THOMAS HARDY

DESPERATE REMEDIES

EXTENDED ANNOTATED EDITION

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Thomas Hardy

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Thomas Hardy – A Biographical Primer

English novelist, was born in Dorsetshire on the 2nd of June 1840. His family was one of the branches of the Dorset Hardys, formerly of influence in and near the valley of the Frome, claiming descent of John Le Hardy of Jersey (son of Clement Le Hardy, lieutenant-governor of that island in 1488), who settled in the west of England. His maternal ancestors were the Swetman, Childs or Child, and kindred families, who before and after 1635 were small landed proprietors in Melbury Osmond, Dorset, and adjoining parishes. He was educated at local schools, 1848–1854, and afterwards privately, and in 1856 was articled to Mr. John Hicks, an ecclesiastical architect of Dorchester. In

1859 he began writing verse and essays, but in 1861 was compelled to apply himself more strictly to architecture, sketching and measuring many old Dorset churches with a view to their restoration. In 1862 he went to London (which he had first visited at the age of nine) and became assistant to the late Sir Arthur Blomfield, R.A. In 1863 he won the medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects for an essay on Coloured Brick and Terra-cotta Architecture, and in the same year won the prize of the Architectural Association for design. In March 1965 his first short story was published in Chamber's Journal, and during the next two or three years he wrote a great deal of verse, being somewhat uncertain whether to take to architecture or to literature as a profession. In 1867 he left London for Weymouth, and during that and the following year wrote a "purpose" story, which in 1869 was accepted by Messrs Chapman and Hall. The manuscript had been read by Mr. George Meredith, who asked the writer to call on him, and advised him not to print it, but to try another, with more plot. The manuscript was withdrawn and re-written, but never published. In 1870 Mr. Hardy took Mr. Meredith's advice too literally, and constructed a novel that was all plot, which was published under the title Desperate Remedies. In 1872 appeared Under the Greenwood Tree, "a rural painting of the Dutch school," in which Mr. Hardy had already "found himself," and which he has never surpassed in happy and delicate perfection of art. A Pair of Blue Eyes, in which tragedy and irony come into his work together, was published in 1873. In 1874 Mr. Hardy married Emma Lavinia, daughter of the late T. Attersoll Gifford of Plymouth. His first popular success was made by Far from the Madding Crowd (1874), which, on its appearance anonymously in the Cornhill Magazine, was attributed by many to George Eliot. Then came The Hand of Ethelberta (1876), described, not inaptly, as "a comedy in chapters"; The Return of the Native (1878), the most

sombre and, in some ways, the most powerful and characteristic of Mr. Hardy's novels; The Trumpet-Major (1880); A Laodicean (1881); Two on a Tower (1882), a long excursion in constructive irony; The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886); The Woodlanders (1887); Wessex Tales (1888); A Group of Noble Dames (1891); Tess of the D' Urbervilles (1891), Mr. Hardy's most famous novel; Life's Little Ironies (1894); Jude the Obscure (1895), his most thoughtful and least popular book; The Well-Beloved, a reprint, with some revision, of a story originally published in the Illustrated London News in 1892 (1897); Wessex Poems, written during the previous thirty years, with illustrations by the author; and The Dynasts (2 parts, 1904–1906). In 1909 appeared Time's Laughing-stocks and other Verses. In all his works Mr. Hardy is concerned with one thing, seen under two aspects; not civilizations, nor manners, but the principle of life itself, invisibly realized in humanity as sex, seen visibly in the world as what we call nature. He is a fatalist, perhaps rather a determinist, and he studies the workings of fate or law (ruling through inexorable moods or humours), in the chief vivifying and disturbing influence in life, women. His view of women is more French than English; it is subtle, a little cruel, not as tolerant as it seems, thoroughly a man's point of view, and not, as with Mr. Meredith, man's and woman's at once. He sees all that is irresponsible for good and evil in a woman's character, all that is untrustworthy in her brain and will, all that is alluring in her variability. He is her apologist, but always with a reserve of private judgment. No one has created more attractive women of a certain class, women whom a man would have been more likely to love or regret loving. In his earlier books he is somewhat careful over the reputation of his heroines; gradually, he allows them more liberty, with a franker treatment of instinct and its consequence. Jude the Obscure is perhaps the most unbiased consideration in English fiction of the more

