

NEY



PRICE ONE SHILLING

# THE CLAIRAUDIENT

A STORY OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

BY

ERNEST ROBIN

*The silent Thought—by Will impelled,  
Will travel far—strange thoughts among,  
Voiceless—until, in embrace held  
By kindred thought, it finds a tongue.*

SYDNEY

ANGUS & ROBERTSON

Booksellers to the University

1896





823.89A





## THE CLAIRAUDIENT

*"Listen! We are in telepathic communication."*



# THE CLAIRAUDIENT

A STORY OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

BY

ERNEST ROBIN

*The silent Thought—by Will impelled,  
Will travel far—strange thoughts among,  
Voiceless—until, in embrace held  
By kindred thought, it finds a tongue.*

SYDNEY

ANGUS & ROBERTSON

Booksellers to the University

1896 *Yd.*

[All Rights Reserved.]



*Websdale, Shoosmith and Co., Printers,  
117 Clarence Street, Sydney.*

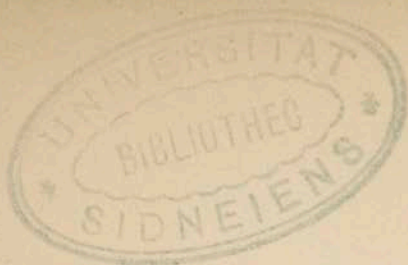
DEDICATED  
TO  
THE FRIEND  
WHOSE UNWEARIED RESEARCHES  
IN MEDICAL SCIENCE  
LED TO THE DISCOVERY  
HERE RECORDED  
AND IN  
TELEPATHIC COLLABORATION  
WITH WHOM  
THE STORY WAS WRITTEN



## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—At the Threshold . . .	1
„ II.—The Parting of the Ways	14
„ III.—In New Bohemia . . .	24
„ IV.—An Israelite Indeed . . .	37
„ V.—The Point of View . . .	49
„ VI.—Vox Humana? . . . .	61
„ VII.—The Fourth Estate . . .	72
„ VIII.—A New Factor in Jour- nalism . . . . .	85
„ X.—Pupil and Master. . . .	98
„ IX.—A Moonlight Picnic . . .	110
„ XI.—Under Orders . . . . .	124
„ XII.—The Ways Unite. . . .	138





## CHAPTER I.

### AT THE THRESHOLD.

*"O! what were tasks when Life was young  
And Hope shone like a star."*—LUX SPEI.

*Every end is the beginning of something else.*

"THE curse of the age is utilitarianism." Not a particularly accurate estimate of the prevailing tendency, perhaps—nor strikingly original as a conception, but sufficiently epigrammatic to provide George Winham with a text. He was seated at a writing table engaged upon an article for the *Criterion*—in the hope, that is to say, that "they" would accept it. In the irreverence of colonial youth, its hedonism and undisguised republicanism, he could trace—he thought—the working of a uniform principle—nothing less than the

## AT THE THRESHOLD

decay of sentiment. It was indeed many years, he reflected, since Sterne took his celebrated trip abroad.

The atmosphere of Murray-street (in the suburbs) was one of peace—congenial, therefore, to a man in the feverish throes of composition. The power behind Mr. Winham's pen was easily disturbed. It was the evening of September the thirtieth—a date not unimportant in the history of events which it inaugurated. The room—it was an upstairs one leading into a balcony—was comfortably furnished enough—embellished in addition with mementoes of that Past which an ex-'Varsity representative man loves to recall. A common error it is to suppose that discomfort—dark chambers and straw, to wit—furnishes the best stimulus to literary work : rather is immediate comfort with the loss of it in prospect a more

## *AT THE THRESHOLD*

prolific procreator. Born in cheerfulness an idea will live—baptised subsequently in tears it will never die. It is the second step that counts for Fame. Tavistock House—a lonely-looking building of brick, holding aloof from its neighbours—was the exclusive property of Miss Margaret Stuyvesant, a maiden lady of certain age. Miss S. was particular, and consented to receive gentlemen boarders only on the footing of paying guests. Mr. Winham had been recommended to her, and, so far, she had no fault to find with him. He was gentlemanly, tidy, kept good hours—in this respect contrasting advantageously with that inveterate irregular, Mr. Wells, and—he had paid in advance. His reputed talents were neither here nor there—negligible quantities. For his part, Winham had been much too self-absorbed in the early days of his isolation to be even

## AT THE THRESHOLD

critical of surroundings, and his fellow-lodger was sufficiently uncompanionable to be tolerable. George Winham had been hardly treated. Fate robbed the boy of five of what no money could redeem—his parents; Fortune, more mercenary, beggared the young man of twenty of what remained. He was an orphan and with expectations until within a few weeks of his coming of age, disastrous speculation—shares in a bank that closed its doors in the day of panic and subsequently put up its shutters altogether—deprived him of his inheritance, and with it his faith in trustees. These gentlemen, more or less shamefacedly, made offers of assistance—a clerkship with a mercantile firm was apparently the best available—but they were all declined, the honour man in “literature” being not at all dismayed at the prospect of a single-

## AT THE THRESHOLD

handed fight for a position in the world of "letters." It satisfied the pent-up yearnings of an ambitious boyhood. Nature, more kind than Fortune, had given him a frame well-knit and supple, to which was added a clear-brained head, the most striking feature of which was a pair of penetrating grey eyes, which even now were occupied in probing beneath the surface of things. It was half-past eleven when the writer threw down his pen and with a yawn stretched himself. The consciousness of a good night's work done gives a rare flavour to tobacco and makes a luxury of reverie. Winham's thoughts reverted to Alma Mater—who henceforth was to know him no more save as a man who had done well in Arts, and of whom a career might safely be predicted. (A miniature of the larger world, a University does not break its heart

## AT THE THRESHOLD

over parting with a promising *alumnus*. None the less it takes a kindly interest in his development.) There are times in life when, despite individual effort, a man's future hangs upon a chance trifle—a single impulse from without—and to Winham, all unconscious, such a time had come. It was a warm evening and the faintest breeze was blowing through the open window. Such was the stillness of the hour that the unexpected sound of voices outside startled the man with a future from his dreams.

Two men were engaged in close conversation.

“What do you say to making it out for a thousand, then?”

The voice was that of Mr. Wells—recognisable by its strident tones.

“Don't talk so loud. There's a light in your place.”

Winham moved nearer to the window.

## AT THE THRESHOLD

"You're in a funk, Jukes. It's only a sucking pressman — quite harmless." Reassured, Mr. Jukes raised his voice a little.

"Better make it five, I think. We musn't play too high."

"That wants thinking over. A couple apiece, then, and one for \_\_\_\_\_."

"No names, remember. The cashier you mean."

"Are you quite sure of your man?"

"Certain. There's another little affair hanging over him. He's ripe for anything."

"Good. When did you say the boat leaves?"

"Saturday, at noon."

"That will give us a couple of hours clear."

Winham extinguished the light and passed into his bedroom. Five minutes later the creak of an inserted latch-key, followed by a sub-

## AT THE THRESHOLD

dued tread upon the stairs carpet, announced the arrival of his fellow lodger. Mr. Lavington Wells followed an indefinite calling—what, no one knew exactly—but in the floating of divers Companies and Societies, which, with a brave flourish of trumpets, promised alluring dividends, and, after a meteoric career, came ingloriously to grief—he certainly had a hand. In appearance he was portly, with a smooth, reddish face, and hair and whiskers of a less pronounced tint. He wore jewellery. Commercial to the finger tips, it was his boast that he never read anything except the business columns of the daily papers—a truthful statement, but obviously intended to convey a severe reproof to an unpractical scribbler. Extremes meet in a boarding-house. Winham, given over to strange emotions, tossed about impatiently in

## *AT THE THRESHOLD*

bed. He had undoubtedly overheard a conversation conducted in the open street—quite a hundred yards away. He was under the same roof with a man who was confessedly a rogue, and yet natural scruples forbade his resenting the discomfort of such a position. His plain duty as a law-abiding citizen was to frustrate the felonious intent, his duty as a man to keep his own counsel. Eventually he decided upon a compromise, and, having satisfied his conscience, went off to sleep.

“Good morning,” said Mr. Wells, affably, briskly unwrapping the newspaper. Mr. Winham acknowledged the greeting with a nod. They were sitting at the breakfast table, at one end of which Miss Stuyvesant was in attendance upon the china. She prided herself on always dressing appropriately, and in the morning habitually wore

## AT THE THRESHOLD

a coffee-coloured tea gown. It was calculated to please everybody.

“Do you know anything of a man named Jukes, Mr. Wells?” Winham asked casually, helping him to a chop. Punctuality at the table already had won the seat at the head of it.

Mr. Lavington Wells looked up from his paper in mild surprise. “The insurance canvasser you mean? Yes, why?”

“I fancy I heard him exchanging confidences with a friend last night.”

Mr. Wells helped himself to a slice of toast.

“Indeed! Very imprudent of Mr. Jukes, I should say, discussing business at that hour, and in the hearing of strangers.”

“I was an unwilling listener. It *was* rather late.”

“Your window was open, I suppose. I should have sung out to

## AT THE THRESHOLD

them to finish their discussion somewhere else."

"I didn't care to rouse the house. The two men were standing by the lamp post."

"Your hearing must be remarkably good, Mr. Winham?"

"Unfortunately it is."

"Dear me," said Miss Stuyvesant, setting down her cup to avoid an accident. "People should be more careful."

"At any rate," said Mr. Wells, with sudden gravity, and addressing himself to the lady, "Mr. Winham is a gentleman, and not likely to retail the substance of a private conversation. May I trouble you for another cup?"

Winham kept his temper with an effort. "One's duty in such a case is rather hard to determine, Mr. Wells," he said, pointedly. "As a friend of Mr. Jukes, it might be of advantage that you should let him

know of my position in the matter. He might have to alter his plans."

"Certainly, by all means," acquiesced the financier, meeting the other man's eye with admirable frankness. "No doubt the correct thing under the circumstances. I'll make a note of it."

He resumed consideration of the Stock and Share lists. Winham rose abruptly, and, hinting at an early engagement, went out for a walk. Mr. Lavington Wells took his leave for the day with characteristic insouciance, to which was added a certain new repose that inspired confidence. He did not return as usual in the evening, nor, indeed, as events proved, on any subsequent occasion—a line of conduct which was variously estimated at Tavistock House.

"Very satisfactory," thought Mr. Winham.

## *AT THE THRESHOLD*

“Most ungentlemanly,” said Miss Stuyvesant. A mental resolve to establish future guests on a sounder commercial footing took immediate root. Winham, however, decided to maintain a diplomatic reticence. Policy is sometimes the best honesty.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

*“ Break-up ! ” Ah ! oft it is our fate  
To break up precious things :  
Friendships—perhaps a Love that late  
Confessed, to mem’ry clings.*

—THE DOMINIE.

“ So here you are ! ”

The door-way framed a “ study in pink.” Mr. George Winham looked up from contemplation of the supper table and smiled, not ill-pleased at being discovered—even thus.

“ Will you have some claret-cup ? ”

Miss Elma Joyce said “ Thank you,” to indicate that she was not unwilling.

The latest whim of the “ Wood-nymphs,” whose return dance to the “ Dryad ” bachelors it was—

## THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

was to exchange rôles with the men and engage partners for themselves, a caprice that was popular with the lazy men.

"I came in to get cool," Mr. Winham explained.

"It *is* warm to-night," Miss Joyce admitted, setting down her glass.

Mr. Winham emphatically agreed. "We'll be sensible and sit ours out," he added. Receiving a smile of acquiescence, he caught up a basket chair and followed his partner on to the verandah. Taking thought he went inside again for a rug and the two descended the steps together. The "Woodnymphs" were fortunate in their hostess, Mrs. D'Arcy Smith, a young and wealthy widow, given to hospitality and good works. Her husband, the late colonel, had made a fortune in Mashonaland, and, not unnaturally, the ball-room

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

at "Waroonga" was one of the finest in the suburbs. To stimulate the exchange of confidences, perhaps, the shrubbery was illuminated by coloured lanterns, but the velvety lawns, dark and cool looking, proved more inviting to Winham and his partner. Miss Joyce tied a handkerchief about her head.

"You won't mind my having a cigarette," asked the Dryad at her feet, stretching his limbs. He was wont to indulge his own sweet will without permission.

