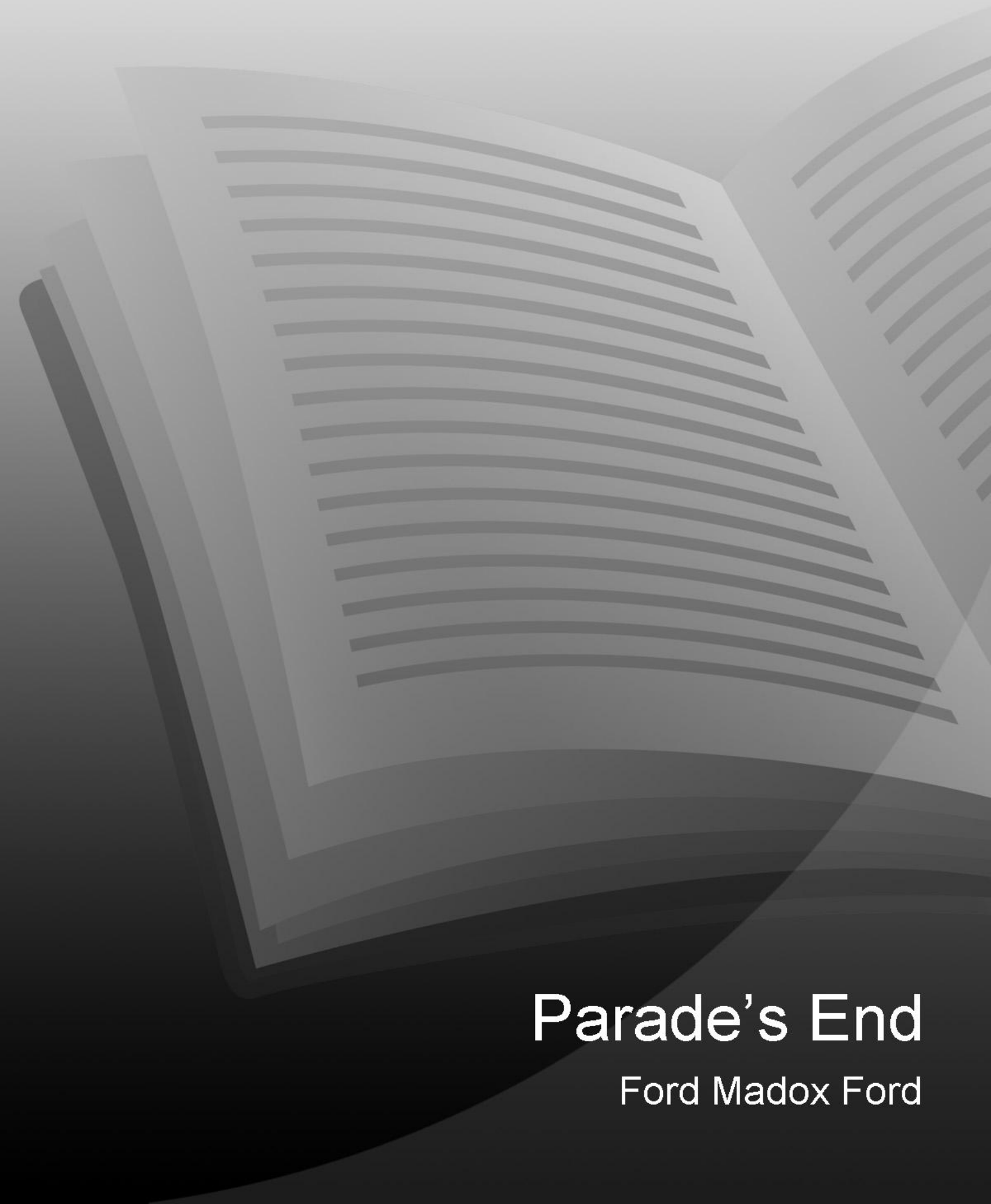
RANDOM HOUSE eBOOKS



Parade's End

Ford Madox Ford

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About the Book

Christopher Tietjens has long loved the beautiful young suffragette Valentine, but the pair are held apart by Christopher’s loyalty to his wife Sylvia, despite her callous infidelities, and to a set of principles which belong to an old world, and which are about to be swallowed up in the mud and chaos of the Western Front. This majestic four-part novel is one of the finest achievements of nineteenth century literature.

About the Author

Ford Madox Ford was born on 17 December 1873 in Merton, Devon. He began writing in the 1890s and both his fiction and his criticism are celebrated. His most famous works are *The Good Soldier* (1915) and *Parade's End* (1924–8). Ford's other major contribution to literature was the foundation of the *English Review* in which he published Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, H. G. Wells, Henry James and gave debuts to Wyndham Lewis and D.H. Lawrence. He also founded the *Transatlantic Review* in 1924. Ford changed his surname from Hueffer in 1919 after serving in the British army in France during the First World War. After 1927 Ford lived in the United States and France. He died in Deauville on 26 June 1939.

Also by Ford Madox Ford

The Good Soldier

FORD MADOX FORD

Parade's End

VINTAGE BOOKS
London

SOME DO NOT . . .