complicated question of sex. There is almost no passion in his work, neither the author nor his characters ever seeming to pass beyond the state of curiosity, the most intellectually interesting of limitations, under the influence of any emotion. In his feeling for nature, curiosity sometimes seems to broaden into a more intimate communion. The heath, the village with its peasants, the change of every hour among the fields and on the roads of that English countryside which he made his own—the Dorsetshire and Wiltshire “Wessex”—mean more to him, in a sense, than even the spectacle of man and woman in their blind and painful and absorbing struggle for existence. His knowledge of woman confirms him in a suspension of judgment; his knowledge of nature brings him nearer to the unchanging and consoling element in the world. All the entertainment which he gets out of life comes to him from his contemplation of the peasant, as himself a rooted part of the earth, translating the dumbness of the fields into humour. His peasants have been compared with Shakespeare’s; he has the Shakesperean sense of their placid vegetation by the side of hurrying animal life, to which they act the part of chorus, with an unconscious wisdom in their close, narrow and undistracted view of things. The order of merit was conferred upon Mr. Hardy in July 1910.

Desperate Remedies

PREFATORY NOTE

The following story, the first published by the author, was written nineteen years ago, at a time when he was feeling his way to a method. The principles observed in its

composition are, no doubt, too exclusively those in which mystery, entanglement, surprise, and moral obliquity are depended on for exciting interest; but some of the scenes, and at least one of the characters, have been deemed not unworthy of a little longer preservation; and as they could hardly be reproduced in a fragmentary form the novel is reissued complete—the more readily that it has for some considerable time been reprinted and widely circulated in America. January 1889.

To the foregoing note I have only to add that, in the present edition of 'Desperate Remedies,' some Wessex towns and other places that are common to the scenes of several of these stories have been called for the first time by the names under which they appear elsewhere, for the satisfaction of any reader who may care for consistency in such matters.

This is the only material change; for, as it happened that certain characteristics which provoked most discussion in my latest story were present in this my first—published in 1871, when there was no French name for them it has seemed best to let them stand unaltered.

T.H. February 1896.

I. THE EVENTS OF THIRTY YEARS

1. DECEMBER AND JANUARY, 1835-36

In the long and intricately inwrought chain of circumstance which renders worthy of record some experiences of Cytherea Graye, Edward Springrove, and others, the first event directly influencing the issue was a Christmas visit.

In the above-mentioned year, 1835, Ambrose Graye, a young architect who had just begun the practice of his profession in the midland town of Hocbridge, to the north of Christminster, went to London to spend the Christmas holidays with a friend who lived in Bloomsbury. They had gone up to Cambridge in the same year, and, after graduating together, Huntway, the friend, had taken orders.

Graye was handsome, frank, and gentle. He had a quality of thought which, exercised on homeliness, was humour; on nature, picturesqueness; on abstractions, poetry. Being, as a rule, broadcast, it was all three.

Of the wickedness of the world he was too forgetful. To discover evil in a new friend is to most people only an additional experience: to him it was ever a surprise.

While in London he became acquainted with a retired officer in the Navy named Bradleigh, who, with his wife and their daughter, lived in a street not far from Russell Square. Though they were in no more than comfortable circumstances, the captain's wife came of an ancient family whose genealogical tree was interlaced with some of the most illustrious and well-known in the kingdom.

The young lady, their daughter, seemed to Graye by far the most beautiful and queenly being he had ever beheld. She was about nineteen or twenty, and her name was Cytherea. In truth she was not so very unlike country girls of that type of beauty, except in one respect. She was perfect in her manner and bearing, and they were not. A mere distinguishing peculiarity, by catching the eye, is often read as the pervading characteristic, and she appeared to him no less than perfection throughout—transcending her rural rivals in very nature. Graye did a thing the blissfulness of

which was only eclipsed by its hazardousness. He loved her at first sight.

His introductions had led him into contact with Cytherea and her parents two or three times on the first week of his arrival in London, and accident and a lover's contrivance brought them together as frequently the week following. The parents liked young Graye, and having few friends (for their equals in blood were their superiors in position), he was received on very generous terms. His passion for Cytherea grew not only strong, but ineffably exalted: she, without positively encouraging him, tacitly assented to his schemes for being near her. Her father and mother seemed to have lost all confidence in nobility of birth, without money to give effect to its presence, and looked upon the budding consequence of the young people's reciprocal glances with placidity, if not actual favour.

Graye's whole impassioned dream terminated in a sad and unaccountable episode. After passing through three weeks of sweet experience, he had arrived at the last stage—a kind of moral Gaza—before plunging into an emotional desert. The second week in January had come round, and it was necessary for the young architect to leave town.

Throughout his acquaintanceship with the lady of his heart there had been this marked peculiarity in her love: she had delighted in his presence as a sweetheart should do, yet from first to last she had repressed all recognition of the true nature of the thread which drew them together, blinding herself to its meaning and only natural tendency, and appearing to dread his announcement of them. The present seemed enough for her without cumulative hope: usually, even if love is in itself an end, it must be regarded as a beginning to be enjoyed.