"Not if you promise to be very agreeable. Smoking improves the temper, I believe." Mr. Winham's face was long enough to justify the request.

"I'm going to cut this sort of thing after to-night," he began gloomily.

The deep-blue eyes opened wide. "Really? Do you mean it? I never know when to take you seriously."

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

"Truthfully—it's not a joke. A case of needs must, that's all."

"But what are you going to do—write for the papers—literature?"

"Amateur journalism, toned by circumstances."

"I think literature sounds better. Well"—she smiled to soften the flattery—"if you write as well as you waltz, your fortune is assured."

He bowed. "Thank you. It's not so pleasant as dancing, of course, and by the law of compensation should prove more profitable. In a ready money sense, I mean."

"How mercenary young ambition is."

"Only when it's hard-up."

"I used to think years ago, when I was a girl at school, that I never should admire a man who did not make a name."

"A pretty hard thing to do now-a-days. A fellow can try, of course. Doing nothing pleasantly

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

is certainly poor financing. Here's the traditional foundation stone." He pulled a half-crown out of his pocket, and, after balancing it on thumb and forefinger, spun it. It fell upon the kangaroo-skin, with "the tail" uppermost. "Bad luck," he said to himself. His companion was looking at the stars. How well pink became her! Somehow she seemed above him to-night—a being on a higher plane—visible but unapproachable. She had always attracted him strongly, and in her presence alone, he had lately discovered, he was completely at rest. She seemed to radiate a sympathetic, even protecting, care. Yet he was going to say good-bye presently. He flicked impatiently at his cigarette, and, in so doing, extinguished it. Another omen!

"We shall not see very much of you in future, then?" Miss Joyce remarked quietly, after the pause.

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

"No. It's pretty hard lines."

"Oh! men always manage to enjoy themselves. I quite envy you your freedom from our conventional life. It's always the same—Darby-and-Joan like."

"It needn't make any difference to our friendship," he said, lamely.

"Oh, nothing so serious as that, of course." How stupid he was to-night.

"We've been very good chums." He delivered himself of an anathema upon fate. Fortunately only the grass blades heard it. When she spoke again it was gravely,—much as a sister to an erring brother. "A new life means new friendships, perhaps. And yet—why should you give up everything?"

"My friends have taken to pitying me. I can't stand that."

"You think so because you are so imaginative and you are too headstrong to accept advice. But

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

you will succeed, I think. Determined men always do. Some day when you are a famous writer—if success doesn't spoil you—I may —”

“What?” She met his upturned gaze smilingly, as she answered: “Give a reception in honour of somebody.”

She was laughing at him, of course. He frowned.

“You are a thorough society girl, after all.”

“We are both a little mercenary, perhaps.”

“You don't, I suppose, believe in—well—affinity?”

“Elective? That's science for love at first sight, isn't it?”

“What a flirt you are!” It was out at last. Ordinarily he was a man of pluck, but he was terribly afraid of being made a fool of. To show how much he felt it, he laughed.

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

"I didn't mean that. Forgive me. It was rude even in fun."

The expression upon Miss Joyce's oval face indicated that it didn't matter in the least. He changed the subject.

"What a pretty girl Miss Devonshire is! Jolly, too. She gave me the last polka."

"Yes, she dances well. Most Melbourne girls do."

Mr. Winham felt himself challenged to a comparison. For which reason perhaps he did not respond. Instead he lit a fresh cigarette. "I wonder where I shall be this night twelve months," he said aloud to a ring of smoke.

"A man's idea of being agreeable is to talk about himself."

"To avoid being inquisitive."

"Or bored."

"Certainly not. I've been a bear to-night, I'm afraid. I shan't

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

have any more opportunities of growling at you."

Miss Joyce did not reply. To Winham she appeared unresponsive and pitiless—even as the stars so remote and chill. The air was passionless and still. The very crickets seemed to have hushed their cries—the better to hear—and the only sound, the regular plash of a fountain, served but to accentuate the silence. A meteor shot across the sky. A wish might have been on the lips of both—it was not uttered. Someone—a fair-haired man with a yellow moustache—threw open one of the French windows and stepped on to the verandah. It was Mr. Cuthbert Mayne in search of a partner. Miss Joyce rose. "Oh, dear ! it's the second extra already." She accepted Winham's arm. At the foot of the steps he disengaged her and held out his hand. "It's

*THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

good-bye," he said. Mr. Mayne coughed. Miss Joyce took the proffered hand without any trace of emotion. "Good night."

## CHAPTER III.

### IN NEW BOHEMIA.

*The garden's wide. If fruit's unripe  
There's fragrance in the briar.  
Like Pan of old I'll sport the pipe—  
A fig for Fortune's ire.—AD TUBUM.*

THE outward and visible sign of the Anti-Philistine Club was a large upper room in Princess-street, City. The fraternity within assembled was a cultured one, with a professed abhorrence of the conventional, which kept it ostensibly within the confines of Bohemia. The qualification necessary for membership was merit—there was no other. But the distinctive feature of the club was the self-depreciative bearing of members. A Mutual Improvement Society on new lines—it set its face steadily against re-

## IN NEW BOHEMIA

ciprocal admiration, taking that for granted, no doubt, and encouraged instead a hostile criticism, which generated an atmosphere of pessimism. To have heard them talk one would have supposed Anti-Philistines to be men very much beneath their reputations. For the most part the club kept exclusively to itself, occasionally going out of its way to entertain an itinerant celebrity at a fish or oyster supper. More rarely a banquet was given.

Such was the institution at whose portals George Winham stood one night in the capacity of a newly elected member. The paternity of "Lance-tilts"—his literary first-born—had been made public, and here he was, he said to himself, on the stepping-stone to distinction. It was a proud moment. Honorary Secretary Westby, a big man with a full red beard, bore down upon him like a man-of-war, and put out

a hand like a grappling-iron. "Come in, dear boy," he said. Everything about Westby was big, especially his heart. Report credited him with the possession of one or two large vices—truly, perhaps, for he did not pose as a stern moralist. In spite of his frankness and geniality, "Dick" was vaguely understood to have had a Past, concerning which he was religiously reticent. In the daytime, "for bread-and-cheese purposes," as he expressed it, he kept other men's books and audited their accounts. In the evening, when not engaged with "first-night" notices, he wrote lyrics for his own amusement. To him the club owed its being and its present vitality. "Come in," he repeated. "I'll introduce you to everybody worth knowing; it won't take long." He linked his arm with Winham's, and they walked up the room together. In appearance it

## *IN NEW BOHEMIA*

was a cheerful resort—this home of the savant and the connoisseur. The newcomer was conscious of a blaze of light and the murmur of many voices. Everybody almost was smoking a churchwarden, and with an air of conscious virtue. In groups men stood about chatting, or seated round small circular tables discussed the contents of frothing pewter-pots and other matters. The Anti-Philistines drank beer more from principle than choice, and, being a conscientious sect, the bell-pull which communicated with the bar below was in a state of constant agitation. What struck Winham at once was the deadly earnestness of members. Westby alone, his big face beaming with satisfaction as he nodded jovially to right and left, appeared to treat everything good humouredly. He had lived in Old Bohemia. A white-haired dreamy-looking man

whose clothes, like the clouds on Hamlet, hung heavily upon him, came towards the new member and was introduced as Mr. Littlemore, the impressionist. "George Winham, author," said Westby, theatrically. "Ah," said the artist, tapping his forehead, "I remember now, of 'Lance-tilts,' isn't it?" The essayist bowed. "Criticism superficial, style bombastic, a failure, in fact," he said gravely. Mr. Littlemore looked relieved. "Happy to make your acquaintance, sir. I do a little brush work myself—sunsets and water studies and that kind of thing—mere trifles. They sell, though. The charitableness of the public is something wonderful, sir." He glared and limped away. Mr. Ambrose Edwards, well-known in press circles, was the next to be button-holed. A stoutish gentleman, with a florid countenance, to which a gold pince-nez lent much-

## IN NEW BOHEMIA

needed dignity. "I'm here on false pretences, Mr. Winham," he said, apologetically. "You remember Beaconsfield's definition of a critic, of course?"

"He made no allowance for conscientiousness—didn't believe in it himself, perhaps." Mr. Ambrose Edwards nodded. "He was right. Half of our work is written up before the curtain rises, the rest after a substantial supper. People take it for gospel, though. Carlyle also was correct—as a popular psychologist." He shook his head and walked off as though anxious to avoid cross-examination.

"And now," said Westby, "you had better interview Wainwright." A benevolent-looking man with shrewd, kindly eyes, protected by spectacles, was discovered—sitting solitary at a side table—leisurely turning over the leaves of a recent *Punch*.

## IN NEW BOHEMIA

“One of your own fallen estate, Wainwright,” said Westby—“a coming writer.” Then, as an importunate chess crony plucked him by an arm, “I’ll leave you together,” he added. In the estimation of his enemies the editor of the *Daily Messenger* was a disappointed man—a dangerous Radical successfully tamed by the shackles of routine work. A humane man whom circumstances occasionally compelled to gall—ink not being pungent enough—more justly said those who knew him. “Splendid fellow, Westby,” he began, enthusiastically—in defiance of club law—“have you read his ‘Affinities’ in last Saturday’s?”

Winham admitted that he had—but in unhappy ignorance of the author.

“He contributes anonymously always,” explained the editor. “Says self-advertisement brands

*IN NEW BOHEMIA*

a man as a hopeless Moabite. It's useless, consequently, advising him to collect and publish."

"Verse that is not racy and yet is popular is exceedingly rare just now. Overcome his indifference, and I should say no obstacle to publication remains." "Obstacles are necessary sometimes. By-the-way, I've been reading your own brochure, Mr. Winham. You'll pardon me for saying that enthusiasm has warped your judgment here and there. In appraising a literary cygnet, for example, you dignify him to the position of a full-fledged swan." This was criticism from the shoulder, and Winham felt bound to defend himself. Truth—even prophetic truth—he ventured to assert, was the offspring of passionate conviction. Then only was the mind capable of clear vision. It was an inauspicious moment to proffer his services as

an occasional contributor, but Winham risked it. In reply Mr. Wainwright was calm and judicial. Newspapers were not conducted along purely philanthropic lines, he pointed out. It would upset even the best of them—financially. The life-blood of our circulation,” continued the editor, with a bold inversion of metaphor, “is advertisements and ‘up-to-date matter,’ interesting to at least ninety-nine per cent. of our readers. The permanent literary staff is always equal to an emergency. Take the advice of an old pressman,” he said in conclusion, “and leave pure literature alone. Don’t be in a hurry to publish anything. The Truth will out and will endure—all else will have its little day and die.”

“After that, Winham, you really must go in for fiction,” Westby, making an unexpected re-appear-

## IN NEW BOHEMIA

ance, broke in. The three men crossed the room together.

"Ah, here's Morse," said the secretary with evident delight, bringing up before a quartette, seated at a card-table, but evidently not engaged in playing.

"We were discussing the possibility of communication at a distance, Westby," said a clean-shaven, sallow-faced man, whom Winham knew by sight as Bellingham, the barrister.

"Scientifically known as telepathy," put in Macmorragh, an enthusiastic public-school head teacher, and a recognised authority on Johnson. Thanks to a prodigious memory his knowledge was encyclopædic. "Thank you, Mac," said the secretary, gravely, "I understand now. What says the Professor?"

The occupant of the chair of Morbid Anatomy at the university shook

his head. It implied deprecation. "Nothing new, perhaps. The subject is in the experimental stage yet, and, as you know, thought-transference is a recognised phenomenon."

"*Vide* the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research," quoth Macmorragh, mechanically and half to himself.

"Certainly communication by brain waves is no new thing," said Bellingham. "How else account for authentic premonitions."

"Coincidence and hallucination explain a good many so-called phenomena," put in the editor, drily.

"I should imagine that a hypersensitive membrane is peculiarly liable to vibrations from outside influences," said Macmorragh with gusto.

"What a time of it you must

## IN NEW BOHEMIA

have, Mac," said the secretary sympathetically.

Winham could not restrain himself.

"I know of a case," he said, "where a person, acutely sensitive, overheard a conversation, whispered, quite a hundred yards away."

"Not incredible," said the Professor, regarding the speaker with interest. "Such sensitiveness, however, amounts to clairaudience—quite a supernormal faculty, of course. Well, we are getting serious. Will you join us in some beer, Mr. Winham? These fellows never will allow me to get away from shop." He rang the bell.

