegging to want to have a life of one's own...."

She repeated, as if she answered an objector: "A sort of blacklegging.

"A sex of blacklegging clients."

Her mind diverged to other aspects, and another type of womanhood.

"Poor little Miniver! What can she be but what she is?... Because she states her case in a tangle, drags it through swamps of nonsense, it doesn't alter the fact that she is right."

That phrase about dragging the truth through swamps of nonsense she remembered from Capes. At the recollection that it was his, she seemed to fall through a thin surface, as one might fall through the crust of a lava into glowing depths. She wallowed for a time in the thought of Capes, unable to escape from his image and the idea of his presence in her life.

She let her mind run into dreams of that cloud paradise of an altered world in which the Goopes and Minivers, the Fabians and reforming people believed. Across that

world was written in letters of light, “Endowment of Motherhood.” Suppose in some complex yet conceivable way women were endowed, were no longer economically and socially dependent on men. “If one was free,” she said, “one could go to him.... This vile hovering to catch a man’s eye!... One could go to him and tell him one loved him. I want to love him. A little love from him would be enough. It would hurt no one. It would not burden him with any obligation.”

She groaned aloud and bowed her forehead to her knees. She floundered deep. She wanted to kiss his feet. His feet would have the firm texture of his hands.

Then suddenly her spirit rose in revolt. “I will not have this slavery,” she said. “I will not have this slavery.”

She shook her fist ceilingward. “Do you hear!” she said “whatever you are, wherever you are! I will not be slave to the thought of any man, slave to the customs of any time. Confound this slavery of sex! I am a man! I will get this under if I am killed in doing it!”

She scowled into the cold blacknesses about her.

“Manning,” she said, and contemplated a figure of inaggressive persistence. “No!” Her thoughts had turned in a new direction.

“It doesn’t matter,” she said, after a long interval, “if they are absurd. They mean something. They mean everything that women can mean—except submission. The vote is only the beginning, the necessary beginning. If we do not begin—”

She had come to a resolution. Abruptly she got out of bed, smoothed her sheet and straightened her pillow and lay down, and fell almost instantly asleep.

Part 2

The next morning was as dark and foggy as if it was mid-November instead of early March. Ann Veronica woke rather later than usual, and lay awake for some minutes before she remembered a certain resolution she had taken in the small hours. Then instantly she got out of bed and proceeded to dress.

She did not start for the Imperial College. She spent the morning up to ten in writing a series of unsuccessful letters to Ramage, which she tore up unfinished; and finally she desisted and put on her jacket and went out into the lamp-lit obscurity and slimy streets. She turned a resolute face southward.

She followed Oxford Street into Holborn, and then she inquired for Chancery Lane. There she sought and at last found 107A, one of those heterogeneous piles of offices which occupy the eastern side of the lane. She studied the painted names of firms and persons and enterprises on the wall, and discovered that the Women's Bond of Freedom occupied several contiguous suites on the first floor. She went up-stairs and hesitated between four doors with ground-glass panes, each of which professed "The Women's Bond of Freedom" in neat black letters. She opened one and found herself in a large untidy room set with chairs that were a little disarranged as if by an overnight meeting. On the walls were notice-boards bearing clusters of newspaper slips, three or four big posters of monster meetings, one of which Ann Veronica had attended with Miss Miniver, and a series of announcements in purple copying-ink, and in one corner was a pile of banners. There was no one at all in this room, but through the half-open door of one of the small apartments that gave upon it she had a glimpse of two very young girls sitting at a littered table and writing briskly.

She walked across to this apartment and, opening the door a little wider, discovered a press section of the movement at work.

"I want to inquire," said Ann Veronica.

"Next door," said a spectacled young person of seventeen or eighteen, with an impatient indication of the direction.

In the adjacent apartment Ann Veronica found a middle-aged woman with a tired face under the tired hat she wore, sitting at a desk opening letters while a dusky, untidy girl of eight-or nine-and-twenty hammered industriously at a typewriter. The tired woman looked up in inquiring silence at Ann Veronica's diffident entry.