In spite of evasions as an obstacle, and in consequence of them as a spur, he would put the matter off no longer. It was evening. He took her into a little conservatory on the landing, and there among the evergreens, by the light of a few tiny lamps, infinitely enhancing the freshness and beauty of the leaves, he made the declaration of a love as fresh and beautiful as they.

'My love—my darling, be my wife!'

She seemed like one just awakened. 'Ah—we must part now!' she faltered, in a voice of anguish. 'I will write to you.' She loosened her hand and rushed away.

In a wild fever Graye went home and watched for the next morning. Who shall express his misery and wonder when a note containing these words was put into his hand?

'Good-bye; good-bye for ever. As recognized lovers something divides us eternally. Forgive me—I should have told you before; but your love was sweet! Never mention me.'

That very day, and as it seemed, to put an end to a painful condition of things, daughter and parents left London to pay off a promised visit to a relative in a western county. No message or letter of entreaty could wring from her any explanation. She begged him not to follow her, and the most bewildering point was that her father and mother appeared, from the tone of a letter Graye received from them, as vexed and sad as he at this sudden renunciation. One thing was plain: without admitting her reason as valid, they knew what that reason was, and did not intend to reveal it.

A week from that day Ambrose Graye left his friend Huntway's house and saw no more of the Love he mourned. From time to time his friend answered any inquiry Graye made by letter respecting her. But very poor food to a lover is intelligence of a mistress filtered through a friend. Huntway could tell nothing definitely. He said he believed there had been some prior flirtation between Cytherea and her cousin, an officer of the line, two or three years before Graye met her, which had suddenly been terminated by the cousin's departure for India, and the young lady's travelling on the Continent with her parents the whole of the ensuing summer, on account of delicate health. Eventually Huntway said that circumstances had rendered Graye's attachment more hopeless still. Cytherea's mother had unexpectedly inherited a large fortune and estates in the west of England by the rapid fall of some intervening lives. This had caused their removal from the small house in Bloomsbury, and, as it appeared, a renunciation of their old friends in that quarter.

Young Graye concluded that his Cytherea had forgotten him and his love. But he could not forget her.

2. FROM 1843 TO 1861

Eight years later, feeling lonely and depressed—a man without relatives, with many acquaintances but no friends—Ambrose Graye met a young lady of a different kind, fairly endowed with money and good gifts. As to caring very deeply for another woman after the loss of Cytherea, it was an absolute impossibility with him. With all, the beautiful things of the earth become more dear as they elude pursuit; but with some natures utter elusion is the one special event which will make a passing love permanent for ever.

This second young lady and Graye were married. That he did not, first or last, love his wife as he should have done, was known to all; but few knew that his unmanageable heart could never be weaned from useless repining at the loss of its first idol.

His character to some extent deteriorated, as emotional constitutions will under the long sense of disappointment at having missed their imagined destiny. And thus, though naturally of a gentle and pleasant disposition, he grew to be not so tenderly regarded by his acquaintances as it is the lot of some of those persons to be. The winning and sanguine receptivity of his early life developed by degrees a moody nervousness, and when not picturing prospects drawn from baseless hope he was the victim of indescribable depression. The practical issue of such a condition was improvidence, originally almost an unconscious improvidence, for every debt incurred had been mentally paid off with a religious exactness from the treasures of expectation before mentioned. But as years revolved, the same course was continued from the lack of spirit sufficient for shifting out of an old groove when it has been found to lead to disaster.

In the year 1861 his wife died, leaving him a widower with two children. The elder, a son named Owen, now just turned seventeen, was taken from school, and initiated as pupil to the profession of architect in his father's office. The remaining child was a daughter, and Owen's junior by a year.

Her christian name was Cytherea, and it is easy to guess why.

3. OCTOBER THE TWELFTH, 1863

We pass over two years in order to reach the next cardinal event of these persons' lives. The scene is still the Grayes' native town of Hocbridge, but as it appeared on a Monday afternoon in the month of October.

The weather was sunny and dry, but the ancient borough was to be seen wearing one of its least attractive aspects. First on account of the time. It was that stagnant hour of the twenty-four when the practical garishness of Day, having escaped from the fresh long shadows and enlivening newness of the morning, has not yet made any perceptible advance towards acquiring those mellow and soothing tones which grace its decline. Next, it was that stage in the progress of the week when business—which, carried on under the gables of an old country place, is not devoid of a romantic sparkle—was well-nigh extinguished. Lastly, the town was intentionally bent upon being attractive by exhibiting to an influx of visitors the local talent for dramatic recitation, and provincial towns trying to be lively are the dullest of dull things.