"We are now, at all events, on common ground," said Macmorragh, looking at everyone but Westby, and distributing the tankards which the waiter had just

deposited. "Drink deep and taste not the colonial spring."

"*A little poetry* with some men is like dynamite," Westby retorted. "Messieurs, the Club!"

He nodded to the Professor, and with evident relish, drained his pewter. Then in company with Macmorragh, whose tried worth as a clubman no disparagement could impair, he strolled off, leaving Winham to take a hand at whist with Professor Morse for a partner.

## CHAPTER IV.

### AN ISRAELITE INDEED !

*"The Past is many-hued. But still  
Hope tints with gold  
The unknown Future. Every ill  
Kind Fates withhold."*—SCHÖNES LEBEN.

*"My friend's the same in shade and shine."*  
—AD SODALEM.

TRUE to its traditions "The Criterion" declined "The Decay of Sentiment." The article was not without merit, and Winham had the satisfaction of seeing a printed column above his signature in the *Afternoon Post*—an enterprising journal conducted by a Cambridge man, who did not encourage anonymity. In the first flush of success—the road to ruin is smooth in the beginning—Winham treated himself to a new pipe, and ordered

## *AN ISRAELITE INDEED*

beer for dinner. With him extravagance and economy were matters of circumstances rather than principle. Ambitious young-manhood, however, needs an occasional pat on the back, even if it has to be self-administered, and Mr. Audrey, Winham's table-companion and the successor to Mr. Lavington Wells, did not drink. He was a solicitor, eminently respectable and somewhat shy of being on terms of camaraderie with a struggling pressman. Struggling, truly! But the story of rejected manuscripts is as old as the first newspaper. It is all contained in three chapters—(1), Hope; (2), Diffidence; (3), Despair. Sometimes there is a postscript—by another hand. A few there are who in their day turned the tide of circumstances and have since achieved success. Their fame is literary—it should be moral—but the result, perhaps, is more

## *AN ISRAELITE INDEED*

satisfactory to their households. In the space of eleven weeks Winham succeeded in deluging an already-flooded market with his MSS.—which, like bread upon the waters, returned to him. At first a stubborn belief in his own capacity to write well kept his articles at a respectable level; but when the lesson of failure could no longer be postponed, he took it to heart, renounced academic essays, and openly courted hack-work. It was literary gambling, but he was growing reckless. More than once he had surprised himself in the attitude of a doting Swift—looking back with as much wonder as vanity on the days when he wrote his masterpiece. Times had indeed changed. He was in a new University now, taking up such hitherto-neglected courses as self-assertion and bargaining. An occasional visit to Mr. Lamb—self-styled expert in gentlemen's dis-

*AN ISRAELITE INDEED*

carded raiment—was but a corollary to such experiences. Every new one was a formative influence. When—on one particularly fine morning—so near and dear a relative as Mr. Abrahams resolutely declined to impawn an old-fashioned hunting lever — at any price, Winham merely laughed. He had touched bottom. The last stage but one had been reached the previous evening—a statement of claims having been submitted by Miss Stuyvesant with an expression of countenance that indicated business. Under the circumstances Winham decided to renew his acquaintance with Mr. Richard Westby, who occupied, for business purposes, a couple of upstairs rooms in Flinders-street. Other men's moods might vary, but Westby was the same cheery spirit always, and a fellow-Israelite, especially if he were in straits, was sure of a welcome at

## *AN ISRAELITE INDEED*

his hand, "a cigar, dear boy, and something to sip." His work never seemed to worry him in the least. He did it in his shirt sleeves, standing up to the desk—whilst visitors sat in the adjoining room—smoking his Manillas and drinking his claret—when there was any. Squaring his shoulders and looking straight ahead of him, Winham crossed into Flinders-street and ascended the well-worn stair-case. The office door was locked, but there was an explanatory notice up: "Back in a day or two. R.W." Rather vague, Winham thought. There was a solicitor's office on the same flat in temporary possession of a clerk. He was a stunted youth, with an oppressively high collar, and cheeks prematurely blown by excessive cigarette smoking. "Want to see Mr. Westby?" he shouted, "Well! he's not in. Dodging creditors, perhaps. Numberthirteen

## AN ISRAELITE INDEED

Emerald-street, Greenfields, will probably find him." It did. Winham walked over in the afternoon, and was admitted by an elderly woman—a working house-keeper apparently, shabbily dressed—who, after a careful scrutiny of the caller, bade him follow her into an inner room. Westby, his long hair characteristically long and unkempt, was in bed—half lying, half sitting—propped up with pillows. His face was flushed, as with fever. Nevertheless, he smiled gaily as of old.

"Very good of you, old fellow," he said, putting out a gaunt hand. "The sight of a true anti-Philistine is cheering. I'm having a dreadful time. *Durum, sed levius fit*. Phew!" He whistled with pain. "Pardon me, dear boy, but it's the very devil." Winham asked if he could do anything.

"Sit you down, mon ami, light

## *AN ISRAELITE INDEED*

your pipe and talk to me. I'm tired of swearing in solitude. Drive away these phantoms." It was like asking a blind man to count the stars, but poor Winham did his best. The talk, light and impersonal at first, drifted imperceptibly into a recital of literary experiences. Westby listened patiently to the younger man's narrative — the story of literature as a profession—nodding every now and then in the manner of an old hand who recognises something once familiar—and then partially opened the floodgates of his own full past. "It was in the old days," he said, sitting up, supported by an elbow, "when all the money was spent and I decided to make a living by my pen. Foolish, fond young man! Articles, verses, and sketches, would-be potboilers all, with hardly one fortunate exception, went the way of all waste-paper, and I was about

## AN ISRAELITE INDEED

to end everything in sheer disgust of it when I got a commission to write some stories for the Christmas numbers. The tide had turned. I walked the streets night and day hunting for material—a lesser “Boz.” Then I locked myself up for a week with half a dozen bottles of brandy and my inspirations. We were good company; my sensitive brain couldn’t have stood solids—organic or inorganic. The reward came at Christmas. By my pals! but it was a merry one. I can see them now. Goldsworthy, the bard without a ‘note;’ fighting Devenish with his *War* medals in pawn; Makepeace Williams—‘the divine’ we used to call him—and the rest of them. Twenty years ago! *Anni labuntur!* Well, the New Year dawned and—the tide went out again. My last days as a *flâneur* were degenerate ones. The Muse has never forgiven me that.” Winham looked at him inquiringly.

## AN ISRAELITE INDEED

"Yes, it's a mistake to trust one's whole weight to literature," Westby concluded, resting his head on the pillows again. "If you succeed, well. It's failure that is so hard."

Winham laughed. "I remember telling a girl once I thought literature would prove lucrative. She seemed to think so too."

Westby put out a sympathetic hand. "There's more than one bond between us, my boy, only you are going to win, I think."

"I'm just about tired of waiting to start," Winham answered, with the egotism that is proof against fine touches of feeling. The deep waters of that epoch of which Westby spoke so seldom were indeed strangely troubled. Suddenly the face of the sick man cleared. "Will you do me a favour? Thank you. It's only to take my place at the *Guelph* to-night and do a critique

AN ISRAELITE INDEED

of the pantomime. It will be worth more than the mere guinea to you. Tut! tut! that's all right. The money will help you a little and you will be doing me a good turn. I can't afford to disappoint the *Messenger*. There's a press-ticket on that table, and—reach me an envelope, will you?" He scribbled a few words. "That will do. The sub. will probably take the copy as read and pass it on to the printer, who'll imagine I've been taking writing lessons. Something light and racy is what is wanted—and above all, generous. One caustic line on some poor devil's best may cost him his bread and butter."

Westby closed his eyes. He was in torture again. Winham stammered his thanks. "It's awfully good of you, old fellow. I only hope I shan't disgrace you." The invalid smiled. "It's the other way about, my boy."

AN ISRAELITE INDEED

“Is there anything I can get for you? Will you have a doctor?”

This time the invalid laughed outright. “And a ‘hit-or-miss’ prescription. No, thank you. Just hand me that sleeping draught, there’s a good chap. Thanks. Here’s success! Morpheus, most obdurate of deities, I look towards you—if you are about. *Au revoir, mon ami.* Copy in before two o’clock, remember.”

And, turning over upon his side, Westby closed his eyes once more. The feverish light in them had died out.

With the more regular beating of his heart his lips were moving in unison—

“We know we love—though ruthless fate,  
With flaming sword, bars Eden’s gate,  
And knowledge sweet has come so late—  
We know we love.

*AN ISRAELITE INDEED*

“ Eyes smile to eyes—and, shining clear,  
Love melts the mists of doubt and fear.  
Seas may divide—apart, yet near  
Eyes smile to eyes.

“ Heart beats with heart—nor Time nor Space  
Hath pow’r to sever the embrace  
In slumber-land—the trysting place—  
Heart beats with heart.

“ Soul speaks to soul—two visions bright,  
Irradiant with no earthly light.  
Sweet the commune in silent night !  
Soul speaks to soul.

“ Our secret keep. The voice that saith  
‘ We love ’ is not the night-wind’s breath.  
Divine, ’twill triumph over death.—  
Our secret keep.”

## CHAPTER V.

### THE POINT OF VIEW.

*The world's a stage—erected, no doubt, to amuse the Gods.*

THE *Royal Guelph Theatre* was crowded. A new pantomime by Becket and Knight, the celebrated collaborateurs, who worked so harmoniously together (in public) was a guarantee of wit and melody; and the “*Faery Queene*” had a splendid welcome. Society—conscious that it was looking its very best—filled the dress circle, smiling and expectant. Less fashionably attired, Mr. Ambrose Edwards, the *Criterion* critic, sat in the press-box, nonchalantly reading an evening paper, thus happily combining work and amusement. A party, choice rather than select, invited by Mrs. Har-

## *THE POINT OF VIEW*

rison James, the estimable wife of a retired Barrier miner, occupied the box opposite in two rows of four. Mrs. James had many friends and deserved to have. Well enough off to have been a law unto others, she was nevertheless unassuming, a natural, homely demeanour—the inheritance of a humble parentage—operating beneficially against her husband's somewhat ostentatious manner. No one had ever heard her privily slander her neighbour. Her guests this evening were young people, and they were fashionably talkative.

“The tableaux? Oh, yes; everything went off splendidly. The fortune-telling alone brought in ten pounds. There's Mrs. Smith.” Miss Joyce's attention was divided between the costumes in the dress-circle and the remarks of a gentleman beside her. Mr. Cuthbert Mayne was a bank manager and a

## *THE POINT OF VIEW*

bachelor. He was considered the handsomest man in town—a reputation which accounted for his fine self-confidence.

“Who was the Gipsy?” he asked.

“Ah! That’s a secret. What a striking profile Miss Devonshire has!”

“Very. Have any of the prophecies come true?”

“It’s too soon yet to say. I’m to die an old maid; Mrs. Smith is to be married in the autumn; and——”

“Is that Miss Devonshire with Mrs. Smith?” interrupted Mr. Harrison James, after a comprehensive scrutiny of Society through his opera glasses.

“Yes; her niece, you know. It was she who arranged the Gipsy Encampment.”

“Ah!” said Mr. Mayne, impressively, but Miss Joyce was busy

## THE POINT OF VIEW

bowing to somebody. Mr. Harrison James picked up the thread.

"Is Dr. Howard engaged to her—do you know, Mayne?"

"It's not given out. You've met him, of course. Quiet sort of fellow." Mr. Harrison James nodded.

"Clever chap. He rusticated at Cambridge, I'm told."

The well-bred Mayne forebore to smile.

"Oh, yes; with honours. Knocked down a proctor in mistake for a 'bull-dog,' I believe."

"How very ludicrous," said Mrs. James, laughing.

"Night was dark, perhaps," suggested Mr. Mayne.

"How mean of you," thought Miss Joyce, frowning at him.

"Gay dogs those medicals," said Mr. Harrison James.

At this point the orchestra sounded the opening bars of a fantasia, and under cover of the

## THE POINT OF VIEW

fluttering play-leaflets Mr. Mayne resumed his *tête-à-tête* with Miss Joyce.