"I want to know more about this movement," said Ann Veronica.

"Are you with us?" said the tired woman.

"I don't know," said Ann Veronica; "I think I am. I want very much to do something for women. But I want to know what you are doing."

The tired woman sat still for a moment. "You haven't come here to make a lot of difficulties?" she asked.

"No," said Ann Veronica, "but I want to know."

The tired woman shut her eyes tightly for a moment, and then looked with them at Ann Veronica. "What can you do?" she asked.

"Do?"

“Are you prepared to do things for us? Distribute bills? Write letters? Interrupt meetings? Canvass at elections? Face dangers?”

“If I am satisfied—”

“If we satisfy you?”

“Then, if possible, I would like to go to prison.”

“It isn’t nice going to prison.”

“It would suit me.”

“It isn’t nice getting there.”

“That’s a question of detail,” said Ann Veronica.

The tired woman looked quietly at her. “What are your objections?” she said.

“It isn’t objections exactly. I want to know what you are doing; how you think this work of yours really does serve women.”

“We are working for the equal citizenship of men and women,” said the tired woman. “Women have been and are treated as the inferiors of men, we want to make them their equals.”

“Yes,” said Ann Veronica, “I agree to that. But—”

The tired woman raised her eyebrows in mild protest.

“Isn’t the question more complicated than that?” said Ann Veronica.

“You could have a talk to Miss Kitty Brett this afternoon, if you liked. Shall I make an appointment for you?”

Miss Kitty Brett was one of the most conspicuous leaders of the movement. Ann Veronica snatched at the opportunity, and spent most of the intervening time in the Assyrian Court of the British Museum, reading and thinking over a little book upon the feminist movement the tired woman had made her buy. She got a bun and some cocoa in the little refreshment-room, and then wandered through the galleries up-stairs, crowded with Polynesian idols and Polynesian dancing-garments, and all the simple immodest accessories to life in Polynesia, to a seat among the mummies. She was trying to bring her problems to a head, and her mind insisted upon being even more discursive and atmospheric than usual. It generalized everything she put to it.

“Why should women be dependent on men?” she asked; and the question was at once converted into a system of variations upon the theme of “Why are things as they are?”—“Why are human beings viviparous?”—“Why are people hungry thrice a day?”—“Why does one faint at danger?”

She stood for a time looking at the dry limbs and still human face of that desiccated unwrapped mummy from the very beginnings of social life. It looked very patient, she thought, and a little self-satisfied. It looked as if it had taken its world for granted and prospered on that assumption—a world in which children were trained to obey their elders and the wills of women over-ruled as a matter of course. It was wonderful to think this thing had lived, had felt and suffered. Perhaps once it had desired some other human being intolerably. Perhaps some one had kissed the brow that was now so cadaverous, rubbed that sunken cheek with loving fingers, held that stringy neck with passionately living hands. But all of that was forgotten. “In the end,” it seemed to be thinking, “they embalmed me with the utmost respect—sound spices chosen to endure—the best! I took my world as I found it. THINGS ARE SO!”

Part 3

Ann Veronica’s first impression of Kitty Brett was that she was aggressive and disagreeable; her next that she was a person of amazing persuasive power. She was perhaps three-and-twenty, and very pink and healthy-looking, showing a great deal of white and rounded neck above her business-like but altogether feminine blouse, and a good deal of plump, gesticulating forearm out of her short sleeve. She had animated dark blue-gray eyes under her fine eyebrows, and dark brown hair that rolled back simply and effectively from her broad low forehead. And she was about as capable of intelligent argument as a runaway steam-roller. She was a trained being—trained by an implacable mother to one end.

She spoke with fluent enthusiasm. She did not so much deal with Ann Veronica’s interpolations as dispose of them with quick and use-hardened repartee, and then she went on with a fine directness to sketch the case for her agitation, for that remarkable rebellion of the women that was then agitating the whole world of politics and discussion. She assumed with a kind of mesmeric force all the propositions that Ann Veronica wanted her to define.

“What do we want? What is the goal?” asked Ann Veronica.