Little towns are like little children in this respect, that they interest most when they are enacting native peculiarities unconscious of beholders. Discovering themselves to be watched they attempt to be entertaining by putting on an antic, and produce disagreeable caricatures which spoil them.

The weather-stained clock-face in the low church tower standing at the intersection of the three chief streets was expressing half-past two to the Town Hall opposite, where the much talked-of reading from Shakespeare was about to begin. The doors were open, and those persons who had already assembled within the building were noticing the entrance of the new-comers—silently criticizing their dress

—questioning the genuineness of their teeth and hair—estimating their private means.

Among these later ones came an exceptional young maiden who glowed amid the dulness like a single bright-red poppy in a field of brown stubble. She wore an elegant dark jacket, lavender dress, hat with grey strings and trimmings, and gloves of a colour to harmonize. She lightly walked up the side passage of the room, cast a slight glance around, and entered the seat pointed out to her.

The young girl was Cytherea Graye; her age was now about eighteen. During her entry, and at various times whilst sitting in her seat and listening to the reader on the platform, her personal appearance formed an interesting subject of study for several neighbouring eyes.

Her face was exceedingly attractive, though artistically less perfect than her figure, which approached unusually near to the standard of faultlessness. But even this feature of hers yielded the palm to the gracefulness of her movement, which was fascinating and delightful to an extreme degree.

Indeed, motion was her speciality, whether shown on its most extended scale of bodily progression, or minutely, as in the uplifting of her eyelids, the bending of her fingers, the pouting of her lip. The carriage of her head—motion within motion—a glide upon a glide—was as delicate as that of a magnetic needle. And this flexibility and elasticity had never been taught her by rule, nor even been acquired by observation, but, nullo cultu, had naturally developed itself with her years. In childhood, a stone or stalk in the way, which had been the inevitable occasion of a fall to her playmates, had usually left her safe and upright on her feet after the narrowest escape by oscillations and whirls for the preservation of her balance. At mixed Christmas

parties, when she numbered but twelve or thirteen years, and was heartily despised on that account by lads who deemed themselves men, her apt lightness in the dance covered this incompleteness in her womanhood, and compelled the self-same youths in spite of resolutions to seize upon her childish figure as a partner whom they could not afford to contemn. And in later years, when the instincts of her sex had shown her this point as the best and rarest feature in her external self, she was not found wanting in attention to the cultivation of finish in its details.

Her hair rested gaily upon her shoulders in curls and was of a shining corn yellow in the high lights, deepening to a definite nut-brown as each curl wound round into the shade. She had eyes of a sapphire hue, though rather darker than the gem ordinarily appears; they possessed the affectionate and liquid sparkle of loyalty and good faith as distinguishable from that harder brightness which seems to express faithfulness only to the object confronting them.

But to attempt to gain a view of her—or indeed of any fascinating woman—from a measured category, is as difficult as to appreciate the effect of a landscape by exploring it at night with a lantern—or of a full chord of music by piping the notes in succession. Nevertheless it may readily be believed from the description here ventured, that among the many winning phases of her aspect, these were particularly striking:—

During pleasant doubt, when her eyes brightened stealthily and smiled (as eyes will smile) as distinctly as her lips, and in the space of a single instant expressed clearly the whole round of degrees of expectancy which lie over the wide expanse between Yea and Nay.

During the telling of a secret, which was involuntarily accompanied by a sudden minute start, and ecstatic pressure of the listener's arm, side, or neck, as the position and degree

of intimacy dictated.

When anxiously regarding one who possessed her affections.

She suddenly assumed the last-mentioned bearing in the progress of the present entertainment. Her glance was directed out of the window.

Why the particulars of a young lady's presence at a very mediocre performance were prevented from dropping into the oblivion which their intrinsic insignificance would naturally have involved—why they were remembered and individualized by herself and others through after years—was simply that she unknowingly stood, as it were, upon the extreme posterior edge of a tract in her life, in which the real meaning of Taking Thought had never been known. It was the last hour of experience she ever enjoyed with a mind entirely free from a knowledge of that labyrinth into which she stepped immediately afterwards—to continue a perplexed course along its mazes for the greater portion of twenty-nine subsequent months.

The Town Hall, in which Cytherea sat, was a building of brown stone, and through one of the windows could be seen from the interior of the room the housetops and chimneys of the adjacent street, and also the upper part of a neighbouring church spire, now in course of completion under the superintendence of Miss Graye's father, the architect to the work.