Meanwhile, the deputy-representative of the *Daily Messenger* was endeavouring to accommodate himself to circumstances—a position of responsibility in the stalls. From the standpoint of a quondam Society man his vicarious office was to be deprecated. He felt grateful, therefore, to Mr. Abrahams for having accepted his dress-clothes for an indefinite period, thereby removing the temptation to resume his old position. Literally, he noted with some chagrin, he was now beneath his former acquaintances. There was consolation in the reflection that there is an aristocracy of letters—to which mere Wealth cannot attain. The curtain rose—revealing a picturesque drop-scene. The moated castle carried one back centuries, whilst the red-cross

## THE POINT OF VIEW

knight, in the pink of condition, posing so centaur-like in the foreground, revived memories of the days of chivalry. Still life gave place to a picture full of animation—wood-nymphs *saltants*. Moved by a subtle magnetism he felt but could not define Winham's heart was beating time—*temps à deux*—to the merry measure. The pantomine—a pretty absurdity in the prevailing fashion—went smoothly, tripping along so divertingly that the inexperienced critic found himself borne along with it. Fortunately he possessed a good memory—a natural aptitude for receiving and retaining impressions. It had never occurred to him that “flimsy” might be out of place in the decorous stalls; and well it was that he found himself able to dispense with that *vade mecum* of gentlemen of the Press. “Mr. Clunes was ‘the lion’ of the evening. His evident humanity

## THE POINT OF VIEW

explained away a long-standing mystery—the chivalrous guardianship of Una, to wit. The ‘song of the lion’ was, appropriately enough, received with roars—of laughter. Man is a gregarious animal.” This anticipatory extract from the *Messenger* of the following morning was written in the library of the Anti-Philistine Club. It boasted an excellent edition of Spenser.

The performance over, a good-humoured crowd poured forth at the exit doors. The night was cloudy, and warm for the month, and the street was unusually animated. Flaming gas jets, illuminating savoury-smelling fish and oyster saloons, tempted the supper-hungry; energetic newsboys, not at all apologetically, cried the contents of the last special; cabmen shouted and dexterously pirouetted their vehicles, defying guardians of the law to rob them of a fare. Here and

## *THE POINT OF VIEW*

there a private carriage was drawn up stiffly, condescendingly even. Winham, lingering for a moment at the theatre doors—out of idle curiosity or in obedience to some stronger impulse—was attracted by the appearance of an Italian mendicant—a striking figure with bared head and bloodshot eyes, who stood on the outskirts of the crowd awaiting his chance. It came with the presence of a tall man in a light overcoat, who was escorting two ladies.

“For love of God, sir,” whined the Italian, confronting him, “give me something. My wife and children are starving.”

One of the ladies instinctively felt for her purse.

“I have nothing for you,” said the tall man, brusquely.

The beggar’s eyes were fixed upon the generously-disposed lady’s hand, and he stood his ground, but

## THE POINT OF VIEW

uncertainly. He was evidently in liquor.

"Get out of the way," said the gentleman in charge.

The Italian hesitated, and the next minute was pushed aside. He stumbled and fell into the gutter. Rising quickly with a muttered malediction, the drunkard drew his knife. Winham saw the movement, and was on to him like a flash. Gripping him by the hand and the collar of his blouse, he brought him down heavily. The stiletto fell rattling upon the paving-stones, and the man in the overcoat turned round.

Winham recognised Dr. Howard, without revealing his own identity. Congratulating himself on having avoided a *mêlée*, the doctor handed his companions into a carriage, and seating himself in front, was driven off.

"You murderous scoundrel,"

## *THE POINT OF VIEW*

said Winham, anxious to settle the matter off-hand. "Clear out of this as quick as you like, or I'll hand you over to the police. Off with you."

Sobered and thoroughly cowed, the man picked up his knife and slunk away. Winham, evading the crowd which had begun to assemble, walked off briskly in the direction of the club, in Princess-street. It was long past midnight when he reached Tavistock House. His brain was hot, every sense supernaturally acute. In his ears rang the jingles of the pantomime, and before his eyes glistened the uplifted stiletto. He went to bed but sleep refused to come, so he did the best thing under the circumstances—lay perfectly still upon the broad of his back and waited patiently for the dawn. Through the window a belated moon playfully shot shafts of silver light

## *THE POINT OF VIEW*

as he passed on his upward way. Winham's feverish eyes wandered to a shadowy object on the wall opposite—the photograph of a 'Varsity group, and his attention was riveted by his efforts to identify individuals in the picture. Presently a peculiarly enervating influence stole over him—a feeling of depression succeeded by drowsiness. He felt himself sinking into a lethargic trance, in which his consciousness was abnormally active—it seemed to be a thing apart from his body, uplifted, and beyond control. (Once or twice before he had experienced a similar sensation, accompanied by a whimsical idea that the detached consciousness was putting the question to the passive body : “Am I really myself ?”) Then a voice—a faint whisper at first, but which gradually increased in volume, until its audibility was beyond doubt, said distinctly :

## THE POINT OF VIEW

*"I congratulate you on your night's work, Mr. George Winham."*

He sat bolt upright. There was no one else in the room. Mr. Audrey was downstairs—presumably asleep, and the window was closed. Was it an echo from the street?

"Who is it?" he asked, involuntarily opening his lips. The answer was instantaneous.

*"A friend. Listen! We are in telepathic communication."*

## CHAPTER VI.

### VOX HUMANA ?

*"In certain conditions of cerebral development the vibrations of brain waves are distinctly audible."*—AN OBITER DICTUM.

THE effect upon Winham was electrical. The dazed feeling vanished, giving way before a sense of alarm.

"Who are you?" he repeated, in a fierce whisper.

Simultaneously almost came the reply, each word resounding with a hollow, metallic echo as though it were issuing from a long tunnel: *"A higher Intelligence!"*

Winham's eyes dilated in their eagerness to pierce the darkness. Was it possible that he was *en rapport* with the Divine Itself? "Are you from without or within?" He had closed his lips, and with

conscious effort willed the question from him. Faintly audible were the echoes of his words, which, as if vocalised in the brain from which they were being impelled, reverberated and died in distance. His ears were strained with the utmost tension to catch every word of the reply as it came: "*From without!*"

Winham felt relieved. It was not an innate conception, then—no brain-bred tormenting devil.

"*Where are you?*"

For a few seconds, during which the listener heard the beating of his own heart, the silence was complete. Then slowly and oracularly as before came the response:

"*In the neighbouring constellation—Aldeboran.*"

It was enough to turn a man's brain. What a secret to hold! But how terrible the position of the man to whom alone it might

VOX HUMANA?

be entrusted ! The voice continued :

*"Soul and body, you are now mine !"*

It was terrible. The perspiration showed in beads on Winham's forehead. If the worst was true, he could commit suicide.

"Is there a God, that such a thing is permitted ? By what right do you hold this power over me ?"

*"I am your Mahatma—in another world."*

"Your object is good, then. What do you want with me ? What am I to do ?"

*"Be a sensible man. Your imagination is running away with your reason. Like yourself I am human."*

"Who are you, then ?"

*"A friend—in closest sympathy. There is nothing to fear. It is a case of mutual attraction."*

"Are you very far away ?"

*"Don't you recognise the voice ?"*

It changed at the words, suddenly diminishing in volume, and the harsh note in it being replaced by a musical intonation. Surely those tones were familiar !

“ Are you a lady friend ? ”

“ *Do you not believe in elective affinity ?* ”

“ Elma ! Miss Joyce ! Is it possible that you are in communication with me ? ”

“ *You have a very interesting individuality, you know.* ”

“ Really ? Do you remember the Woodnymph’s dance at ‘ Wa-roonga ? ’ ”

“ *Everybody seemed to enjoy themselves.* ”

“ Is it true that you are engaged ? ”

“ *What a question to ask at such a time.* ”

“ It is true, then. Look here, Elma, are you only fooling me ? What is your object in trying to frighten me like this ? ”

*"There is no necessary correlation between the motive of an action and the effect of it. Don't be so stupid."*

"You know what my feeling is towards you. Why are you talking to me in this mysterious way?"

*"You speak as if I alone were responsible. Have you never recognised what a magnetic personality yours is?"*

"We are drawn to each other—that's it! Our love has simply annihilated distance. It's wonderful! Tell me—are you really attached to anyone else?"

*"Certainly not."*

"That's the best news I've had for months. Why, it's splendid our being able to chat together like this. I thought you were in the mountains."

*"Communication must now cease."*

The voice died away as suddenly as it had come. Winham's heart palpitated and his brain throbbed.

Surely this was the most wonderful thing in the world !

In absolute silence—which to a calmer mind would have been eloquently convincing afterwards—he lay upon the bed with parted lips, awaiting he knew not what. Soon a confused murmur, seemingly afar off, developed into a single vocal sound that gradually increased in volume and once more was stern and virile.

*“Don’t you think you’ve been making a pretty fool of yourself, Mr. George Winham.”* The sneering tones had the desired effect. In angry bewilderment Winham sat up.

“What is this? Can it be that I am in communication with the spirit world?”

*“Certainly not.”*

“Then am I a raving lunatic?”

*“A little excited, that’s all. I’ve only been breaking the news of*

*telepathic communication gently to you."*

"What are you—a man or a devil? For God's sake, tell me. I shall go stark staring mad if this continues much longer."

"*You have a very active brain—otherwise you are as sane as I am. Listen very attentively. My intention is to do you a great and lasting service. Will you give me your word of honour not to reveal a word of what passes between us at this or any future time?*" This was reassuring, but Winham's duty as a man demanded a discriminating submission—he considered. "I don't know. I may be selling myself to the devil."

"*But if I give you a distinct proof of my benevolence?*"

"For the present—at any rate—I will agree to say nothing. I'm in pretty low water just now."

"*Of that I am aware. Worrying*

*over ways and means has seriously impaired your normal health. Now listen. You are to do exactly what I tell you, obeying me in every particular or I can promise nothing. Do you agree to the condition?"*

*"I do—in the absence of any more acceptable alternative."*

*"In the first place, then, you are to call upon the editor of the 'Daily Messenger' this afternoon at three o'clock. You are to ask for work in an unemotional, business-like manner. Is that clear?"*

*"As daylight. I don't believe, of course, that anything will come of it. However, I've given my word."*

*"Very well, then. I may tell you that you will get what you ask. Not one word, remember, of this audience. Communication will now be cut off."*

*This conversation took place between three and four o'clock a.m. With the first glimmer of dawn,*

## VOX HUMANA?

Winham jumped out of bed and examined his face in the mirror. He didn't feel particularly mad; though his eyes, he noticed, were rather wild-looking. But that, of course, was due to loss of sleep and natural neurotic excitement. Who of all his friends was this strange visitant? What purpose had the man to serve? Why had he (Winham) been thus singled out? Was he to play the Genius to an unknown Aladdin? Of such perplexing problems the solutions were far to seek. A breath of fresh air in the garden might be of assistance. Bracing indeed he found it, so much so that with the arrogance of that morally-superior person, the early riser, he became for once contemptuous of sluggards. His long night's vigil was further rewarded by an early perusal of the *Messenger*. The critique on the pantomime had a prominent place, and he could

detect only one printer's error. But, such is the way of amateur contributors, he essayed a second reading, in the privacy of his bedroom. In so doing he fell asleep. The cure for insomnia was found at last !

He awoke some hours later with a start and the conviction that he had been the victim of a nightmare. He drew up the window-blinds, and the old familiar sunlight streaming in seemed to dissipate the extraordinary imaginings of the night and bring back the common-place world again. It was only an hallucination, then—most wonderfully realistic, however, the feverish fancy of an over-tasked brain—no doubt a cold shower would put him right. So he reasoned. Yet, in the face of what Wainwright had said at the club, this suggested visit to the editor could not have been a reflex of his own thought—an evo-

## *VOX HUMANA?*

lution of the excited subliminal consciousness. Such a course of action would not spontaneously have occurred to him. There were only two possible explanations. Either he had indeed been raving mad or he was in possession of a great secret. In any case silence would be the wiser policy. After all no harm could come of keeping his promise and obeying the dictate of the occult friend—things journalistic might have taken a turn for the better. He ate a poor lunch, however, and not without grave misgivings went out in the afternoon on a literary errand.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE FOURTH ESTATE.

*Writing maketh an inexact man.*

—THE EXPERIENCED COMP.