PART ONE

THE TWO YOUNG men – they were of the English public official class – sat in the perfectly appointed railway carriage. The leather straps to the windows were of virgin newness; the mirrors beneath the new luggage racks immaculate as if they had reflected very little; the bulging upholstery in its luxuriant, regulated curves was scarlet and yellow in an intricate, minute dragon pattern, the design of a geometrician in Cologne. The compartment smelt faintly, hygienically of admirable varnish; the train ran as smoothly – Tietjens remembered thinking – as British gilt-edged securities. It travelled fast; yet had it swayed or jolted over the rail joints, except at the curve before Tonbridge or over the points at Ashford where these eccentricities are expected and allowed for, Macmaster, Tietjens felt certain, would have written to the company. Perhaps he would even have written to *The Times*.

Their class administered the world, not merely the newly created Imperial Department of Statistics under Sir Reginald Ingleby. If they saw policemen misbehave, railway porters lack civility, an insufficiency of street lamps, defects in public services or in foreign countries, they saw to it, either with nonchalant Balliol voices, or with letters to *The Times*, asking in regretful indignation: 'Has the British This or That come to *this*!' Or they wrote, in the serious reviews of which so many still survived, articles taking under their care, manners, the Arts, diplomacy, inter-Imperial trade, or the personal reputations of deceased statesmen and men of letters.

Macmaster, that is to say, would do all that: of himself Tietjens was not so certain. There sat Macmaster; smallish; Whig; with a trimmed, pointed black beard, such as a smallish man might wear to enhance his already germinated distinction; black hair of a stubborn fibre, drilled down with hard metal brushes; a sharp nose; strong, level teeth; a white, butterfly collar of the smoothness of porcelain; a tie confined by a gold ring, steel-blue speckled with black – to match his eyes, as Tietjens knew.

Tietjens, on the other hand, could not remember what coloured tie he had on. He had taken a cab from the office to their rooms, had got himself into a loose, tailored coat and trousers, and a soft shirt, had packed quickly, but still methodically, a great number of things in an immense two-handled kit-bag, which you could throw into a guard's van if need be. He disliked letting that 'man' touch his things; he had disliked letting his wife's maid pack for him. He even disliked letting porters carry his kit-bag. He was a Tory – and as he disliked changing his clothes, there he sat, on the journey, already in large, brown, hugely welted and nailed golf boots, leaning forward on the edge of the cushion, his legs apart, on each knee an immense white hand – and thinking vaguely.

Macmaster, on the other hand, was leaning back, reading some small, unbound printed sheets, rather stiff, frowning a little. Tietjens knew that this was, for Macmaster, an impressive moment. He was correcting the proofs of his first book.

To this affair, as Tietjens knew, there attached themselves many fine shades. If, for instance, you had asked Macmaster whether he were a writer, he would have replied with the merest suggestion of a deprecatory shrug.

'No, dear lady!' for of course no man would ask the question of anyone so obviously a man of the world. And he would continue with a smile: 'Nothing so fine! A mere

trifler at odd moments. A critic, perhaps. Yes! A little of a critic.'

Nevertheless Macmaster moved in drawing-rooms that, with long curtains, blue china plates, large-patterned wallpapers and large, quiet mirrors, sheltered the longhaired of the Arts. And, as near as possible to the dear ladies who gave the At Homes, Macmaster could keep up the talk – a little magisterially. He liked to be listened to with respect when he spoke of Botticelli, Rossetti, and those early Italian artists whom he called 'The Primitives.' Tietjens had seen him there. And he didn't disapprove.

For, if they weren't, these gatherings, Society, they formed a stage on the long and careful road to a career in a first-class Government office. And, utterly careless as Tietjens imagined himself of careers or offices, he was, if sardonically, quite sympathetic towards his friend's ambitiousnesses. It was an odd friendship, but the oddnesses of friendships are a frequent guarantee of their lasting texture.

The youngest son of a Yorkshire country gentleman, Tietjens himself was entitled to the best – the best that first-class public offices and first-class people could afford. He was without ambition, but these things would come to him as they do in England. So he could afford to be negligent of his attire, of the company he kept, of the opinions he uttered. He had a little private income under his mother's settlement; a little income from the Imperial Department of Statistics; he had married a woman of means, and he was, in the Tory manner, sufficiently a master of flouts and jeers to be listened to when he spoke. He was twenty-six; but, very big, in a fair, untidy, Yorkshire way, he carried more weight than his age warranted. His chief, Sir Reginald Ingleby, when Tietjens chose to talk of public tendencies which influenced statistics, would listen with attention. Sometimes Sir Reginald would say: 'You're a perfect encyclopædia of exact material knowledge,

Tietjens,' and Tietjens thought that that was his due, and he would accept the tribute in silence.

At a word from Sir Reginald, Macmaster, on the other hand, would murmur: 'You're very good, Sir Reginald!' and Tietjens thought that perfectly proper.