That the top of this spire should be visible from her position in the room was a fact which Cytherea's idling eyes had discovered with some interest, and she was now engaged in watching the scene that was being enacted about its airy summit. Round the conical stonework rose a cage of scaffolding against the blue sky, and upon this stood five men—four in clothes as white as the new erection close

beneath their hands, the fifth in the ordinary dark suit of a gentleman.

The four working-men in white were three masons and a mason's labourer. The fifth man was the architect, Mr. Graye. He had been giving directions as it seemed, and retiring as far as the narrow footway allowed, stood perfectly still.

The picture thus presented to a spectator in the Town Hall was curious and striking. It was an illuminated miniature, framed in by the dark margin of the window, the keen-edged shadiness of which emphasized by contrast the softness of the objects enclosed.

The height of the spire was about one hundred and twenty feet, and the five men engaged thereon seemed entirely removed from the sphere and experiences of ordinary human beings. They appeared little larger than pigeons, and made their tiny movements with a soft, spirit-like silentness. One idea above all others was conveyed to the mind of a person on the ground by their aspect, namely, concentration of purpose: that they were indifferent to—even unconscious of—the distracted world beneath them, and all that moved upon it. They never looked off the scaffolding.

Then one of them turned; it was Mr. Graye. Again he stood motionless, with attention to the operations of the others. He appeared to be lost in reflection, and had directed his face towards a new stone they were lifting.

'Why does he stand like that?' the young lady thought at length—up to that moment as listless and careless as one of the ancient Tarentines, who, on such an afternoon as this,

watched from the Theatre the entry into their Harbour of a power that overturned the State.

She moved herself uneasily. 'I wish he would come down,' she whispered, still gazing at the skybacked picture. 'It is so dangerous to be absent-minded up there.'

When she had done murmuring the words her father indecisively laid hold of one of the scaffold-poles, as if to test its strength, then let it go and stepped back. In stepping, his foot slipped. An instant of doubling forward and sideways, and he reeled off into the air, immediately disappearing downwards.

His agonized daughter rose to her feet by a convulsive movement. Her lips parted, and she gasped for breath. She could utter no sound. One by one the people about her, unconscious of what had happened, turned their heads, and inquiry and alarm became visible upon their faces at the sight of the poor child. A moment longer, and she fell to the floor.

The next impression of which Cytherea had any consciousness was of being carried from a strange vehicle across the pavement to the steps of her own house by her brother and an older man. Recollection of what had passed evolved itself an instant later, and just as they entered the door—through which another and sadder burden had been carried but a few instants before—her eyes caught sight of the south-western sky, and, without heeding, saw white sunlight shining in shaft-like lines from a rift in a slaty cloud. Emotions will attach themselves to scenes that are simultaneous—however foreign in essence these scenes may be—as chemical waters will crystallize on twigs and wires. Even after that time any mental agony brought less

vividly to Cytherea's mind the scene from the Town Hall windows than sunlight streaming in shaft-like lines.

4. OCTOBER THE NINETEENTH

When death enters a house, an element of sadness and an element of horror accompany it. Sadness, from the death itself: horror, from the clouds of blackness we designedly labour to introduce.

The funeral had taken place. Depressed, yet resolved in his demeanour, Owen Graye sat before his father's private escritoire, engaged in turning out and unfolding a heterogeneous collection of papers—forbidding and inharmonious to the eye at all times—most of all to one under the influence of a great grief. Laminae of white paper tied with twine were indiscriminately intermixed with other white papers bounded by black edges—these with blue foolscap wrapped round with crude red tape.

The bulk of these letters, bills, and other documents were submitted to a careful examination, by which the appended particulars were ascertained:—

First, that their father's income from professional sources had been very small, amounting to not more than half their expenditure; and that his own and his wife's property, upon which he had relied for the balance, had been sunk and lost in unwise loans to unscrupulous men, who had traded upon their father's too open-hearted trustfulness.

Second, that finding his mistake, he had endeavoured to regain his standing by the illusory path of speculation. The most notable instance of this was the following. He had been induced, when at Plymouth in the autumn of the previous year, to venture all his spare capital on the bottomry security of an Italian brig which had put into the harbour in distress. The profit was to be considerable, so was the risk. There turned out to be no security whatever. The circumstances of the case tendered it the most unfortunate speculation that a man like himself—ignorant of all

such matters—could possibly engage in. The vessel went down, and all Mr. Graye's money with it.

Third, that these failures had left him burdened with debts he knew not how to meet; so that at the time of his death even the few pounds lying to his account at the bank were his only in name.