EDITOR WAINWRIGHT was poring over a leaderette when Winham called. "Oh! it's you," he said, laying down his pen with unusual readiness. "The very man I wanted to see." His visitor's heart beat quickly as the great journalist explained. "We are short-handed just now. Mr. Young left us on Friday to take charge of the *Uplands Mail*. I wanted to ask you if you would be able to take his place at a day's notice?"

Winham's misgivings vanished. It was no hallucination, then; he had been in actual telepathic com-

## *THE FOURTH ESTATE*

munication! His answer was an enthusiastic affirmative.

"I called, to tell you the truth," he added, "to see if you could put me on to something."

"Remarkable coincidence! what Bellingham would call a brain wave," said the editor, smiling. His young friend would suit, he thought. Winham looked at him curiously.

"It was Westby who recommended you," explained the editor, and I made enquiries last night at the club. No one had seen anything of you for months. I intended dropping you a line this afternoon."

Winham's momentary fancy was dispelled at once; Wainwright, he remembered now, was a sceptic with regard to thought transference. There was nothing more to do, the editor remarked, but to talk things over with the sub-editor. In answer to a call down the passage,

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

a tall man, with a boyish face, entered.

"Mr. Winham will take Mr. Young's place," said the editor.

Mr. Smithers extended a long arm and shook hands.

"Delighted to have you for a colleague, Mr. Winham. Heard of you before. A pipe in my room if you're agreeable," said the sub-editor, briskly. He was a busy man. The new member of the literary staff was soon made acquainted with the duties of his position. There was "Tea and Toast" for example—a column of crisp and lively paragraphs affording ample scope to a versatile flâneur; country letters and telegrams, and the "Notes in Parliament by Quiz." Winham was delighted with the prospect opened up, and showed it in his face.

"Yes, pruning 'pars' and revising reports is drier—that is,

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

more conservative work," said the sub-editor, grimly. "Reporters are such big responsibilities. Wastrel, for instance, has a penchant for superfluous adjectives, and almost a mania for sentences beginning with the relative. He's a junior Kipling, perhaps. Then there's Jackson." He was right. A business-like looking young man, carelessly well-dressed, with a cigar in one hand and flimsy in the other, entered as if by summons. "Suburbans, Mr. Smithers," he said, curtly, laying them on the table. The sub-editor nodded. "Oh! Jackson, you are down to relieve Gibbs at the Exhibition at 4.30. Report at 7."

"Very good," said Mr. Jackson, retreating. "The jumping is in safe hands." He seemed anxious to begin work at once.

"Invaluable man," commented Mr. Smithers to his companion,

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

“with only one weakness—hyperbole. Knows everybody and is always on the spot. Takes his bearings everywhere, so that if he gets lost he can find his way, I suppose. You’ll find us a practical lot, Mr. Winham.”

“Who are the other men on the staff?”

“Wilson, commercial editor, and Thorpe, leader-writer; Westby, unattached, does the criticisms. There are four reporters, Jackson being *facile princeps*.”

The sub-editor’s pipe refused to draw, and he took a pen up from the rack. It was an unintentional hint, and the sensitive Winham took it. In the lobby downstairs he brushed past the chief reporter, who was putting a match to his cigar.

“Hello!” said that gentleman, advancing; “have you decided to join us?”

Winham admitted that he had.

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

"Congratulate you, sir. The occasion, as we used to say on the *Criterion*, merits fitting celebration. Will you join me in a glass of something? The atmosphere is oppressive."

Mr. Jackson's omniscience of things civic extended to a quiet-looking hostelry, "just round the corner," professionally known as "The Wayzgoose." From within its comfortable parlour, Winham, being invited to "nominate his poison," spoke in favour of whisky. There was no opposition, and whisky was unanimously elected.

"Emily!" commanded Mr. Jackson, addressing a comely young woman in a costume of many colours; "bring the bottle. Red seal, mind."

The chief reporter was a connoisseur.

"A little whisky," remarked Mr. Jackson, helping himself liberally,

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

"is a dangerous thing. A single glass irritates. The true ethereal glow only comes with the third. Here's to our new literary star. Your very good health, Mr. Winham!"

"Thanks. Wish you the same. We all shine by night, of course."

At Winham's invitation, the glasses were refilled, and Mr. Jackson, who was seldom reticent, became eloquently reminiscent.

"When I was on the *Criterion* as junior they gave me the odds and ends to do—letters from 'Indignant Taxpayer' and 'A Candid Friend of the Ministry.' It was very demoralising. They wanted me to attend an up-country show on one occasion for a couple of days. It promised to be an unusually slow affair—and—the place was a long way off. I was younger then and the city had its temptations. I awoke on the third day

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

with a head like a hot potato, but no visible copy. Fortunately I discovered a notice of the previous year's affair among the files of an exchange, and by the exercise of a little ingenuity managed to evolve a presentable report. The sub., unfortunately, recognised something familiar—one or two pet phrases of his own—in the descriptive parts and took the trouble to verify what he suspected. They wouldn't give me a testimonial."

"How long ago was that?"

"Five years. I was in diggings then—No. 13 Emerald-street, Greenfields—and—like the express—I had to leave at night, only without warning."

Winham laughed. "I thought the old lady seemed suspicious of literary men."

"Yes," said Mr. Jackson, drily. "I've settled up since."

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

"Help yourself, Jackson."

"Not any more, thanks. The *Messenger* took me on after a while. Those were the busy times. I did my best to make the P.C. reports readable, but Smithers, who prefers scissors and paste humour, made a point of deleting mine. It was a pity, because the other items—bazaars and prayer meetings—didn't admit of much variety. I used to fancy concerts rather, especially in the suburbs. There was nothing to do but to look in for a minute and get hold of the programme. Imagination is a useful faculty. After all, the performers were satisfied, and the public didn't seem to mind. Smithers put me on a fire once, and being both urbane and ubiquitous—*Criterion* phrase, Mr. Winham—I scored. They give me the big things now—banquets, lectures and an occasional *séance*. Wastrel does the tea-fights."

## *THE FOURTH ESTATE*

“You manage to knock out some fun, then?”

“Sometimes; at a general election for instance. Then it’s ‘Jackson, give it a name;’ and ‘cigar, Jackson?’ I boil them down, though, just the same.”

“Clear case of bribery and corruption,” said Winham, gravely.

“Attemptedly so. Some fellows have all the luck. There’s Green gets off to Melbourne for a week to enjoy ‘the loving Cup,’ as he calls it. In the slack season he does the cricket matches, and lunches with the players. I’ve only responded for the Press twice myself—once at a Mutual Improvement Society’s mock banquet, and again at a ‘valedictory’ to a missionary. You can’t do much on cold water, or even tea. No! Reporting’s not all beer and skittles,” moralised Mr. Jackson, draining his glass.

“One comes across some strange

## THE FOURTH ESTATE

characters on the journalistic road," said Winham, to stimulate the orator anew. Mr. Jackson nodded. "Naturally. It's the last refuge of the indigent they say, except one."

"What's that—sand shifting?"

"Tutoring—ten shillings' work for half a crown."

"I've been tempted to flee there myself."

"Suicidal tendencies, eh? Talking of characters—the coolest fish I ever met on dry land was Rollin-ston—a T.C.D. man. On the strength of a thorough theoretical knowledge of the land question—so his credentials affirmed—he got the editorship of a big agricultural weekly.\* The first week he was at his wits' end for an appropriate subject for the regular Saturday's leader, when he came across an uncut copy of the *Garden and Field* in the

---

[\* This recorded experience is an actual passage in the life of an academical gentleman not unknown in the colonies. Mark Twain has it to answer for, perhaps.]

## *THE FOURTH ESTATE*

local School of Arts, and promptly annexed it."

"That's a very good article of yours on hay, Mr. Editor," said a burly farmer, who dropped in a day or two later; "but we don't make hay in July out here. 'You're an Irishman, perhaps?'"

Rollinston, at any rate, had the national forte—a persuasive tongue—and, assisted by some particularly convincing "ten-year-old," he succeeded in smoothing over apparent inconsistencies. But the thing preyed on his mind, and a day before the next leader was due he disappeared.

"About time, I should think," said Winham, with a laugh.

"Yes," said Mr. Jackson, pensively. "He's dead now, poor beggar."

As Mr. Jackson's chronometer was "undergoing repairs" he felt

## *THE FOURTH ESTATE*

it necessary to ask Winham the time.

It was half-past four. He whistled. "By Jove! I must be off to interview the animals." It was not to the dogs, however, that the chief reporter went.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM.

*“Ephemera, tenth Muse, is winged sometimes with borrowed plumes.”*

IN the events of the two days that immediately followed upon Winham's appointment, telepathic communication, not being in audience, was temporarily forgotten. The spell of novelty enhaloed the young journalist's work, and he did it with zest. Even Mr. Smithers, the exacting sub-editor, was well pleased with the new member. “He'll do” was the official verdict. On the afternoon of the third day Winham was sitting at his work-table, pen-handle in mouth. The preparation of “Tea and Toast” was not so elementary a matter as he had anticipated, or else his brain

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

—the literary lobes, at any rate—was at fault for once. It seemed incapable of origination. He was unable to concentrate his thoughts at all; hither and thither they roved, bringing up always before a *cul-de-sac*—the forbidden subject of reference. The feeling of indolence gave way to one of positive drowsiness. This was succeeded by a buzzing sound—in his ears apparently—but which presently resolved itself into a single cerebral voice, so clear and pronounced that he began to wonder if they could hear it in the outer offices.

*“I congratulate you, sir, on the results of your obedience.”*

Winham started. “Is it you? Well, you have proved a practical friend. Whom am I to thank?”

*“Never mind that. Compliments are a waste of nervous force. I want to assist you in your work this afternoon.”*

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

“Telepathic collaboration?”

“*Exactly. George Winham + x. You know something of Esoteric phenomena, I’ve no doubt?*”

“A little. I’m better up in the exposures.”

“*Understand, once for all, that I am your Mahatma.*”

“That’s *borak*, of course—to clear the ground for rational action.”

“*Don’t be flippant. How do you suppose Mahatmas communicate with their protégés?*”

“Telepathically, you mean? The higher life on the Himalayas is all humbug, then?”

“*On the contrary, it is an essential postulate. But make a paragraph of it.*”

Winham gripped his pen and the words came—so readily, indeed, that here and there he fancied they were being dictated. The unseen friend certainly exercised a stimulating influence. Evidently

## *A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM*

he was to be the predominant partner of their union.

“Of the making of discoveries there is no end. A member of the Psychical Society has succeeded in establishing the remarkable fact that sympathetic communion at a distance is an actual daily experience of a few favoured individuals. Is it not reasonable to conclude, then, in the face of recent startling ‘investigations,’ that the Mahatma is a genuine flesh-and-blood being in telepathic communication with organisms similarly clairaudient? There are not many obstacles, it seems, in the way of the average man’s developing Mahatman powers. The less material the more spiritual, of course. Constant self-repression and a vegetable diet will, we are assured, eventually lift a person on to ‘the higher plane.’ The possibilities of such a discovery are infinite. Valentine Vox and the

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

Voice of Conscience will, doubtless, no longer hold a prominent place in our respect. Parted lovers will, of course, soon be re-united in audible thought. Business men—their ‘elevation’ will, perhaps, take the longest time—will be able to dispense with the telephone and, to crown the hopes of the bi-metallists, silvern speech will be transmuted, at an appreciation, into golden thought.”

Winham read it over. “H’hm ! That ought to do,” he said to himself.

“*With slight alteration, it will,*” was the prompt answer, “*first of all, there must be no reference to any individual in the discovery ; make it a general one.*”

“Very well ! Upon my word it’s very funny collaborating like this. Would anyone else believe it ? ”

“*On the contrary ; it is a grave*

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

matter, and of the highest importance. Now, in the second place, leave out any hint of cerebral agency."

"It will make it more incredible. However——"

"*Reserve is becoming in the possessor of a secret. Omit also the flippant reference to conscience.*"

Winham smiled and made the final correction.

"Won't the general verdict be very far-fetched?" he said to himself.

"*That's exactly what telepathy is,*" came the reply. "*Now for something heavier—what do you say to Sociology in literature?*"

Winham shook his head. "That's beyond me."

"*Try a lighter vein, then—the new Photography, for instance, or the Clairaudience of Trilby.*"

"Here goes, then."