Macmaster was a little the senior in the service as he was probably a little the senior in age. For, as to his roommate's years, or as to his exact origins, there was a certain blank in Tietjens' knowledge. Macmaster was obviously Scotch by birth, and you accepted him as what was called a son of the manse. No doubt he was really the son of a grocer in Cupar or a railway porter in Edinburgh. It does not matter with the Scotch, and as he was very properly reticent as to his ancestry, having accepted him, you didn't, even mentally, make any enquiries.

Tietjens always had accepted Macmaster – at Clifton, at Cambridge, in Chancery Lane and in their rooms at Gray's Inn. So for Macmaster he had a very deep affection – even a gratitude. And Macmaster might be considered as returning these feelings. Certainly he had always done his best to be of service to Tietjens. Already at the Treasury and attached as private secretary to Sir Reginald Ingleby, whilst Tietjens was still at Cambridge, Macmaster had brought to the notice of Sir Reginald Tietjens' many great natural gifts, and Sir Reginald, being on the lookout for young men for his ewe lamb, his newly-found department, had very readily accepted Tietjens as his third in command. On the other hand, it had been Tietjens' father who had recommended Macmaster to the notice of Sir Thomas Block at the Treasury itself. And indeed, the Tietjens family had provided a little money – that was Tietjens' mother really – to get Macmaster through Cambridge and install him in Town. He had repaid the small sum – paying it partly by finding room in his chambers for Tietjens when in turn he came to Town.

With a Scots young man such a position had been perfectly possible. Tietjens had been able to go to his fair, ample, saintly mother in her morning-room and say:

'Look here, mother, that fellow Macmaster! He'll need a little money to get through the University,' and his mother would answer:

'Yes, my dear. How much?'

With an English young man of the lower orders that would have left a sense of class obligation. With Macmaster it just didn't.

During Tietjens' late trouble – for four months before Tietjens' wife had left him to go abroad with another man – Macmaster had filled a place that no other man could have filled. For the basis of Christopher Tietjens' emotional existence was a complete taciturnity – at any rate as to his emotions. As Tietjens saw the world, you didn't 'talk'. Perhaps you didn't even think about how you felt.

And, indeed, his wife's flight had left him almost completely without emotions that he could realise, and he had not spoken more than twenty words at most about the event. Those had been mostly to his father, who, very tall, very largely built, silver-haired and erect, had drifted, as it were, into Macmaster's drawing-room in Gray's Inn, and after five minutes of silence had said:

'You will divorce?'

Christopher had answered:

'No! No one but a blackguard would ever submit a woman to the ordeal of divorce.'

Mr. Tietjens had suggested that, and after an interval had asked:

'You will permit her to divorce you?'

He had answered:

'If she wishes it. There's the child to be considered.'

Mr. Tietjens said:

'You will get her settlement transferred to the child?'

Christopher answered:

‘If it can be done without friction.’

Mr. Tietjens had commented only:

‘Ah!’ Some minutes later he had said:

‘Your mother’s very well.’ Then: ‘That motor-plough *didn’t* answer,’ and then: ‘I shall be dining at the club.’

Christopher said:

‘May I bring Macmaster in, sir? You said you would put him up.’

Mr. Tietjens answered:

‘Yes, do. Old General ffolliott will be there. He’ll second him. He’d better make his acquaintance.’ He had gone away.

Tietjens considered that his relationship with his father was an almost perfect one. They were like two men in the club – the *only* club; thinking so alike that there was no need to talk. His father had spent a great deal of time abroad before succeeding to the estate. When, over the moors, he went into the industrial town that he owned, he drove always in a coach-and-four. Tobacco smoke had never been known inside Groby Hall: Mr. Tietjens had twelve pipes filled every morning by his head gardener and placed in rose bushes down the drive. These he smoked during the day. He farmed a good deal of his own land; had sat for Holdernesse from 1878 to 1881, but had not presented himself for election after the redistribution of seats; he was patron of eleven livings; rode to hounds every now and then, and shot fairly regularly. He had three other sons and two daughters, and was now sixty-one.

To his sister Effie, on the day after his wife’s elopement, Christopher had said over the telephone:

‘Will you take Tommie for an indefinite period? Marchant will come with him. She offers to take charge of your two youngest as well, so you’ll save a maid, and I’ll pay their board and a bit over.’

The voice of his sister – from Yorkshire – had answered:

‘Certainly, Christopher.’ She was the wife of a vicar, near Groby, and she had several children.

To Macmaster Tietjens had said:

‘Sylvia has left me with that fellow Perowne.’

Macmaster had answered only: ‘Ah!’

Tietjens had continued:

‘I’m letting the house and warehousing the furniture. Tommie is going to my sister Effie. Marchant is going with him.’

Macmaster had said:

‘Then you’ll be wanting your old rooms.’ Macmaster occupied a very large storey of the Gray’s Inn buildings. After Tietjens had left him on his marriage he had continued to enjoy solitude, except that his man had moved down from the attic to the bedroom formerly occupied by Tietjens.

Tietjens said:

‘I’ll come in to-morrow night if I may. That will give Ferens time to get back into his attic.’

That morning, at breakfast, four months having passed, Tietjens had received a letter from his wife. She asked, without any contrition at all, to be taken back. She was fed up with Perowne and Brittany.