Fourth, that the loss of his wife two years earlier had awakened him to a keen sense of his blindness, and of his duty by his children. He had then resolved to reinstate by unflagging zeal in the pursuit of his profession, and by no speculation, at least a portion of the little fortune he had let go.

Cytherea was frequently at her brother's elbow during these examinations. She often remarked sadly—

'Poor papa failed to fulfil his good intention for want of time, didn't he, Owen? And there was an excuse for his past, though he never would claim it. I never forget that original disheartening blow, and how that from it sprang all the ills of his life—everything connected with his gloom, and the lassitude in business we used so often to see about him.'

'I remember what he said once,' returned the brother, 'when I sat up late with him. He said, "Owen, don't love too blindly: blindly you will love if you love at all, but a little care is still possible to a well-disciplined heart. May that heart be yours as it was not mine," father said. "Cultivate the art of renunciation." And I am going to, Cytherea.'

'And once mamma said that an excellent woman was papa's ruin, because he did not know the way to give her up when he had lost her. I wonder where she is now, Owen? We were told not to try to find out anything about her. Papa never told us her name, did he?'

'That was by her own request, I believe. But never mind her; she was not our mother.'

The love affair which had been Ambrose Graye's disheartening blow was precisely of that nature which lads take little account of, but girls ponder in their hearts.

5. FROM OCTOBER THE NINETEENTH TO JULY THE NINTH

Thus Ambrose Graye's good intentions with regard to the reintegration of his property had scarcely taken tangible form when his sudden death put them for ever out of his power.

Heavy bills, showing the extent of his obligations, tumbled in immediately upon the heels of the funeral from quarters previously unheard and unthought of. Thus pressed, a bill was filed in Chancery to have the assets, such as they were, administered by the Court.

'What will become of us now?' thought Owen continually.

There is in us an unquenchable expectation, which at the gloomiest time persists in inferring that because we are *ourselves*, there must be a special future in store for us, though our nature and antecedents to the remotest particular have been common to thousands. Thus to Cytherea and Owen Graye the question how their lives would end seemed the deepest of possible enigmas. To others who knew their position equally well with themselves the question was the easiest that could be asked—'Like those of other people similarly circumstanced.'

Then Owen held a consultation with his sister to come to some decision on their future course, and a month was passed in waiting for answers to letters, and in the examination of schemes more or less futile. Sudden hopes that were rainbows to the sight proved but mists to the touch. In the meantime, unpleasant remarks, disguise them as some well-meaning people might, were floating around them every day. The undoubted truth, that they were the children of a dreamer who let slip away every farthing of his money and ran into debt with his neighbours—that the daughter had been brought up to no profession—that the son who had, had made no progress in it, and might come to the dogs—could not from the nature of things be wrapped up in silence in order that it might not hurt their feelings; and as a matter of fact, it greeted their ears in some form or other wherever they went. Their few acquaintances passed them hurriedly. Ancient pot-wallopers, and thriving shopkeepers, in their intervals of leisure, stood at their shop-doors—their toes hanging over the edge of the step, and their obese waists hanging over their toes—and in discourses with friends on the pavement, formulated the course of the improvident, and reduced the children's prospects to a shadow-like attenuation. The sons of these men (who wore breastpins of a sarcastic kind, and smoked humorous pipes) stared at Cytherea with a stare unmitigated by any of the respect that had formerly softened it.

Now it is a noticeable fact that we do not much mind what men think of us, or what humiliating secret they discover of our means, parentage, or object, provided that each thinks and acts thereupon in isolation. It is the exchange of ideas about us that we dread most; and the possession by a hundred acquaintances, severally insulated, of the knowledge of our skeleton-closet's whereabouts, is not so

distressing to the nerves as a chat over it by a party of half-a-dozen—exclusive depositaries though these may be.

Perhaps, though Hocbridge watched and whispered, its animus would have been little more than a trifle to persons in thriving circumstances. But unfortunately, poverty, whilst it is new, and before the skin has had time to thicken, makes people susceptible inversely to their opportunities for shielding themselves. In Owen was found, in place of his father's impressibility, a larger share of his father's pride, and a squareness of idea which, if coupled with a little more blindness, would have amounted to positive prejudice. To him humanity, so far as he had thought of it at all, was rather divided into distinct classes than blended from extreme to extreme. Hence by a sequence of ideas which might be traced if it were worth while, he either detested or respected opinion, and instinctively sought to escape a cold shade that mere sensitiveness would have endured. He could have submitted to separation, sickness, exile, drudgery, hunger and thirst, with stoical indifference, but superciliousness was too incisive.