## *A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM*

In such unprofessional manner was "Tea and Toast" made ready for the "Messenger." By seven o'clock it was on the frames, and for the rest of the evening Winham could hardly contain himself. (Self-restraint, he learnt afterwards, was the law of life). He had given his word, though, and his lips were under seal. He looked in at the club for half an hour, hoping to see Westby, but the Old Bohemian had been ordered "down South" for a change, Macmorragh informed him, and would not be back for a month or two. Winham went back to the office. The paragraph on telepathy was read next day by a sceptical public with the smile of unbelief. "Very good skit" was the deliberate opinion of the smoking compartments. Inquiries from within the office were parried by a non-committal shake of the head—a demeanour which

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

at once elevated the writer to the plane of very clever fellows in the estimation of his *confrères*. Reticence is an excellent lever. Familiarity soon wears away the enthusiasm born of novelty, even from a world's wonder, and quite in a matter-of-fact way Winham came to discuss the details of his day's work with the unknown collaborateur and with results that were certainly advantageous. He acquired the reputation of being a thoroughly well-informed man—in some branches of medical science quite an authority. His literary style underwent a change; from being dithyrambical and flamboyant it became simple and direct. Anything like periphrasis or ambiguity he learnt to ticket "not to be imitated" and not seldom to label "humbug." From information duly imparted he had no difficulty in arriving at the con-

## *A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM*

clusion that his master's profession was that of letters—his avocation, science. There were times when he found it very difficult to preserve his secret. In the midst of a conversation, for instance, with an acquaintance, an interpolation by the telepathic communicant would be so apt that the ridiculousness of the position striking Winham, he would smile all over. The voice could assume any form—from a soundless but audible whisper to what seemed a shout.

Communication could be "cut off" at will apparently, and, as Winham once ruefully observed, without even the melodramatic "shilling." It made no difference to the audibility of it, Winham found, whether he were physically inactive or the reverse—the voice had the power of assimilating itself with any exterior sound—of availing itself of it, in fact, as a vehicle. But its

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

mental effect upon the journalist was not the most beneficent of its good works. A veritable guide, philosopher, and friend—one who was not passion's slave—the voice directed, warned, and encouraged him as though its chief end was his moral advancement. His consols at this time stood at par.

Thus supervised and stimulated, Winham's journalistic work daily grew in repute. There came a day, for ever after to be marked with Cretan chalk in the calendar of his career. A section of the pastoral community in the western districts, disaffected with the principle of "unfettered choice," upheld by their masters, had, as being the most effective argument available, taken up arms. The turn of events was sufficiently interesting to demand special chroniclers, and it was Winham who received marching orders from the *Messenger*.

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

Like a good pressman, he went gladly. It was a change from routine work he was now in a position to relish; the opportunity it presented, too, of testing the extent and strength of the "communication" was too tempting to be lost. For several days previously it had been fitful and of short duration. By some unknown way he was approaching, perhaps, the desired goal. It was exactly a week since his departure from the metropolis, and Winham was busy writing in the sitting-room of a well-known up-country hotel. A telegraph form was in front of him. "This morning—Sergeant Lachlan—shot—not fatally—in left shoulder—by Frank Travers—unionist—since arrested," were the words he was filling in.

"*Have you any idea who St. Clair is?*" said a familiar voice.

Winham burst out laughing.

"Hello, old truepenny! Mr.

## A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM

Nobody from Nowhere! I didn't expect you up here. Miles don't seem to trouble you much."

*"Answer the question!"*

"No. I haven't the honour of the gentleman's acquaintance."

*"My telling you, then, will be convincing proof that you have been, and now are, in communication with someone not yourself."*

"Undoubtedly. The fact that I am here attests as much."

*"Travers—alias St. Clair, was a prominent agitator in the Great Maritime Strike."*

"That's news. Certainly no revived impression of my own. The idea of connecting the two insurrections never entered my head. I'll mention the fact in my letter."

*"You might add that St. Clair is an Oxford man who took a Double First from Christ's."*

The reports of the *Messenger* special attracted a good deal of

## *A NEW FACTOR IN JOURNALISM*

attention in print, especially that of newspaper men. The writer—from motives of modesty possibly—made no mention of the fact that they were written in collaboration. Yet it is the fear of ridicule, we know, that makes humbugs of us all.

## CHAPTER IX.

### PUPIL AND MASTER.

*To teach is to instruct—to instruct oneself.*

—THE DOMINIE.

“ANOTHER good fellow gone wrong!”

Winham was lying in bed, lazily skimming the morning's news, and the comment was mental.

“*Distinctly a case of dual personality,*” said the invisible communicant. The journalist did not even smile. Such interruptions were quite common now.

“His life then is a conflict between his good and his evil genius?” he telepathed back.

“*Precisely. Cerebrum versus cerebellum.*”

“Cerebrum acts as a check upon the lower brain—a sort of mental Upper House, I suppose?”

## PUPIL AND MASTER

"Yes. It comprises all the intellect, however."

"That is smart enough for a paragraph."

"You have the journalistic instinct very strong."

"Turn everything into copy, you mean?"

"To parody the Latin: 'I am a pressman; nothing of interest is sacred to me.'"

"For my part I except love-letters. Unfortunately, however, I have no correspondent."

"*Faint heart never won fair lady!*"

"No, nor should empty pocket. What's your opinion of the proposed bachelor tax?"

"Economically it is of course fallacious."

"There would have to be exemptions, of course—to protect the poor man."

"Sound government, unfortunately, is a theoretical abstraction."

PUPIL AND MASTER

"No, but in the clouds at present, like the rain. *Apropos*, a severe winter is, I see, forecasted. What's the best thing to do with the unemployed, by the way?"

"*Employ them.*"

"That's a good idea—but how?"

"*Profitably—to themselves and the community.*"

"A statesmanlike suggestion. It would hardly do with 'Tea and Toast,' though."

"*Assimilation of ideas is only a matter of time.*"

"There's a flavour of finality about your utterances that is very convincing."

"*Leave sarcasm to a Twain. You are a young man yet.*"

"How much older are you, I wonder?"

"*Sufficiently to be entitled to your respect.*"

"You are now engaged in expanding my intellect, I suppose?"



## PUPIL AND MASTER

*"Exactly. What's the next item of interest?"*

*"The riddle of the West. What shall we do with our Turkey?"*

*"'Cut it up,' as Mr. Toots might have said. But de mortuis, &c. Have you ever tried your hand at novel-writing?"*

*"I've written the opening chapters of several promising stories."*

*"H'hm! You're not a stylist—I know—like Barrie nor a word-juggler of the Crockett school."*

*"No. Besides being in the position of the unimaginative knife-grinder, with nothing to narrate."*

*"Study the common-place. There's a fortune in it."*

*"And write eloquently of the broomstick? An excellent pot-boiler, no doubt, but too material for immortality."*

*"It depends how you handle it. As I said, 'the style's the thing.'"*

## PUPIL AND MASTER

"In journalism not so much. Pace Sydney Smith and Macaulay."

"*The sledge-hammer is obsolete—except in the prov—back-blocks, I mean, of course No. Cultivate the two literary evangelists, Matthew and John, Arnold and Morley—luminosity without artificiality.*"

"'For the essay philosophical—Lamb, Addison and De Quincey,' my old prof. used to say."

"*A trite recommendation.*"

"What if one would punish a 'loathsome' contemporary — for false witness, say, or piracy."

"*Lay aside the bludgeon and borrow a rapier from Thackeray.*"

"You speak by the card—a litterateur, perhaps?"

"*Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*"

"Ha! A distinct proof of word-for-word communication. Why, I wonder have some evidently-great men concealed their identity?"

"*Reasons of policy.*"

## PUPIL AND MASTER

“No doubt. There seems to be a want of principle in it.”

“*Understand that my object in communicating with you is not to stimulate you to repartee. Conversation, I must confess, is not among your lost arts.*”

“That reminds me. Some fellow somewhere recommends a conversation *mènu* adapted to the dinner-table, introducing weather with the soup and egotistical anecdotes with the wine—nothing indigestible, of course.”

“*What with the joints?*”

“Silence.”

“*Yes; that’s about the most sensible contribution to ‘Fellowes’ Magazine.’*”

“You read it, then?”

“*I take it. What do you think of it?*”

“Clever, stylish, and original; a rattling good sixpenn’orth.”

“*Of what?*”

PUPIL AND MASTER

"Chiefly candour, the result of self-analysis."

"*'Nothing in excess' is at least a healthier maxim than 'know thyself.'*"

"*'Know one another' would doubtless be more salubrious still.*"

"*You are pleased to be facetious. To turn to a graver subject. You don't hold to the tenets of the Divine Wisdom, as it is called, perhaps?*"

"Its insistence of humanness in the Christian conception appeals to my reason."

"*That's Buddhism, surely.*"

"With a belief in the survival of the soul and its gradual evolution added."

"*Evolution by reincarnation you mean?*"

"No. That would necessitate a limit to the number of souls. If, as I think, the ultimate destiny of these is that they will, by a penal process of purification, merge into

## PUPIL AND MASTER

the Infinite of Good—which will constitute their sum—they must themselves be infinitely numerous. Number and Time and Space are without limits on the extra-terrestrial plane.”

*“I am not well up in these Higher Mathematics. To descend a space—what is the position of the scientific materialist of to-day?”*

“Morally unsound and logically false. Having postulated for his law of Universal Decay the conception of a primordial molecule the Infinitely Small—he in the next breath will deny the human possibility of grasping the idea of the Divine—of that which is Infinitely Great.”

*“Thus far you are a Theist. Apropos of Natural Revelation, now, do you believe that the soul, one’s ego, enters and leaves the body in obedience to will?”*

“Yes; in all cases.”

PUPIL AND MASTER

“How do you explain the phenomenon of Trance?”

“The body is in a state of suspended animation—but still fitted to house the soul which has been temporarily projected by the force of Will.”

“*The soul is not wholly detached?*”

“No. But of the nature of a *penumbra*, and in reality an impalpable, ethereal essence.”

“*Soul with soul communication is therefore possible?*”

“When the penumbrae are projected sufficiently far as to meet.”

“*Under what conditions would this take place?*”

“Given two highly magnetic organisms, willed into the clairvoyant state by nervous force operating upon them when partially devitalised, the passing thence into actual communion is only a matter of concentration and sympathy.”

## PUPIL AND MASTER

*“To attain the clairvoyant state, is exterior force indispensable?”*

“No. Self-hypnotisation, the only tenable scientific explanation of visions, so-called ghosts, is a common enough phase of it. Here the will is acting unconsciously. But after long and painful years spent in acquiring perfect control over the vital processes, adepts can will themselves into a state of absolute unconsciousness lasting days, weeks and even months. It is on record.”

*“A dangerous practice one would think. What if the body meanwhile be wholly deprived of its organic functions?”*

“It at once decays, but the soul in obedience to the highest law of centripetal attraction is drawn upwards to the source of all energy. This is what happens at death.”

*“In life, then, the individual will is, or is intended to be, paramount?”*

PUPIL AND MASTER

"Yes. The Higher Will suggesting rather than commanding."

"*Freewill, consequently, is denied to none.*"

"To none. The Higher Intelligence can, however, in the germs of causes not yet in active operation, foresee their logical developments. That is the faculty of clairvoyance, of second sight, of prophecy—call it as you may, but not the power of control."

"*At any rate you are on a solid foundation. We may now leave dialectics.*"

"It's wonderfully fascinating."

"*And apt to engender a taste for mental dram-drinking.*"

"I don't remember having taken any interest in this sort of thing before."

"*For the last hour you have been uplifted. There's a day's work before you, remember. Take my advice and get up.*"

*PUPIL AND MASTER*

"Thanks. It is about a fair thing. Oh, dear!"

*"Communication will now cease."*

"Au revoir."

## CHAPTER X.

### A MOONLIGHT PICNIC.

*It is a fine evening—let us go out and eat something.*—THE WOMAN THAT WAS.

It was six months later. Society—that portion of it at least that had not succumbed to Christmas—season of domestic broils and ill-will to the men—was still in the mountains undergoing the lightest of Lent penances. It was Easter Monday—in the morning. From the various intermittent sounds that issued from the kitchen at “Mount View”—the Joyce’s summer residence—it was evident that stirring preparations were in progress. Miss Joyce—indeed, was baking meringues—an occupation calculated to benefit neither the temper nor the complexion—and Tom—fourteen and

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

precocious, whose ticket of leave from college expired on the morrow—was voluntarily supervising the packing of a commodious hamper. This function had already cost the family the price of a cup and saucer.