Tietjens looked up at Macmaster. Macmaster was already half out of his chair, looking at him with enlarged, steel-blue eyes, his beard quivering. By the time Tietjens spoke Macmaster had his hand on the neck of the cut-glass brandy decanter in the brown wood tantalus.

Tietjens said:

‘Sylvia asks me to take her back.’

Macmaster said:

‘Have a little of this!’

Tietjens was about to say: ‘No’, automatically. He changed that to:

‘Yes. Perhaps. A liqueur glass.’

He noticed that the lip of the decanter agitated, tinkling on the glass. Macmaster must be trembling.

Macmaster, with his back still turned, said:

‘Shall you take her back?’

Tietjens answered:

‘I imagine so.’ The brandy warmed his chest in its descent. Macmaster said:

‘Better have another.’

Tietjens answered:

‘Yes. Thanks.’

Macmaster went on with his breakfast and his letters. So did Tietjens. Ferens came in, removed the bacon plates and set on the table a silver water-heated dish that contained poached eggs and haddock. A long time afterwards Tietjens said:

‘Yes, in principle I’m determined to. But I shall take three days to think out the details.’

He seemed to have no feelings about the matter. Certain insolent phrases in Sylvia’s letter hung in his mind. He preferred a letter like that. The brandy made no difference to his mentality, but it seemed to keep him from shivering.

Macmaster said:

‘Suppose we go down to Rye by the 11.40. We could get a round after tea now the days are long. I want to call on a parson near there. He has helped me with my book.’

Tietjens said:

‘Did your poet know parsons? But of course he did. Duchemin is the name, isn’t it?’

Macmaster said:

‘We could call about 2.30. That will be all right in the country. We stay till four with a cab outside. We can be on the first tee at five. If we like the course we’ll stay next day: then Tuesday at Hythe and Wednesday at Sandwich. Or we could stay at Rye all your three days.’

‘It will probably suit me better to keep moving,’ Tietjens said. ‘There are those British Columbia figures of yours. If

we took a cab now I could finish them for you in an hour and twelve minutes. Then British North America can go to the printers. It's only 8.30 now.'

Macmaster said, with some concern:

'Oh, but you *couldn't*. I can make our going all right with Sir Reginald.'

Tietjens said:

'Oh, yes I can. Ingleby will be pleased if you tell him they're finished. I'll have them ready for you to give him when he comes at ten.'

Macmaster said:

'What an extraordinary fellow you are, Chrissie. Almost a genius!'

'Oh,' Tietjens answered. 'I was looking at your papers yesterday after you'd left and I've got most of the totals in my head. I was thinking about them before I went to sleep. I think you make a mistake in overestimating the pull of Klondyke this year on the population. The passes are open, but relatively no one is going through. I'll add a note to that effect.'

In the cab he said:

'I'm sorry to bother you with my beastly affairs. But how will it affect you and the office?'

'The office,' Macmaster said, 'not at all. It is supposed that Sylvia is nursing Mrs. Satterthwaite abroad. As for me, I wish . . .' – he closed his small, strong teeth – 'I wish you would drag the woman through the mud. By God I do! Why should she mangle you for the rest of your life? She's done enough!'

Tietjens gazed out over the flap of the cab.

That explained a question. Some days before, a young man, a friend of his wife's rather than of his own, had approached him in the club and had said that he hoped Mrs. Satterthwaite – his wife's mother – was better. He said now:

‘I see. Mrs. Satterthwaite has probably gone abroad to cover up Sylvia’s retreat. She’s a sensible woman, if a bitch.’

The hansom ran through nearly empty streets, it being very early for the public official quarters. The hoofs of the horse clattered precipitately. Tietjens preferred a hansom, horses being made for gentlefolk. He had known nothing of how his fellows had viewed his affairs. It was breaking up a great, numb inertia to enquire.

During the last few months he had employed himself in tabulating from memory the errors in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, of which a new edition had lately appeared. He had even written an article for a dull monthly on the subject. It had been so caustic as to miss its mark, rather. He despised people who used works of reference; but the point of view had been so unfamiliar that his article had galled no one’s withers, except possibly Macmaster’s. Actually it had pleased Sir Reginald Ingleby, who had been glad to think that he had under him a young man with a memory so tenacious, and so encyclopædic a knowledge. . . .

That had been a congenial occupation, like a long drowse. Now he had to make enquiries. He said:

‘And my breaking up the establishment at twenty-nine? How’s that viewed? I’m not going to have a house again.’

‘It’s considered,’ Macmaster answered, ‘that Lowndes Street did not agree with Mrs. Satterthwaite. That accounted for her illness. Drains wrong. I may say that Sir Reginald entirely – expressly – approves. He does not think that young married men in Government offices should keep up expensive establishments in the S.W. district.’

Tietjens said:

‘Damn him.’ He added: ‘He’s probably right, though.’ He then said: ‘Thanks. That’s all I want to know. A certain discredit has always attached to cuckolds. Very properly. A man ought to be able to keep his wife.’

Macmaster exclaimed anxiously:

'No! No! Chrissie.'