“Freedom! Citizenship! And the way to that—the way to everything—is the Vote.”

Ann Veronica said something about a general change of ideas.

“How can you change people’s ideas if you have no power?” said Kitty Brett.

Ann Veronica was not ready enough to deal with that counter-stroke.

“One doesn’t want to turn the whole thing into a mere sex antagonism.”

“When women get justice,” said Kitty Brett, “there will be no sex antagonism. None at all. Until then we mean to keep on hammering away.”

“It seems to me that much of a woman’s difficulties are economic.”

“That will follow,” said Kitty Brett—“that will follow.”

She interrupted as Ann Veronica was about to speak again, with a bright contagious hopefulness. “Everything will follow,” she said.

“Yes,” said Ann Veronica, trying to think where they were, trying to get things plain again that had seemed plain enough in the quiet of the night.

“Nothing was ever done,” Miss Brett asserted, “without a certain element of Faith. After we have got the Vote and are recognized as citizens, then we can come to all these other things.”

Even in the glamour of Miss Brett’s assurance it seemed to Ann Veronica that this was, after all, no more than the gospel of Miss Miniver with a new set of resonances. And like that gospel it meant something, something different from its phrases, something elusive, and yet something that in spite of the superficial incoherence of its phrasing, was largely essentially true. There was something holding women down, holding women back, and if it wasn’t exactly man-made law, man-made law was an aspect of it. There was something indeed holding the whole species back from the imaginable largeness of life....

“The Vote is the symbol of everything,” said Miss Brett.

She made an abrupt personal appeal.

“Oh! please don’t lose yourself in a wilderness of secondary considerations,” she said. “Don’t ask me to tell you all that women can do, all that women can be. There is a new life, different from the old life of dependence, possible. If only we are not divided. If only we work together. This is the one movement that brings women of different classes together for a common purpose. If you could see how it gives them souls,

women who have taken things for granted, who have given themselves up altogether to pettiness and vanity....”

“Give me something to do,” said Ann Veronica, interrupting her persuasions at last. “It has been very kind of you to see me, but I don’t want to sit and talk and use your time any longer. I want to do something. I want to hammer myself against all this that pens women in. I feel that I shall stifle unless I can do something—and do something soon.”

Part 4

It was not Ann Veronica’s fault that the night’s work should have taken upon itself the forms of wild burlesque. She was in deadly earnest in everything she did. It seemed to her the last desperate attack upon the universe that would not let her live as she desired to live, that penned her in and controlled her and directed her and disapproved of her, the same invincible wrappering, the same leaden tyranny of a universe that she had vowed to overcome after that memorable conflict with her father at Morningside Park.

She was listed for the raid—she was informed it was to be a raid upon the House of Commons, though no particulars were given her—and told to go alone to 14, Dexter Street, Westminster, and not to ask any policeman to direct her. 14, Dexter Street, Westminster, she found was not a house but a yard in an obscure street, with big gates and the name of Podgers & Carlo, Carriers and Furniture Removers, thereon. She was perplexed by this, and stood for some seconds in the empty street hesitating, until the appearance of another circumspect woman under the street lamp at the corner reassured her. In one of the big gates was a little door, and she rapped at this. It was immediately opened by a man with light eyelashes and a manner suggestive of restrained passion. “Come right in,” he hissed under his breath, with the true conspirator’s note, closed the door very softly and pointed, “Through there!”

By the meagre light of a gas lamp she perceived a cobbled yard with four large furniture vans standing with horses and lamps alight. A slender young man, wearing glasses, appeared from the shadow of the nearest van. “Are you A, B, C, or D?” he asked.

“They told me D,” said Ann Veronica.

“Through there,” he said, and pointed with the pamphlet he was carrying.

Ann Veronica found herself in a little stirring crowd of excited women, whispering and tittering and speaking in undertones.

The light was poor, so that she saw their gleaming faces dimly and indistinctly. No one spoke to her. She stood among them, watching them and feeling curiously alien to them. The oblique ruddy lighting distorted them oddly, made queer bars and patches of shadow upon their clothes. “It’s Kitty’s idea,” said one, “we are to go in the vans.”