“What on earth’s the good of taking a tea-pot, Elma? I’ve put up a couple of billies.”

Tom’s masculinity asserted itself before girls.

“Children shouldn’t ask questions,” replied his sister—frowning at the fire. Then she turned round.

“I hope you rinsed out the brown earthenware, Cissie?”

“No, Miss; but I will,” was the prompt response.

“Funny sort of gipsy tea you’ll have,” retorted Tom in fine scorn.

“I’ll stay home with the mater.”

“That’s a relief. Everybody will be delighted. Now have the goodness to walk out of the kitchen.”

“Thanks. This is the reward

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

for helping, I suppose. Don't forget the cream jug and sugar tongs, Cissie. Gipsies are very particular you know," and with a parting grimace at the pretty housemaid—indicative of infinite disgust with his sister—Tom beat an undignified retreat to the front sitting-room, where, as he expected, he found his mother. Mrs. Joyce—a refined, sad-looking woman whose once sable hair had prematurely silvered, was an invalid. Her husband, who had deserted her when Tom was an infant, was vaguely understood to be somewhere in America—but his name was never mentioned.

It was the mother, however, who had moulded these children's characters, and, sitting at her side—reading aloud the news in the daily paper—Tom was hardly recognisable as the despair of his form-master. No wonder the gentle lady considered the quarterly reports

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

of that long-suffering gentleman unnecessarily severe. He filled them up with the best possible intentions, however—poor man.

The moonlight picnic as an idea emanated from the brain of Miss Georgina Devonshire—a pleasure-loving maiden, whose home was on the banks of the Yarra—the upper Yarra. It was not a large party, but the elements were apparently harmonious (notwithstanding that “Mr. Tom” had, at the last moment, relaxed his determination not to go, and was now “on for it,” as he expressed it), a sentiment which Mrs. D’Arcy Smith conveyed indirectly to Professor Morse. Naturally, he endorsed it. In the sunshine of society more congenial than his own, this eligible widower’s bohemian predilections were fast melting away. “What a perfect evening,” cried Miss Devonshire, with enthusiasm, posing herself

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

upon a boulder, and "drinking in" the view. "I could walk miles in this light."

"Look out for snakes," called out Tom from in front. On the strength of superior knowledge, or for other reasons not expressed, he had been unanimously requested to act as guide. The moon was not expected for some hours ("as if that mattered," remarked the Professor, who, to tell the truth, rather looked down upon astronomy), and, meanwhile, the lesser constellations were taking the opportunity to display their brilliancy. The day had been warm, and a welcome land-breeze was now stirring the tree-tops. Tom led the way—a rough and erratic one—along an almost imperceptible bush track, which, in something less than a mile, descended to a waterfall gorge, strewn at the foot with sandstone boulders, and hung on

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

all sides with serried masses of ferns, from the diminutive maiden hair and common bracken to the firmly-rooted tree shrub.

"So this is Faun Gully!" said Mrs. D'Arcy Smith, with a note of admiration, glad, however, to find a boulder at hand to recover breath upon.

"Yes," said Tom. "It might be any other gully for that matter."

"Not so," corrected the Professor. "Is it not the haunt of the dear?"

"Don't, Prof.," Tom groaned, "that chestnut always gives me toothache."

"I thought boy's nut-crackers were equal to anything," retorted the Professor severely.

While the cloth was being laid the men hunted for wood. It is a way they have at picnics—to conceal their interest in the commissariat, perhaps. Dr. Howard erected a substantial tripod. "Trust

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

Howard for doing the correct thing," said Mr. Mayne a little maliciously. The doctor had a practical bent of mind which the other envied him. Mr. Mayne's rôle in life was generally that of looker-on.

"Now this is what I call tip-top," said Tom, contemplating the completed preparations with approval. "I'll hold that, Elma. This stuff's red hot."

"We can't get along without a tea-pot you see, Tom," said his sister wickedly.

Tom affected not to notice the affront. "Pass me that cup, Elma, please."

"It's just lovely," said Miss Devonshire, accepting an oyster patè from the doctor. "Fingers are the correct thing, I hope."

"Chance it," was the doctor's advice.

"Felicity, after all, is a matter

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

of appetite and the wherewithal to satisfy it." solemnly remarked the Professor, stirring his tea with a twig. "What may I pass you, Mrs. Smith?"

"I shall be quite happy with some strawberries, thank you. O, what beauties! Wherever did you get them, Elma?"

There are occasions when the most picturesque scenery pales into insignificance.

As soon as the ladies had finished packing and the men were half through their first pipe, Miss Devonshire expressed a wish—"dying" was the word she used—to explore the Falls; and Tom, who was already head-over-heels in love with the energetic, bright-eyed girl from Melbourne, at once offered to accompany her. But Dr. Howard forestalled him.

"You'll find some cigarettes in

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

there," he said, diplomatically throwing Tom his case.

"After all, a newly-engaged man has prior claims," mused philosophic fourteen, as the couple walked sedately away.

Such an excellent example proved contagious. It was Mr. Mayne's turn at last.

"Do you feel equal to climbing to the top, Miss Joyce?"

"Oh, quite! The view is splendid," said Elma, rising to go. "Mrs. Smith, we'll leave you and the Professor in charge of the camp, if you don't mind," she added.

"Don't go too far away. I shall be very anxious, you know."

And the young-looking chaperone smiled. The Professor thought he had never seen anything more nearly approaching perfect communication without the aid of language.

"Come along, Tom," said Elma.

## *A MOONLIGHT' PICNIC*

There was a grunt of disapproval, but prompt obedience followed. She was his only sister.

"Very pretty girl," remarked the Professor, when the others were out of hearing.

"Yes; and as good as beautiful, dear girl."

"Ah!" said the Professor, reverently, "one of Nature's heiresses."

"They seem very well suited to each other, don't you think?"

The Professor removed his pipe from his lips, and shook his head. It was a massive one, with a broad, protruding front which slanted verandahwise over and above a pair of deep-set black eyes.

"It's never safe to venture a prophecy in these matters," he said ominously, a remark which had the effect of turning the conversation nearer home.

Tom liked Mayne. He was a decent fellow and deserved a good

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

turn. Under the circumstances there was only one course open to a man—make himself scarce. Accordingly “the man” took the first opportunity to disappear among the bracken and reward his twice-tested virtue with a cigarette. Elma, apparently unconscious of her brother’s defection, walked along soberly at Mr. Mayne’s side. She was looking particularly pretty, he thought, in that dainty pink and white cambric that so becomingly relieved the dark brown of her wavy hair, the deep blue of her southern eyes. He was just about as happy in himself as a mortal ever is, and like most mortals, he was not quite content. Under the surface—a polished one of good-humoured tolerance—were the meaner qualities of a selfish pleasure-lover. As she took his hand to cross the tranquil streamlet which a few yards further on tumbled so riotously from the

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

summit, his pulses beat with an unaccustomed thrill. For the first time in his personally successful experience he was conscious of feeling at a disadvantage. At his suggestion they sat down together on the bank to rest. In spite of Miss Joyce's efforts to keep the conversation in conventional channels, it persisted in taking a personal turn.

"I shall have to go up to town to-morrow," he said gloomily.

"O, what a pity! You ought to stay the week out. We are all going home on Friday."

"Yes, it's a beastly nuisance, but duty is duty, you know. It's been a particularly enjoyable holiday to me. Do you know why?"

"Everyone enjoys themselves up here. It's the different atmosphere, I suppose. I just love mountain life."

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

"Do you? You'd be buried alive in the winter here."

"I shouldn't mind that a bit if I were a man. A girl couldn't afford to be so independent."

"Why not?"

Miss Joyce laughed merrily. "She would probably have to die an old maid in this quiet place."

"There's no need for you ever to contemplate such an end, Miss Joyce," he said somewhat theatrically.

She laughed a little nervously.

"Oh! I hope not. Really, I haven't thought very seriously about it yet."

Mr. Mayne frowned. He had been too precipitate, of course. Well, he would have to postpone his departure for a day or two.

"We really must be getting back now," said his companion, rising abruptly. "They will be

## *A MOONLIGHT PICNIC*

wondering what has become of us. Why, where's Tom?"

"The moon's only just rising," said Mr. Mayne, reproachfully. "Look!" and he pointed to the sun-flushed goddess rising majestically in mid-ocean. Together they watched it in silence. For a moment only. A shrill "coo-ee" suddenly recalled them to the world they had temporarily left. It came from Tom, who was leisurely working his way upwards to remind them of the lateness of the hour.

## CHAPTER XI.

### UNDER ORDERS.

*“ And friendly faces, lost awhile  
Will re-appear  
Wreathed in forgiving, kindly smiles  
Some future year.”*

—LUX SPEI.

*Obedience is often baffled disobedience.*

EASTER brought no gift but work to Winham. Mr. Jackson went away for a brief holiday, to cool his excitable brain, somewhere on the South Coast, and the Chief put in only an occasional appearance. Mr. Smithers, however, kept his post. There was a prospect of Winham succeeding Thorpe, the leader-writer, who had just secured the permanent secretaryship to a Standing Commission. It was no time to grumble, and “the flâneur”

## UNDER ORDERS

did double duty without a murmur. On the Monday evening Winham was hard at it—now revising the reports of the day's festivities, anon contemplating them with professional pride. There was a knock at the door.

"Come in, Bottle Imp, confound you!" It was not the time for ceremony.

"More copy, sir," said the printer's devil, meekly, showing a face pale and freckled. He was a sorry looking youth—a creature of ink-stains and patches.

"Here you are. Clearout now!" was the response. The P.D. understood only one language—abuse—and wondered sometimes why printed Anglo-Saxon was so different from the vernacular. He had won a reputation with the literary staff as the joint author of the notorious typographical error (in a Queen's Birthday leader)

which credited Thorpe with having written of "that Empire on which the hen never sets." (Bottle Imp didn't see much of the sun.) A smudge was the prime cause, so the comps. averred, what time "the father" was swearing piously at the chapel. The old man found it hard to compose his feelings at times.

"Thank goodness that's over," said Winham as "the devil" left him, carrying off the bulk of the night's work. He lit his pipe—the pipe of consolation purchased at the price of "The Decay of Sentiment"—and, clasping his hands over his head, gave his thoughts rein. As usually happened when he was absorbed thus—in moody meditation, fancy bound—he was aroused by what had fairly earned the right to be regarded as his "familiar."

*"Don't you think a trip into the*

## UNDER ORDERS

*country would do you good ? ”* The bantering tone irritated the tired pressman.

“ Don’t bother me now. I’m busy.”

“ *Listen !* ” It was the tone of command. “ *Did you not promise to obey me in every particular ?* ”

“ Certainly. What do you want me to do now—man of commanding intellect ? ”

“ *Keep your temper. I’ve some news for you. Your friend, Mr. Mayne, is reported to be engaged.* ”

“ Who to ? ”

“ *Whom do you think ?* ”

“ Miss Joyce.”

“ *I didn’t say so. But what I want you to do is to find out for yourself.* ”

“ You might proceed to show me the way.”

“ *Certainly. Listen then. You are to come up to the Mountains not*

*later than to-morrow. Is that clear? "*

*"It can't be done. Work will be in full swing again."*

*"You can get permission, I suppose. In any case you have got to take the train to-morrow afternoon."*

*"And if I don't? "*

*"You must take the consequences. Haven't I in everything shown that I have your welfare at heart? "*

*"And I believe you. I am to call and see Miss Joyce then? "*

*"Doesn't the prospect please you? Mahomet going to the Mountains."*  
Again the bantering tone.

*"Look here, stranger—you are either a very disinterested good friend, or else the——"*

*"Silence. Whatever happens you are to keep your promise of secrecy inviolate. Communication will now cease."*

*This shaping of a fellow's whole*

## *UNDER ORDERS*

course of action by an unknown autocrat was certainly a most unwarranted interference with the liberty of the individual, Winham reflected as he walked home. It was such a paltry use—he had to confess—to apply so powerful an engine to—there must be a grave underlying purpose. Possibly the morrow might elucidate the mystery. It wanted a week to the re-assembling of Parliament—and it was possible, by stretching a point, for Winham to be relieved for three or four days. It would be decidedly impolitic, though, he thought, to ask such a favour. Mr. Smithers, however, took a different view.