Tietjens continued:

'And a first-class public office is very like a public school. It might very well object to having a man whose wife had bolted amongst its members. I remember Clifton hated it when the Governors decided to admit the first Jew and the first nigger.'

Macmaster said:

'I wish you wouldn't go on.'

'There was a fellow,' Tietjens continued, 'whose land was next to ours. Conder his name was. His wife was habitually unfaithful to him. She used to retire with some fellow for three months out of every year. Conder never moved a finger. But we felt Groby and the neighbourhood were unsafe. It was awkward introducing him – not to mention her – in your drawing-room. All sorts of awkwardnesses. Everyone knew the younger children weren't Conder's. A fellow married the youngest daughter and took over the hounds. And not a soul called on her. It wasn't rational or just. But that's why society distrusts the cuckold, really. It never knows when it mayn't be driven into something irrational and unjust.'

'But you *aren't*,' Macmaster said with real anguish, 'going to let Sylvia behave like that.'

'I don't know,' Tietjens said. 'How am I to stop it? Mind you, I think Conder was quite right. Such calamities are the will of God. A gentleman accepts them. If the woman won't divorce, he *must* accept them, and it gets talked about. You seem to have made it all right this time. You and, I suppose, Mrs. Satterthwaite between you. But you won't be always there. Or I might come across another woman.'

Macmaster said:

'Ah!' and after a moment:

'What then?'

Tietjens said:

‘God knows . . . There’s that poor little beggar to be considered. Marchant says he’s beginning to talk broad Yorkshire already.’

Macmaster said:

‘If it wasn’t for that. . . . That would be a solution.’

Tietjens said: ‘Ah!’

When he paid the cabman, in front of a grey cement portal with a gabled arch, reaching up, he said:

‘You’ve been giving the mare less licorice in her mash. I told you she’d go better.’

The cabman, with a scarlet, varnished face, a shiny hat, a drab box-cloth coat and a gardenia in his buttonhole, said:

‘Ah! Trust you to remember, sir.’

In the train, from beneath his pile of polished dressing and despatch cases – Tietjens had thrown his immense kit-bag with his own hands into the guard’s van – Macmaster looked across at his friend. It was, for him, a great day. Across his face were the proof-sheets of his first, small, delicate-looking volume. . . . A small page, the type black and still odorous! He had the agreeable smell of the printer’s ink in his nostrils; the fresh paper was still a little damp. In his white, rather spatulate, always slightly cold fingers, was the pressure of the small, flat, gold pencil he had purchased especially for these corrections. He had found none to make.

He had expected a wallowing of pleasure – almost the only sensuous pleasure he had allowed himself for many months. Keeping up the appearances of an English gentleman on an exiguous income was no mean task. But to wallow in your own phrases, to be rejoiced by the savour of your own shrewd pawkinesses, to feel your rhythm balanced and yet sober – that is a pleasure beyond most, and an inexpensive one at that. He had had it from mere ‘articles’ – on the philosophies and domestic lives of such

great figures as Carlyle and Mill, or on the expansion of inter-colonial trade. This was a book.

He relied upon it to consolidate his position. In the office they were mostly ‘born’, and not vastly sympathetic. There was a sprinkling, too – it was beginning to be a large one – of young men who had obtained their entry by merit or by sheer industry. These watched promotions jealously, discerning nepotic increases of increment and clamouring amongst themselves at favouritisms.

To these he had been able to turn a cold shoulder. His intimacy with Tietjens permitted him to be rather on the ‘born’ side of the institution, his agreeableness – he knew he was agreeable and useful! – to Sir Reginald Ingleby, protecting him in the main from unpleasantness. His ‘articles’ had given him a certain right to an austerity of demeanour; his book he trusted to let him adopt an almost judicial attitude. He would then be *the* Mr. Macmaster, the critic, the authority. And the first-class departments are not averse to having distinguished men as ornaments to their company; at any rate the promotion of the distinguished are not objected to. So Macmaster saw – almost physically – Sir Reginald Ingleby perceiving the empressement with which his valued subordinate was treated in the drawing-rooms of Mrs. Leamington, Mrs. Cressy, the Hon. Mrs. de Limoux; Sir Reginald would perceive that, for he was not a reader himself of much else than Government publications, and he would feel fairly safe in making easy the path of his critically gifted and austere young helper. The son of a very poor shipping clerk in an obscure Scotch harbour town, Macmaster had very early decided on the career that he would make. As between the heroes of Mr. Smiles, an author enormously popular in Macmaster’s boyhood, and the more distinctly intellectual achievements open to the very poor Scot, Macmaster had had no difficulty in choosing. A pit lad *may* rise to be a mine owner; a hard, gifted, unsleeping Scots youth, pursuing unobtrusively and

unobjectionably a course of study and of public usefulness, *will* certainly achieve distinction, security and the quiet admiration of those around him. It was the difference between the *may* and the *will*, and Macmaster had had no difficulty in making his choice. He saw himself by now almost certain of a career that should give him at fifty a knighthood, and long before that a competence, a drawing-room of his own, and a lady who should contribute to his unobtrusive fame, she moving about, in that room, amongst the best of the intellects of the day, gracious, devoted, a tribute at once to his discernment and his achievements. Without some disaster he was sure of himself. Disasters come to men through drink, bankruptcy, and women. Against the first two he knew himself immune, though his expenses had a tendency to outrun his income, and he was always a little in debt to Tietjens. Tietjens fortunately had means. As to the third, he was not so certain. His life had necessarily been starved of women, and, arrived at a stage when the female element might, even with due respect to caution, be considered as a legitimate feature of his life, he had to fear a rashness of choice due to that very starvation. The type of woman he needed he knew to exactitude: tall, graceful, dark, loose-gowned, passionate yet circumspect, oval-featured, deliberative, gracious to everyone around her. He could almost hear the very rustle of her garments.