“Kitty is wonderful,” said another.

“Wonderful!”

“I have always longed for prison service,” said a voice, “always. From the beginning. But it’s only now I’m able to do it.”

A little blond creature close at hand suddenly gave way to a fit of hysterical laughter, and caught up the end of it with a sob.

“Before I took up the Suffrage,” a firm, flat voice remarked, “I could scarcely walk up-stairs without palpitations.”

Some one hidden from Ann Veronica appeared to be marshalling the assembly. “We have to get in, I think,” said a nice little old lady in a bonnet to Ann Veronica, speaking with a voice that quavered a little. “My dear, can you see in this light? I think I would like to get in. Which is C?”

Ann Veronica, with a curious sinking of the heart, regarded the black cavities of the vans. Their doors stood open, and placards with big letters indicated the section assigned to each. She directed the little old woman and then made her way to van D. A young woman with a white badge on her arm stood and counted the sections as they entered their vans.

“When they tap the roof,” she said, in a voice of authority, “you are to come out. You will be opposite the big entrance in Old Palace Yard. It’s the public entrance. You are to make for that and get into the lobby if you can, and so try and reach the floor of the House, crying ‘Votes for Women!’ as you go.”

She spoke like a mistress addressing school-children.

“Don’t bunch too much as you come out,” she added.

“All right?” asked the man with the light eyelashes, suddenly appearing in the doorway. He waited for an instant, wasting an encouraging smile in the imperfect light, and then shut the doors of the van, leaving the women in darkness....

The van started with a jerk and rumbled on its way.

“It’s like Troy!” said a voice of rapture. “It’s exactly like Troy!”

Part 5

So Ann Veronica, enterprising and a little dubious as ever, mingled with the stream of history and wrote her Christian name upon the police-court records of the land.

But out of a belated regard for her father she wrote the surname of some one else.

Some day, when the rewards of literature permit the arduous research required, the Campaign of the Women will find its Carlyle, and the particulars of that marvellous series of exploits by which Miss Brett and her colleagues nagged the whole Western world into the discussion of women’s position become the material for the most delightful and amazing descriptions. At present the world waits for that writer, and the confused record of the newspapers remains the only resource of the curious. When he comes he will do that raid of the pantechnicons the justice it deserves; he will picture the orderly evening scene about the Imperial Legislature in convincing detail, the coming and going of cabs and motor-cabs and broughams through the chill, damp evening into New Palace Yard, the reinforced but untroubled and unsuspecting police about the entries of those great buildings whose square and panelled Victorian Gothic streams up from the glare of the lamps into the murkiness of the night; Big Ben shining overhead, an unassailable beacon, and the incidental traffic of Westminster, cabs, carts, and glowing omnibuses going to and from the bridge. About the Abbey and Abingdon Street stood the outer pickets and detachments of the police, their attention all directed westward to where the women in Caxton Hall, Westminster, hummed like an angry hive. Squads reached to the very portal of that centre of disturbance. And through all these defences and into Old Palace Yard, into the very vitals of the defenders’ position, lumbered the unsuspected vans.

They travelled past the few idle sightseers who had braved the uninviting evening to see what the Suffragettes might be doing; they pulled up unchallenged within thirty yards of those coveted portals.

And then they disgorged.

Were I a painter of subject pictures, I would exhaust all my skill in proportion and perspective and atmosphere upon the august seat of empire, I would present it gray

and dignified and immense and respectable beyond any mere verbal description, and then, in vivid black and very small, I would put in those valiantly impertinent vans, squatting at the base of its altitudes and pouring out a swift, straggling rush of ominous little black objects, minute figures of determined women at war with the universe.

Ann Veronica was in their very forefront.