After living on for nine months in attempts to make an income as his father's successor in the profession—attempts which were utterly fruitless by reason of his inexperience—Graye came to a simple and sweeping resolution. They would privately leave that part of England, drop from the sight of acquaintances, gossips, harsh critics, and bitter creditors of whose misfortune he was not the cause, and escape the position which galled him by the only road their great poverty left open to them—that of his obtaining some employment in a distant place by following his profession as a humble under-draughtsman.

He thought over his capabilities with the sensations of a soldier grinding his sword at the opening of a campaign.

What with lack of employment, owing to the decrease of his late father's practice, and the absence of direct and uncompromising pressure towards monetary results from a pupil's labour (which seems to be always the case when a professional man's pupil is also his son), Owen's progress in the art and science of architecture had been very insignificant indeed. Though anything but an idle young man, he had hardly reached the age at which industrious men who lack an external whip to send them on in the world, are induced by their own common sense to whip on themselves. Hence his knowledge of plans, elevations, sections, and specifications, was not greater at the end of two years of probation than might easily have been acquired in six months by a youth of average ability—himself, for instance—amid a bustling London practice.

But at any rate he could make himself handy to one of the profession—some man in a remote town—and there fulfil his indentures. A tangible inducement lay in this direction of survey. He had a slight conception of such a man—a Mr. Gradfield—who was in practice in Budmouth Regis, a seaport town and watering-place in the south of England.

After some doubts, Graye ventured to write to this gentleman, asking the necessary question, shortly alluding to his father's death, and stating that his term of apprenticeship had only half expired. He would be glad to complete his articles at a very low salary for the whole remaining two years, provided payment could begin at once.

The answer from Mr. Gradfield stated that he was not in want of a pupil who would serve the remainder of his time on the terms Mr. Graye mentioned. But he would just add one remark. He chanced to be in want of some young man in his office—for a short time only, probably about two

months—to trace drawings, and attend to other subsidiary work of the kind. If Mr. Graye did not object to occupy such an inferior position as these duties would entail, and to accept weekly wages which to one with his expectations would be considered merely nominal, the post would give him an opportunity for learning a few more details of the profession.

'It is a beginning, and, above all, an abiding-place, away from the shadow of the cloud which hangs over us here—I will go,' said Owen.

Cytherea's plan for her future, an intensely simple one, owing to the even greater narrowness of her resources, was already marked out. One advantage had accrued to her through her mother's possession of a fair share of personal property, and perhaps only one. She had been carefully educated. Upon this consideration her plan was based. She was to take up her abode in her brother's lodging at Budmouth, when she would immediately advertise for a situation as governess, having obtained the consent of a lawyer at Aldbrickham who was winding up her father's affairs, and who knew the history of her position, to allow himself to be referred to in the matter of her past life and respectability.

Early one morning they departed from their native town, leaving behind them scarcely a trace of their footsteps.

Then the town pitied their want of wisdom in taking such a step. 'Rashness; they would have made a better income in Hocbridge, where they are known! There is no doubt that they would.'

But what is Wisdom really? A steady handling of any means to bring about any end necessary to happiness.

Yet whether one's end be the usual end—a wealthy position in life—or no, the name of wisdom is seldom applied but to the means to that usual end.

II. THE EVENTS OF A FORTNIGHT

1. THE NINTH OF JULY

The day of their departure was one of the most glowing that the climax of a long series of summer heats could evolve. The wide expanse of landscape quivered up and down like the flame of a taper, as they steamed along through the midst of it. Placid flocks of sheep reclining under trees a little way off appeared of a pale blue colour. Clover fields were livid with the brightness of the sun upon their deep red flowers. All waggons and carts were moved to the shade by their careful owners, rain-water butts fell to pieces; well-buckets were lowered inside the covers of the well-hole, to preserve them from the fate of the butts, and generally, water seemed scarcer in the country than the beer and cider of the peasantry who toiled or idled there.

To see persons looking with children's eyes at any ordinary scenery, is a proof that they possess the charming faculty of drawing new sensations from an old experience—a healthy sign, rare in these feverish days—the mark of an imperishable brightness of nature.

Both brother and sister could do this; Cytherea more noticeably. They watched the undulating corn-lands, monotonous to all their companions; the stony and clayey prospect succeeding those, with its angular and abrupt hills. Boggy moors came next, now withered and dry—the

spots upon which pools usually spread their waters showing themselves as circles of smooth bare soil, over-run by a net-work of innumerable little fissures. Then arose plantations of firs, abruptly terminating beside meadows cleanly mown, in which high-hipped, rich-coloured cows, with backs horizontal and straight as the ridge of a house, stood motionless or lazily fed. Glimpses of the sea now interested them, which became more and more frequent till the train finally drew up beside the platform at Budmouth.