And yet . . . He had had passages when a sort of blind unreason had attracted him almost to speechlessness towards girls of the most giggling, behind-the-counter order, big-bosomed, scarlet-cheeked. It was only Tietjens who had saved him from the most questionable entanglements.

‘Hang it,’ Tietjens would say, ‘don’t get messing round that trollop. All you could do with her would be to set her up in a tobacco shop, and she would be tearing your beard out inside the quarter. Let alone, you can’t afford it.’

And Macmaster, who would have sentimentalised the plump girl to the tune of *Highland Mary*, would for a day damn Tietjens up and down for a coarse brute. But at the moment he thanked God for Tietjens. There he sat, near to thirty, without an entanglement, a blemish on his health, or a worry with regard to any woman.

With deep affection and concern he looked across at his brilliant junior, who hadn't saved himself. Tietjens had fallen into the most barefaced snare, into the cruellest snare, of the worst woman that could be imagined.

And Macmaster suddenly realised that he wasn't wallowing, as he had imagined that he would, in the sensuous current of his prose. He had begun spiritedly with the first neat square of paragraph. . . . Certainly his publishers had done well by him in the matter of print:

> 'Whether we consider him as the imaginer of mysterious, sensuous and exact plastic beauty; as the manipulator of sonorous, rolling and full-mouthed lines; of words as full of colour as were his canvases; or whether we regard him as the deep philosopher, elucidating and drawing his illumination from the arcana of a mystic hardly greater than himself, to Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti, the subject of this little monograph, must be accorded the name of one who has profoundly influenced the outward aspects, the human contacts, and all those things that go to make up the life of our higher civilisation as we live it to-day. . . .'

Macmaster realised that he had only got thus far with his prose, and had got thus far without any of the relish that he had expected, and that then he had turned to the middle paragraph of page three – after the end of his exordium. His eyes wandered desultorily along the line:

‘The subject of these pages was born in the western central district of the metropolis in the year . . .’

The words conveyed nothing to him at all. He understood that that was because he hadn’t got over that morning. He had looked up from his coffee-cup – over the rim – and had taken in a blue-grey sheet of notepaper in Tietjens’ fingers, shaking, inscribed in the large, broad-nibbed writing of that detestable harridan. And Tietjens had been staring – staring with the intentness of a maddened horse – at his, Macmaster’s, face! And grey! Shapeless! The nose like a pallid triangle on a bladder of lard! That was Tietjens’ face. . . .

He could still feel the blow, physical, in the pit of his stomach! He had thought Tietjens was going mad: that he *was* mad. It had passed. Tietjens had assumed the mask of his indolent, insolent self. At the office, but later, he had delivered an extraordinarily forceful – and quite rude – lecture to Sir Reginald on his reasons for differing from the official figures of population movements in the western territories. Sir Reginald had been much impressed. The figures were wanted for a speech of the Colonial Minister – or an answer to a question – and Sir Reginald had promised to put Tietjens’ views before the great man. That was the sort of thing to do a young fellow good – because it got kudos for the office. They had to work on figures provided by the Colonial Governments, and if they could correct those fellows by sheer brain work – that scored.

But there sat Tietjens, in his grey tweeds, his legs apart, lumpish, clumsy, his tallowy, intelligent-looking hands drooping inert between his legs, his eyes gazing at a coloured photograph of the port of Boulogne beside the mirror beneath the luggage rack. Blond, high-coloured, vacant apparently, you couldn’t tell what in the world he was thinking of. The mathematical theory of waves, very likely, or slips in someone’s article on Arminianism. For,

absurd as it seemed, Macmaster knew that he knew next to nothing of his friend's feelings. As to them, practically no confidences had passed between them. Just two: On the night before his starting for his wedding in Paris Tietjens had said to him:

'Vinnie, old fellow, it's a back door way out of it. She's bitched *me*.'

And once, rather lately, he had said:

'Damn it! I don't even know if the child's my own!'

This last confidence had shocked Macmaster so irremediably – the child had been a seven months' child, rather ailing, and Tietjens' clumsy tenderness towards it had been so marked that, even without this nightmare, Macmaster had been affected by the sight of them together – that confidence then had pained Macmaster so frightfully, it was so appalling, that Macmaster had regarded it almost as an insult. It was the sort of confidence a man didn't make to his equal, but only to solicitors, doctors, or the clergy who are not quite men. Or, at any rate, such confidences are not made between men without appeals for sympathy, and Tietjens had made no appeal for sympathy. He had just added sardonically:

'She gives me the benefit of the agreeable doubt. And she's as good as said as much to Marchant' – Marchant had been Tietjens' old nurse.