In an instant the expectant calm of Westminster was ended, and the very Speaker in the chair blenched at the sound of the policemen's whistles. The bolder members in the House left their places to go lobbyward, grinning. Others pulled hats over their noses, cowered in their seats, and feigned that all was right with the world. In Old Palace Yard everybody ran. They either ran to see or ran for shelter. Even two Cabinet Ministers took to their heels, grinning insincerely. At the opening of the van doors and the emergence into the fresh air Ann Veronica's doubt and depression gave place to the wildest exhilaration. That same adventurousness that had already buoyed her through crises that would have overwhelmed any normally feminine girl with shame and horror now became uppermost again. Before her was a great Gothic portal. Through that she had to go.

Past her shot the little old lady in the bonnet, running incredibly fast, but otherwise still alertly respectable, and she was making a strange threatening sound as she ran, such as one would use in driving ducks out of a garden—"B-r-r-r-r-r—!" and pawing with black-gloved hands. The policemen were closing in from the sides to intervene. The little old lady struck like a projectile upon the resounding chest of the foremost of these, and then Ann Veronica had got past and was ascending the steps.

Then most horribly she was clasped about the waist from behind and lifted from the ground.

At that a new element poured into her excitement, an element of wild disgust and terror. She had never experienced anything so disagreeable in her life as the sense of being held helplessly off her feet. She screamed involuntarily—she had never in her life screamed before—and then she began to wriggle and fight like a frightened animal against the men who were holding her.

The affair passed at one leap from a spree to a nightmare of violence and disgust. Her hair got loose, her hat came over one eye, and she had no arm free to replace it. She felt she must suffocate if these men did not put her down, and for a time they would not put her down. Then with an indescribable relief her feet were on the pavement, and she was being urged along by two policemen, who were gripping her wrists in an

irresistible expert manner. She was writhing to get her hands loose and found herself gasping with passionate violence, “It’s damnable!—damnable!” to the manifest disgust of the fatherly policeman on her right.

Then they had released her arms and were trying to push her away.

“You be off, missie,” said the fatherly policeman. “This ain’t no place for you.”

He pushed her a dozen yards along the greasy pavement with flat, well-trained hands that there seemed to be no opposing. Before her stretched blank spaces, dotted with running people coming toward her, and below them railings and a statue. She almost submitted to this ending of her adventure. But at the word “home” she turned again.

“I won’t go home,” she said; “I won’t!” and she evaded the clutch of the fatherly policeman and tried to thrust herself past him in the direction of that big portal. “Steady on!” he cried.

A diversion was created by the violent struggles of the little old lady. She seemed to be endowed with superhuman strength. A knot of three policemen in conflict with her staggered toward Ann Veronica’s attendants and distracted their attention. “I WILL be arrested! I WON’T go home!” the little old lady was screaming over and over again. They put her down, and she leaped at them; she smote a helmet to the ground.

“You’ll have to take her!” shouted an inspector on horseback, and she echoed his cry: “You’ll have to take me!” They seized upon her and lifted her, and she screamed. Ann Veronica became violently excited at the sight. “You cowards!” said Ann Veronica, “put her down!” and tore herself from a detaining hand and battered with her fists upon the big red ear and blue shoulder of the policeman who held the little old lady.

So Ann Veronica also was arrested.

And then came the vile experience of being forced and borne along the street to the police-station. Whatever anticipation Ann Veronica had formed of this vanished in the reality. Presently she was going through a swaying, noisy crowd, whose faces grinned and stared pitilessly in the light of the electric standards. “Go it, miss!” cried one. “Kick aht at ‘em!” though, indeed, she went now with Christian meekness, resenting only the thrusting policemen’s hands. Several people in the crowd seemed to be fighting. Insulting cries became frequent and various, but for the most part she could not understand what was said. “Who’ll mind the baby nar?” was one of the night’s inspirations, and very frequent. A lean young man in spectacles pursued her for some time, crying “Courage! Courage!” Somebody threw a dab of mud at her, and some of it

got down her neck. Immeasurable disgust possessed her. She felt draggled and insulted beyond redemption.

She could not hide her face. She attempted by a sheer act of will to end the scene, to will herself out of it anywhere. She had a horrible glimpse of the once nice little old lady being also borne stationward, still faintly battling and very muddy—one lock of grayish hair straggling over her neck, her face scared, white, but triumphant. Her bonnet dropped off and was trampled into the gutter. A little Cockney recovered it, and made ridiculous attempts to get to her and replace it.