'The whole town is looking out for us,' had been Graye's impression throughout the day. He called upon Mr. Gradfield—the only man who had been directly informed of his coming—and found that Mr. Gradfield had forgotten it.

However, arrangements were made with this gentleman—a stout, active, grey-bearded burgher of sixty—by which Owen was to commence work in his office the following week.

The same day Cytherea drew up and sent off the advertisement appended:—

> 'A YOUNG LADY is desirous of meeting with an *engagement* as *governess* or *companion*. She is competent to teach English, French, and Music. Satisfactory references—Address, C. G., Post-Office, Budmouth.'

It seemed a more material existence than her own that she saw thus delineated on the paper. 'That can't be myself; how odd I look!' she said, and smiled.

2. JULY THE ELEVENTH

On the Monday subsequent to their arrival in Budmouth, Owen Graye attended at Mr. Gradfield's office to enter

upon his duties, and his sister was left in their lodgings alone for the first time.

Despite the sad occurrences of the preceding autumn, an unwonted cheerfulness pervaded her spirit throughout the day. Change of scene—and that to untravelled eyes—conjoined with the sensation of freedom from supervision, revived the sparkle of a warm young nature ready enough to take advantage of any adventitious restoratives. Point-blank grief tends rather to seal up happiness for a time than to produce that attrition which results from griefs of anticipation that move onward with the days: these may be said to furrow away the capacity for pleasure.

Her expectations from the advertisement began to be extravagant. A thriving family, who had always sadly needed her, was already definitely pictured in her fancy, which, in its exuberance, led her on to picturing its individual members, their possible peculiarities, virtues, and vices, and obliterated for a time the recollection that she would be separated from her brother.

Thus musing, as she waited for his return in the evening, her eyes fell on her left hand. The contemplation of her own left fourth finger by symbol-loving girlhood of this age is, it seems, very frequently, if not always, followed by a peculiar train of romantic ideas. Cytherea's thoughts, still playing about her future, became directed into this romantic groove. She leant back in her chair, and taking hold of the fourth finger, which had attracted her attention, she lifted it with the tips of the others, and looked at the smooth and tapering member for a long time.

She whispered idly, 'I wonder who and what he will be?

'If he's a gentleman of fashion, he will take my finger so, just with the tips of his own, and with some fluttering of the heart, and the least trembling of his lip, slip the ring so lightly on that I shall hardly know it is there—looking delightfully into my eyes all the time.

'If he's a bold, dashing soldier, I expect he will proudly turn round, take the ring as if it equalled her Majesty's crown in value, and desperately set it on my finger thus. He will fix his eyes unflinchingly upon what he is doing—just as if he stood in battle before the enemy (though, in reality, very fond of me, of course), and blush as much as I shall.

'If he's a sailor, he will take my finger and the ring in this way, and deck it out with a housewifely touch and a tenderness of expression about his mouth, as sailors do: kiss it, perhaps, with a simple air, as if we were children playing an idle game, and not at the very height of observation and envy by a great crowd saying, "Ah! they are happy now!"

'If he should be rather a poor man—noble-minded and affectionate, but still poor—'

Owen's footsteps rapidly ascending the stairs, interrupted this fancy-free meditation. Reproaching herself, even angry with herself for allowing her mind to stray upon such subjects in the face of their present desperate condition, she rose to meet him, and make tea.

Cytherea's interest to know how her brother had been received at Mr. Gradfield's broke forth into words at once. Almost before they had sat down to table, she began cross-examining him in the regular sisterly way.

'Well, Owen, how has it been with you to-day? What is the place like—do you think you will like Mr. Gradfield?'

'O yes. But he has not been there to-day; I have only had the head draughtsman with me.'

Young women have a habit, not noticeable in men, of putting on at a moment's notice the drama of whosoever's life they choose. Cytherea's interest was transferred from Mr. Gradfield to his representative.

'What sort of a man is he?'

'He seems a very nice fellow indeed; though of course I can hardly tell to a certainty as yet. But I think he's a very worthy fellow; there's no nonsense in him, and though he is not a public school man he has read widely, and has a sharp appreciation of what's good in books and art. In fact, his knowledge isn't nearly so exclusive as most professional men's.'

'That's a great deal to say of an architect, for of all professional men they are, as a rule, the most professional.'

'Yes; perhaps they are. This man is rather of a melancholy turn of mind, I think.'

'Has the managing clerk any family?' she mildly asked, after a while, pouring out some more tea.

'Family; no!'

'Well, dear Owen, how should I know?'

'Why, of course he isn't married. But there happened to be a conversation about women going on in the office, and I