Suddenly – and as if in a sort of unconscious losing of his head – Macmaster remarked:

'You can't say the man wasn't a poet!'

The remark had been, as it were, torn from him, because he had observed, in the strong light of the compartment, that half of Tietjens' forelock and a roundish patch behind it was silvery white. That might have been going on for weeks: you live beside a man and notice his changes very little. Yorkshire men of fresh colour, and blondish, often go speckled with white very young; Tietjens had had a white

hair or two at the age of fourteen, very noticeable in the sunlight when he had taken his cap off to bowl.

But Macmaster's mind, taking appalled charge, had felt assured that Tietjens had gone white with the shock of his wife's letter – in four hours! That meant that terrible things must be going on within him; his thoughts, at all costs, must be distracted. The mental process in Macmaster had been quite subconscious. He would not, advisedly, have introduced the painter-poet as a topic.

Tietjens said:

'I haven't said anything at all that I can remember.'

The obstinacy of his hard race awakened in Macmaster:

'Since,' he quoted, 'when we stand side by side

Only hands may meet,
Better half this weary world
Lay between us, sweet!
Better far tho' hearts may break
Bid farewell for aye!
Lest thy sad eyes, meeting mine,
Tempt my soul away!'

'You can't,' he continued, 'say that that isn't poetry! Great poetry.'

'I can't say,' Tietjens answered contemptuously. 'I don't read poetry except Byron. But it's a filthy picture. . . .'

Macmaster said uncertainly:

'I don't know that I know the picture. Is it in Chicago?'

'It isn't painted!' Tietjens said. 'But it's there!'

He continued with sudden fury:

'Damn it. What's the sense of all these attempts to justify fornication? England's mad about it. Well, you've got your John Stuart Mills and your George Eliots for the high-class thing. Leave the furniture out! Or leave me out, at least I tell you it revolts me to think of that obese, oily man who never took a bath, in a grease-spotted dressing-gown and

the underclothes he's slept in, standing beside a five-shilling model with crimped hair, or some Mrs. W. Three Stars, gazing into a mirror that reflects their fetid selves and gilt sunfish and drop chandeliers and plates sickening with cold bacon fat and gurgling about passion.'

Macmaster had gone chalk white, his short beard bristling:

'You daren't . . . you daren't talk like that,' he stuttered.

'I *dare*!' Tietjens answered; 'but I oughtn't to . . . to you! I admit that. But you oughtn't, almost as much, to talk about that stuff to me, either. It's an insult to my intelligence.'

'Certainly,' Macmaster said stiffly, 'the moment was not opportune.'

'I don't understand what you mean,' Tietjens answered. 'The moment can never be opportune. Let's agree that making a career is a dirty business – for me as for you! But decent augurs grin behind their masks. They never preach to each other.'

'You're getting esoteric,' Macmaster said faintly.

'I'll underline,' Tietjens went on. 'I quite understand that the favour of Mrs. Cressy and Mrs. de Limoux is essential to you! They have the ear of that old don Ingleby.'

Macmaster said:

'Damn!'

'I quite agree,' Tietjens continued, 'I quite approve. It's the game as it has always been played. It's the tradition, so it's right. It's been sanctioned since the days of the *Précieuses Ridicules*.'

'You've a way of putting things,' Macmaster said.

'I haven't,' Tietjens answered. 'It's just because I haven't that what I *do* say sticks out in the minds of fellows like you who are always fiddling about after literary expression. But what I do say is this: I stand for monogamy.'

Macmaster uttered a '*You!*' of amazement.

Tietjens answered with a negligent '*I!*' He continued:

‘I stand for monogamy and chastity. And for no talking about it. Of course if a man who’s a man wants to have a woman he has her. And again, no talking about it. He’d no doubt be in the end better, and better off, if he didn’t. Just as it would probably be better for him if he didn’t have the second glass of whisky and soda. . . .’

‘You call that monogamy and chastity!’ Macmaster interjected.

‘I do,’ Tietjens answered. ‘And it probably is, at any rate it’s clean. What is loathsome is all your fumbling in placket-holes and polysyllabic Justification by Love. You stand for lachrymose polygamy. That’s all right if you can get your club to change its rules.’

‘You’re out of my depth,’ Macmaster said. ‘And being very disagreeable. You appear to be justifying promiscuity. I don’t like it.’

‘I’m probably being disagreeable,’ Tietjens said. ‘Jeremiahs usually are. But there ought to be a twenty years’ close time for discussions of sham sexual morality. Your Paolo and Francesca – and Dante’s – went, very properly, to Hell, and no bones about it. You don’t get Dante justifying them. But your fellow whines about creeping into Heaven.’

‘He *doesn’t*,’ Macmaster exclaimed. Tietjens continued with equanimity:

‘Now your novelist who writes a book to justify his every tenth or fifth seduction of a commonplace young woman in the name of the rights of shop boys. . . .’