“You must arrest me!” she gasped, breathlessly, insisting insanely on a point already carried; “you shall!”

The police-station at the end seemed to Ann Veronica like a refuge from unnamable disgraces. She hesitated about her name, and, being prompted, gave it at last as Ann Veronica Smith, 107A, Chancery Lane....

Indignation carried her through that night, that men and the world could so entreat her. The arrested women were herded in a passage of the Panton Street Police-station that opened upon a cell too unclean for occupation, and most of them spent the night standing. Hot coffee and cakes were sent in to them in the morning by some intelligent sympathizer, or she would have starved all day. Submission to the inevitable carried her through the circumstances of her appearance before the magistrate.

He was no doubt doing his best to express the attitude of society toward these wearily heroic defendants, but he seemed to be merely rude and unfair to Ann Veronica. He was not, it seemed, the proper stipendiary at all, and there had been some demur to his jurisdiction that had ruffled him. He resented being regarded as irregular. He felt he was human wisdom prudentially interpolated.... “You silly wimmin,” he said over and over again throughout the hearing, plucking at his blotting-pad with busy hands. “You silly creatures! Ugh! Fie upon you!” The court was crowded with people, for the most part supporters and admirers of the defendants, and the man with the light eyelashes was conspicuously active and omnipresent.

Ann Veronica’s appearance was brief and undistinguished. She had nothing to say for herself. She was guided into the dock and prompted by a helpful police inspector. She was aware of the body of the court, of clerks seated at a black table littered with papers, of policemen standing about stiffly with expressions of conscious integrity, and a murmuring background of the heads and shoulders of spectators close behind her. On a high chair behind a raised counter the stipendiary’s substitute regarded her

malevolently over his glasses. A disagreeable young man, with red hair and a loose mouth, seated at the reporter's table, was only too manifestly sketching her.

She was interested by the swearing of the witnesses. The kissing of the book struck her as particularly odd, and then the policemen gave their evidence in staccato jerks and stereotyped phrases.

"Have you anything to ask the witness?" asked the helpful inspector.

The ribald demons that infested the back of Ann Veronica's mind urged various facetious interrogations upon her, as, for example, where the witness had acquired his prose style. She controlled herself, and answered meekly, "No."

"Well, Ann Veronica Smith," the magistrate remarked when the case was all before him, "you're a good-looking, strong, respectable gell, and it's a pity you silly young wimmin can't find something better to do with your exuberance. Two-and-twenty! I can't imagine what your parents can be thinking about to let you get into these scrapes."

Ann Veronica's mind was filled with confused unutterable replies.

"You are persuaded to come and take part in these outrageous proceedings—many of you, I am convinced, have no idea whatever of their nature. I don't suppose you could tell me even the derivation of suffrage if I asked you. No! not even the derivation! But the fashion's been set and in it you must be."

The men at the reporter's table lifted their eyebrows, smiled faintly, and leaned back to watch how she took her scolding. One with the appearance of a bald little gnome yawned agonizingly. They had got all this down already—they heard the substance of it now for the fourteenth time. The stipendiary would have done it all very differently.

She found presently she was out of the dock and confronted with the alternative of being bound over in one surety for the sum of forty pounds—whatever that might mean or a month's imprisonment.

"Second class," said some one, but first and second were all alike to her. She elected to go to prison.

At last, after a long rumbling journey in a stuffy windowless van, she reached Canongate Prison—for Holloway had its quota already. It was bad luck to go to Canongate.