“It will do you good, my dear fellow. You’re not looking very bad, but these heart troubles are very deceptive, I’m told. I’ve never had time to inquire into the matter myself,” and the man who

worked twelve hours a day, year by year, without a holiday, smiled apologetically.

“Very kind of you, Smithers, old chap. How shall I report—‘sick list?’”

“Not necessary. Send us a column on the beauties of the place—natural beauties, of course—and I’ll enter it as a ‘special.’” Mr. Smithers pulled himself together, and resumed the congenial task of excising “fills.”

It did not take Winham long to tub, shave clean and pack his Gladstone—orthodox preliminaries of the travelling Briton—fastidious man though he was. But at the last moment he received a visitor, who dashed up in a hansom—and, as Miss Stuyvesant subsequently related at a four o’clock “experience meeting” of fellow spinsters—“burst into the house like an

## UNDER ORDERS

overgrown school-boy." It was Westby.

"Just in time, dear boy, to say good-bye. I'm ordered home, and leave to-morrow."

"Nothing seriously wrong, I hope."

The big man laughed and smote his chest. "Nothing organic, at any rate. No. A repentant relative has made post-mortem reparation to a great and good man, who will philosophise upon the blessings of poverty no longer. Isn't it dreadful to contemplate?"

"I congratulate you heartily. What great luck!"

"The greatest is behind. But—I am going your way. Hi! Cabby!"

At the railway station over a final "sip"—which assumed the proportions of a goodly bottle—Westby's story was by degrees drawn from him. It was the story of a man who had sacrificed him-

self. But it concerns a lady who, though no longer a girl, yet with infinite sympathy and grace, now helps a chivalrous old lover, in dispensing hospitality at Westby Hall, Warwickshire, and its place is not here. The big man laughing at an objurgating porter, and finally turning away his wrath with a tip of unexpectedly large dimensions, was the last Winham saw of Dick Westby.

But the Anti-Philistine Club was more fortunate. Late that night, when the new "Esquire" uplifted the six feet of him to acknowledge a toast—which only President Wainwright knew how to give—a cheer went up, the like of which, for volume and duration, the club walls had never before re-echoed with, nor ever would again.

"Midst Pleasures and Palaces" the orchestra (a Philistinic band), began, but got no further.

## UNDER ORDERS

“Anti-Philistines, I am ashamed of you.” He was standing as he always did when at ease, with his head in the air and his hands comfortably pocketed. The full red beard and tawny mane were as innocent of the scissors as ever, and in the leonine eyes was the twinkle of mischief. It recalled to some members long-vanished debate nights. “Positively ashamed of you. Here you are, the best of *bons vivants*, sumptuously banquetting an apostate—an arch-Philistine—a conventional plutocrat. It’s dreadful! Club, where is thy etiquette? Macmorragh, what are you laughing at? When a Texas man goes alone and gets euchred, they refer him sorrowfully to a rope. Which is business. Conversely, when a club-man deliberately hangs himself socially, he should be allowed to go alone, if possible, in silence. Which, I take

it, would be sentiment. Instead of which what have we—congratulations! a panegyric!! Great O'Hara! A wake!!! *Pro bono publico*, too. (The speaker had just caught sight of two bobbing heads at the reporters' table.) Have you any conception of my feelings, gentlemen, just now? I shall not attempt to translate them into words. I am not equal to it. Were it not that the Chief—I beg your pardon, Mr. President—is the kindest of men, I would accuse him of deliberately planning to get copy out of me to the last. (The President: "You are a public man, Mr. Westby.") I apologise. J.P., I believe. I had forgotten it. It's a first-night notice, then. (Mr. Macmorragh: "A last one, unfortunately.") Thank you Mac. I hope not. Still, Anti-Philistines, you might have some regard for a fellow's feelings. It's depressing

## UNDER ORDERS

enough at any time to have ancestral greatness thrust upon one, but when it means saying good-bye to Bohemia — it's rough, men — it's rough. If I accept a position of moral responsibility it is because my duty as a man demands it. I have lived too long a free lance to be swayed by any other force. I lose in *camaraderie* only to gain in something I have lately learned to feel the need of more. Thank you, gentlemen. Bellingham, dear boy, if it's a fair question in constitutional law, I continue a member of the Club so long as I am not posted for arrears—do I not? Thank you. I'll take care of that. And so far as consistent avoidance of publicity and cant entitles me to still rank as an Anti-Philistine—an Anti-Philistine I shall remain. It can't be otherwise. You who, no less than I, count the rank as but the guineastamp, know that I shall be just as

undistinguished a member of the Club as ever I have been, and that whatever of the man is in Dick Westby will not tolerate his conversion by altered circumstances. The roots of thirty years strike deeper than that. Richard may not be himself again, financially—(Mr. Macmorragh: “Hear, hear”)—but if what I take to be the milk of humanity within him turns to Philistine gall—write me down a quadruped—a blatant ass. It would make an impression, Littlemore, I think—yea, a blatant ass.” (The repetition involved a pause which evoked a sigh of relief from the reporters’ table. It came from the *Criterion* representative. Mr. Jackson, still busy, was a sentence behind). I am reminded that long speeches are a failure. (A voice: “What about long bachelors?”) Well, I have changed my views on that subject the last day or two.

## UNDER ORDERS

It's the only change in me, I think." He stroked his beard. "I haven't even had the orthodox 'tonsilitis.' Well, well! I am old-fashioned, I suppose. I've thought sometimes that as a club we might possibly have degenerated — become too respectable, perhaps. And with brazen effrontery here I stand—a traitor in the camp—the embodiment of gentility! Will some Anti-Philistine kindly kick me? Not one! Then, gentlemen, with this picture, one more in keeping, possibly, with the traditions of this venerable institution than any other of me that has been presented to-night, I leave you. Whatever you may be tempted to think of it, remember this—Dick Westby is not the man to forget his friends."

He sat down almost in silence—for even those who were hopelessly without the pale of Bohemia dimly understood.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE WAYS UNITE.

*And with the years has Love returned  
All-conquering.*

*And now, I know, no heart has earned,  
The crown of Love till it has learned  
That Love is king.—AMOR REX.*

WINHAM arrived at the Blue Mountain Hotel shortly before sunset, with the feelings of a detective strangely mingled with those of a knight-errant. On the visitors' list were several familiar names. With Mrs. D'Arcy Smith and her niece in the neighbourhood, it was not difficult to guess what Dr. Howard and Professor Morse, for instance, found attractive in the country. On this particular evening, however, they were engaged to dine out, so the clerk believed. On

## THE WAYS UNITE

his way upstairs Winham came face to face with Mr. Cuthbert Mayne, who at first raised his eyebrows slightly, and then held out a hand in his jauntiest manner.

"Hullo, Winham ! I hardly knew you. You're quite a foreigner."

"Yes. I've been out West. You're looking well. How is everybody?"

"Nicely browned most of them. Are you staying long?"

"A day or two. You're off to-night, it seems."

"I'll be up again soon I expect."

"I may see you, then." Mr. Mayne left to catch his train. A sense of emptiness that was not altogether physical suddenly overcame Winham. Mayne, of course, had been successful, hence the unexpected cordiality, the trip to town, and — yes — the dainty "button-hole." Well, he would exercise the privilege of an old friend of the family. In that capacity he would

be better able to offer his congratulations.

“Mount View”—a modern cottage planted in a garden—was not more than ten minutes’ walk from the hotel, and Winham was there before dusk. Something of the old Society feeling returned as he walked slowly up the gravel path leading to the cottage. He wondered what his feelings would be half an hour hence. Mrs. Joyce was at home, and quite able to see a visitor—the maid informed him. The good lady indeed was infinitely delighted when his name was announced. He had always been a favourite of hers—her orphan boy she had been wont to call him—and his quixotism in cutting himself off from his friends added a feeling of respect for him. Yet he was no longer a boy to be petted, but a determined man. Winham found her looking ten years younger—

## THE WAYS UNITE

this unknown heroine, whose undramatic life was yet so tragic—and laughingly told her so. It put him in good spirits. The troubled events of the last eighteen months were rapidly passing from his memory as mists lift from before the sun. A return to the refining influences of a cultured home was like medicine to marrowless bones. Together they chatted awhile for all the world like mother and son. Among other important matters Winham's prospects were touched upon, and once Mr. Mayne's name was mentioned.

"How *is* Miss Joyce?" he asked at length.

"Oh! very well. You will stay to dinner, Mr. Winham? That's right. Elma is in the garden, I think."

The young man decided to find out for himself. The garden was not a large one—indeed one pair of

## *THE WAYS UNITE*

hands, and these a lady's, sufficed to keep it in something more than order—and from the verandah one could take in at a glance every shady nook and sheltered corner. Winham's critical eye, however, failed to detect a human presence. Then, for the first time, he noticed at the end of the verandah a diminutive bush house—its latticed frame almost hidden from view by a giant convolvulus—luxuriant in purple bloom. The door was open a little, and, advancing to his fate, he looked in.

A figure he recognised with a thrill of pure pleasure—clad in cool muslin and a large useful-looking straw hat—stood with its back to him, leisurely employed in snipping off the dead fronds from a tree-fern. In an instant the scene of their last meeting—and parting—came back to him. But this time he was the aggressive one.

## THE WAYS UNITE

“So here you are!”

The figure turned. “Mr. Winham! This *is* a surprise. I had no idea you were in the Mountains.”

No doubt it was the exertion of using the garden-shears that had so suddenly lent her cheeks the rich colouring of the Lancastrian rose. In the dim light, however, it escaped notice.

“I must apologise for interrupting you in your gardening. Let me help you?”

“It certainly was a liberty for a stranger to take. Thank you.”

“I’m awfully sorry. I should have asked for an introduction, of course.”

“Never mind. It’s too late now. Where are you staying?”

“Here for the present. How have you been enjoying yourself lately?”

But there were so many questions to ask—it was wonderful the keen

personal interest these two people discovered in each other—that it was found necessary to resort to the bush seat. What a sweet girl she was—lovelier than ever, he said to himself. He certainly had improved in appearance—she admitted to herself. The world and its cares were a long way off, then. Presently he said boyishly :

“It’s just like old times—do you remember our last chat together?”

“You went off in a hurry—I remember.”

“Did I? I was an awful ass, I know. Don’t you think so?”

“Perhaps the least little bit of a donkey.”

“I’ll promise to behave better this time. Have you forgotten your promise to me?”

“What was it?”

“Oh, about when I became a great literary man.”

*THE WAYS UNITE*

“If you were not spoiled, I think I said.”

“By success?” He laughed.

“If you only knew——”

“Have you lost your old ambition then?”

“Not altogether, but I have quite abandoned the idea of becoming a celebrity. I’m a failure.”

“That doesn’t matter very much.”

“Doesn’t it? Well, now, I think you promised me a reception, didn’t you?”

“Did I? Oh! but I haven’t a grand enough establishment yet.”

“That doesn’t matter very much either. Do you know what sort of a reception I should like best?”

“No.” She was studying the pink sprigs on her muslin.

“Truthfully—don’t you?” He bent over her.

No answer. The useful-looking straw hat was fast losing its shape.

“Elma?”

*THE WAYS UNITE*

There was no verbal reply, but she looked up radiantly, and——.

Scribbling has its compensations.

POSTSCRIPT.

Among the first to offer their congratulations were Dr. Howard and Professor Morse. Two heads are proverbially better than one.



SYDNEY

WEBSDALE, SHOOSMITH AND CO., PRINTERS,  
117 CLARENCE STREET.













BOOK IS DUE FOR RETURN ON  
LATEST DATE SHOWN BELOW

cept that members of academic staff  
y retain it for the following period:

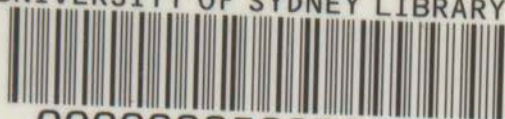
Book for 2 weeks after due date.

Stack Book (not periodical) for  
two months after due date.

107785 -6 AUG 1963

**CANCELLED**  
**DATE DUE**  
**28 AUG 1991**

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY LIBRARY



0000000502304546

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Fisher Research

A 823.89

0000000502304546

Robin E

Clairaudient: a story of  
psychical research