‘I’ll admit,’ Macmaster coincided, ‘that Briggs is going too far. I told him only last Thursday at Mrs. Limoux’s . . .’

‘I’m not talking of anyone in particular,’ Tietjens said. ‘I don’t read novels. I’m supposing a case. And it’s a cleaner case than that of your pre-Raphaelite horrors! No! I don’t read novels, but I follow tendencies. And if a fellow chooses to justify his seductions of uninteresting and viewy young females along the lines of freedom and the rights of man,

it’s relatively respectable. It would be better just to boast about his conquests in a straightforward and exultant way. But . . .’

‘You carry joking too far sometimes,’ Macmaster said. ‘I’ve warned you about it.’

‘I’m as solemn as an owl!’ Tietjens rejoined. ‘The lower classes are becoming vocal. Why shouldn’t they? They’re the only people in this country who are sound in wind and limb. They’ll save the country if the country’s to be saved.’

‘And you call yourself a Tory!’ Macmaster said.

‘The lower classes,’ Tietjens continued equably, ‘such of them as get through the secondary schools, want irregular and very transitory unions. During holidays they go together on personally conducted tours to Switzerland and such places. Wet afternoons they pass in their tiled bathrooms, slapping each other hilariously on the backs and splashing white enamel paint about.’

‘You say you don’t read novels,’ Macmaster said, ‘but I recognise the quotation.’

‘I don’t *read* novels,’ Tietjens answered. ‘I know what’s in ’em. There has been nothing worth *reading* written in England since the eighteenth century except by a woman. . . . But it’s natural for your enamel splashers to want to see themselves in a bright and variegated literature. Why shouldn’t they? It’s a healthy, human desire, and now that printing and paper are cheap they get it satisfied. It’s healthy, I tell you. Infinitely healthier than . . .’ He paused.

‘Than what?’ Macmaster asked.

‘I’m thinking,’ Tietjens said, ‘thinking how not to be too rude.’

‘You want to be rude,’ Macmaster said bitterly, ‘to people who lead the contemplative . . . the circumspect life.’

‘It’s precisely that,’ Tietjens said. He quoted:

She walks, the lady of my delight,
A shepherdess of sheep;

She is so circumspect and right:
She has her thoughts to keep.

Macmaster said:

'Confound you, Chrissie. You know everything.'

'Well, yes,' Tietjens said musingly, 'I think I should want to be rude to her. I don't say I should be. Certainly I shouldn't if she were good looking. Or if she were your soul's affinity. You can rely on that.'

Macmaster had a sudden vision of Tietjens' large and clumsy form walking beside the lady of his, Macmaster's, delight, when ultimately she was found – walking along the top of a cliff amongst tall grass and poppies and making himself extremely agreeable with talk of Tasso and Cimabue. All the same, Macmaster imagined, the lady wouldn't like Tietjens. Women didn't as a rule. His looks and his silences alarmed them. Or they hated him. . . . Or they liked him very much indeed. And Macmaster said conciliatorily:

'Yes, I think I could rely on that!' He added: 'All the same I don't wonder that . . .'

He had been about to say:

'I don't wonder that Sylvia calls you immoral.' For Tietjens' wife alleged that Tietjens was detestable. He bored her, she said, by his silences; when he did speak she hated him for the immorality of his views. . . . But he did not finish his sentence, and Tietjens went on:

'All the same when the war comes it will be these little snobs who will save England, because they've the courage to know what they want and to say so.'

Macmaster said loftily:

'You're extraordinarily old-fashioned at times, Chrissie. You ought to know as well as I do that a war is impossible – at any rate with this country in it. Simply because . . .' He hesitated and then emboldened himself: '*We* – the

circumspect – yes, the circumspect classes, will pilot the nation through the tight places.'

'War, my good fellow,' Tietjens said – the train was slowing down preparatorily to running into Ashford – 'is inevitable, and with this country plumb centre in the middle of it. Simply because you fellows are such damn hypocrites. There's not a country in the world that trusts us. We're always, as it were, committing adultery – like your fellow! – with the name of Heaven on our lips.' He was jibing again at the subject of Macmaster's monograph.

'He never!' Macmaster said in almost a stutter. 'He never whined about Heaven.'

'He did,' Tietjens said: 'The beastly poem you quoted ends:

Better far though hearts may break,
  Since we dare not love,
Part till we once more may meet
  In a Heaven above.'

And Macmaster, who had been dreading that shot – for he never knew how much or how little of any given poem his friend would have by heart – Macmaster collapsed, as it were, into fussily getting down his dressing-cases and clubs from the rack, a task he usually left to a porter. Tietjens who, however much a train might be running into a station he was bound for, sat like a rock until it was dead-still, said:

'Yes, a war is inevitable. Firstly, there's you fellows who can't be trusted. And then there's the multitude who mean to have bathrooms and white enamel. Millions of them; all over the world. Not merely here. And there aren't enough bathrooms and white enamel in the world to go round. It's like you polygamists with women. There aren't enough women in the world to go round to satisfy your insatiable appetites. And there aren't enough men in the world to give each woman one. And most women want several. So you