Prison was beastly. Prison was bleak without spaciousness, and pervaded by a faint, oppressive smell; and she had to wait two hours in the sullenly defiant company of

two unclean women thieves before a cell could be assigned to her. Its dreariness, like the filthiness of the police cell, was a discovery for her. She had imagined that prisons were white-tiled places, reeking of lime-wash and immaculately sanitary. Instead, they appeared to be at the hygienic level of tramps' lodging-houses. She was bathed in turbid water that had already been used. She was not allowed to bathe herself: another prisoner, with a privileged manner, washed her. Conscientious objectors to that process are not permitted, she found, in Canongate. Her hair was washed for her also. Then they dressed her in a dirty dress of coarse serge and a cap, and took away her own clothes. The dress came to her only too manifestly unwashed from its former wearer; even the under-linen they gave her seemed unclean. Horrible memories of things seen beneath the microscope of the baser forms of life crawled across her mind and set her shuddering with imagined irritations. She sat on the edge of the bed—the wardress was too busy with the flood of arrivals that day to discover that she had it down—and her skin was shivering from the contact of these garments. She surveyed accommodation that seemed at first merely austere, and became more and more manifestly inadequate as the moments fled by. She meditated profoundly through several enormous cold hours on all that had happened and all that she had done since the swirl of the suffrage movement had submerged her personal affairs....

Very slowly emerging out of a phase of stupefaction, these personal affairs and her personal problem resumed possession of her mind. She had imagined she had drowned them altogether.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

THOUGHTS IN PRISON

Part 1

The first night in prison she found it impossible to sleep. The bed was hard beyond any experience of hers, the bed-clothes coarse and insufficient, the cell at once cold and stuffy. The little grating in the door, the sense of constant inspection, worried her. She kept opening her eyes and looking at it. She was fatigued physically and mentally, and neither mind nor body could rest. She became aware that at regular intervals a light

flashed upon her face and a bodiless eye regarded her, and this, as the night wore on, became a torment....

Capes came back into her mind. He haunted a state between hectic dreaming and mild delirium, and she found herself talking aloud to him. All through the night an entirely impossible and monumental Capes confronted her, and she argued with him about men and women. She visualized him as in a policeman's uniform and quite impassive. On some insane score she fancied she had to state her case in verse. "We are the music and you are the instrument," she said; "we are verse and you are prose.

"For men have reason, women rhyme

A man scores always, all the time."

This couplet sprang into her mind from nowhere, and immediately begot an endless series of similar couplets that she began to compose and address to Capes. They came teeming distressfully through her aching brain:

"A man can kick, his skirts don't tear;

A man scores always, everywhere.

"His dress for no man lays a snare;

A man scores always, everywhere.

For hats that fail and hats that flare;

Toppers their universal wear;

A man scores always, everywhere.

"Men's waists are neither here nor there;

A man scores always, everywhere.

"A man can manage without hair;

A man scores always, everywhere.

"There are no males at men to stare;

A man scores always, everywhere.

"And children must we women bear—

"Oh, damn!" she cried, as the hundred-and-first couplet or so presented itself in her unwilling brain.

For a time she worried about that compulsory bath and cutaneous diseases.

Then she fell into a fever of remorse for the habit of bad language she had acquired.

"A man can smoke, a man can swear;

A man scores always, everywhere."

She rolled over on her face, and stuffed her fingers in her ears to shut out the rhythm from her mind. She lay still for a long time, and her mind resumed at a more tolerable pace. She found herself talking to Capes in an undertone of rational admission.

"There is something to be said for the lady-like theory after all," she admitted. "Women ought to be gentle and submissive persons, strong only in virtue and in resistance to evil compulsion. My dear—I can call you that here, anyhow—I know that. The Victorians over-did it a little, I admit. Their idea of maidenly innocence was just a blank white—the sort of flat white that doesn't shine. But that doesn't alter the fact that there IS innocence. And I've read, and thought, and guessed, and looked—until MY innocence—it's smirched.

"Smirched!...

"You see, dear, one IS passionately anxious for something—what is it? One wants to be CLEAN. You want me to be clean. You would want me to be clean, if you gave me a thought, that is....

"I wonder if you give me a thought....

"I'm not a good woman. I don't mean I'm not a good woman—I mean that I'm not a GOOD woman. My poor brain is so mixed, dear, I hardly know what I am saying. I mean I'm not a good specimen of a woman. I've got a streak of male. Things happen to women—proper women—and all they have to do is to take them well. They've just got to keep white. But I'm always trying to make things happen. And I get myself dirty...

“It’s all dirt that washes off, dear, but it’s dirt.

“The white unaggressive woman who corrects and nurses and serves, and is worshipped and betrayed—the martyr-queen of men, the white mother.... You can’t do that sort of thing unless you do it over religion, and there’s no religion in me—of that sort—worth a rap.

“I’m not gentle. Certainly not a gentlewoman.

“I’m not coarse—no! But I’ve got no purity of mind—no real purity of mind. A good woman’s mind has angels with flaming swords at the portals to keep out fallen thoughts....

“I wonder if there are any good women really.

“I wish I didn’t swear. I do swear. It began as a joke.... It developed into a sort of secret and private bad manners. It’s got to be at last like tobacco-ash over all my sayings and doings....

“‘Go it, missie,’ they said; “kick aht!’

“I swore at that policeman—and disgusted him. Disgusted him!

“For men policemen never blush;

A man in all things scores so much...

“Damn! Things are getting plainer. It must be the dawn creeping in.

“Now here hath been dawning another blue day;

I’m just a poor woman, please take it away.

“Oh, sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep!”

Part 2

“Now,” said Ann Veronica, after the half-hour of exercise, and sitting on the uncomfortable wooden seat without a back that was her perch by day, “it’s no good staying here in a sort of maze. I’ve got nothing to do for a month but think. I may as well think. I ought to be able to think things out.

“How shall I put the question? What am I? What have I got to do with myself?...

“I wonder if many people HAVE thought things out?

“Are we all just seizing hold of phrases and obeying moods?

“It wasn’t so with old-fashioned people, they knew right from wrong; they had a clear-cut, religious faith that seemed to explain everything and give a rule for everything. We haven’t. I haven’t, anyhow. And it’s no good pretending there is one when there isn’t.... I suppose I believe in God.... Never really thought about Him—people don’t.. .. I suppose my creed is, ‘I believe rather indistinctly in God the Father Almighty, substratum of the evolutionary process, and, in a vein of vague sentimentality that doesn’t give a datum for anything at all, in Jesus Christ, His Son.’...

“It’s no sort of good, Ann Veronica, pretending one does believe when one doesn’t....

“And as for praying for faith—this sort of monologue is about as near as any one of my sort ever gets to prayer. Aren’t I asking—asking plainly now?...

“We’ve all been mixing our ideas, and we’ve got intellectual hot coppers—every blessed one of us....

“A confusion of motives—that’s what I am!...

“There is this absurd craving for Mr. Capes—the ‘Capes crave,’ they would call it in America. Why do I want him so badly? Why do I want him, and think about him, and fail to get away from him?

“It isn’t all of me.

“The first person you love, Ann Veronica, is yourself—get hold of that! The soul you have to save is Ann Veronica’s soul....”

She knelt upon the floor of her cell and clasped her hands, and remained for a long time in silence.

“Oh, God!” she said at last, “how I wish I had been taught to pray!”

Part 3

She had some idea of putting these subtle and difficult issues to the chaplain when she was warned of his advent. But she had not reckoned with the etiquette of Canongate. She got up, as she had been told to do, at his appearance, and he amazed

her by sitting down, according to custom, on her stool. He still wore his hat, to show that the days of miracles and Christ being civil to sinners are over forever. She perceived that his countenance was only composed by a great effort, his features severely compressed. He was ruffled, and his ears were red, no doubt from some adjacent controversy. He classified her as he seated himself.

“Another young woman, I suppose,” he said, “who knows better than her Maker about her place in the world. Have you anything to ask me?”

Ann Veronica readjusted her mind hastily. Her back stiffened. She produced from the depths of her pride the ugly investigatory note of the modern district visitor. “Are you a special sort of clergyman,” she said, after a pause, and looking down her nose at him, “or do you go to the Universities?”

“Oh!” he said, profoundly.

He panted for a moment with unuttered replies, and then, with a scornful gesture, got up and left the cell.

So that Ann Veronica was not able to get the expert advice she certainly needed upon her spiritual state.