THE COMPLETE SHORT STORIES OF SAKI

THE UNREST-CURE

THE MUSIC ON THE HILL

ILLUSTRATED

THE COMPLETE SHORT STORIES OF SAKI

Illustrated

Hector Hugh Munro, or Saki, as he was known to his avid readers, worked as a news correspondent who had ample opportunity to travel the world and observe many cultures of the East. He lifted his pen name from the popular Rubáiyat of Omar Khayyám. In Farsi, the word "saki" means wine.

His short satirical stories, filled with well-turned phrases and cynical irony, are reminiscent of O. Wilde and O. Henry. Black humor permeates almost all of Saki's work. In the realm of social satire, Munro influenced Evelyn Waugh and Wodhouse.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION TO SAKI'S STORIES

Saki is now chiefly remembered for his inimitable short stories. Many of his stories from 1902-1908 feature the dapper, but mischievous characters Reginald and Clovis, young men-about-town that take great delight in the discomfort or downfall of their conventional and pretentious elders. Munro's first collection of *Reginald* stories appeared in 1904 in book form, which in itself was very short, with fewer than forty pages. Most of the pieces are not really stories, but short anecdotes, providing context for a witty remark from the cynical Reginald. These include what is probably Saki's most famous phrase: "She was a good cook, as cooks go, and as cooks go, she went." The main purpose of these vignettes was to satirise society through the character of Reginald in what he says and does. He is a product of high society, and yet something of an outsider in that he does not take the world around him seriously. The urbane wit and characters of Oscar Wilde are clearly noticeable influences in the tales of *Reginald* and *Clovis*.

Munro's other tales are famous for contrasting the conventions and hypocrisies of Edwardian England with the ruthless, but straightforward life-and-death struggles of nature. Throughout his range of tales, nature generally prevails in the end. For example, *The Interlopers* concerns Georg Znaeym and Ulrich von Gradwitz, whose families have fought over a forest in the eastern Carpathian Mountains for generations. Ulrich's family legally owns the land, but Georg, believing that it rightfully belongs to him, hunts there anyway. One winter night Ulrich catches Georg hunting in his forest. Neither man can shoot the other without warning, as they would soil their family's honour, so

they hesitate to acknowledge one another. As an “act of God” a tree branch suddenly falls on each of them, trapping them both under a log. Gradually they realise the futility of their quarrel, become friends and end the feud. Nature has prevailed over man’s folly.

The famous story *Gabriel-Ernest* opens with a stark warning: “There is a wild beast in your woods …” As the story proceeds we learn from the narrator that Gabriel, a naked boy sunbathing by the river, is wild, indeed feral, and turns out to be a werewolf. The climax comes when Gabriel is revealed to have taken a small child home from Sunday school. A pursuit ensues, but Gabriel and the child disappear near a river. The only items found are Gabriel’s clothes, and the two are never seen again…

REGINALD

REGINALD

I did it — I who should have known better. I persuaded Reginald to go to the McKillops' garden-party against his will.

We all make mistakes occasionally.

"They know you're here, and they'll think it so funny if you don't go. And I want particularly to be in with Mrs. McKillop just now."

"I know, you want one of her smoke Persian kittens as a prospective wife for Wumples — or a husband, is it?" (Reginald has a magnificent scorn for details, other than sartorial.) "And I am expected to undergo social martyrdom to suit the connubial exigencies" —

"Reginald! It's nothing of the kind, only I'm sure Mrs. McKillop Would be pleased if I brought you. Young men of your brilliant attractions are rather at a premium at her garden-parties."

"Should be at a premium in heaven," remarked Reginald complacently.

"There will be very few of you there, if that is what you mean. But seriously, there won't be any great strain upon your powers of endurance; I promise you that you shan't have to play croquet, or talk to the Archdeacon's wife, or do anything that is likely to bring on physical prostration. You can just wear your sweetest clothes and moderately amiable expression, and eat chocolate-creams with the appetite of a *blasé* parrot. Nothing more is demanded of you."

Reginald shut his eyes. "There will be the exhaustingly up-to-date young women who will ask me if I have seen *San Toy*; a less progressive grade who will yearn to hear about the Diamond Jubilee — the historic event, not the horse. With a little encouragement, they will inquire if I saw the Allies march into Paris. Why are women so fond of raking up

the past? They're as bad as tailors, who invariably remember what you owe them for a suit long after you've ceased to wear it."

"I'll order lunch for one o'clock; that will give you two and a half hours to dress in."

Reginald puckered his brow into a tortured frown, and I knew that my point was gained. He was debating what tie would go with which waistcoat.

Even then I had my misgivings.

* * *

During the drive to the McKillops' Reginald was possessed with a great peace, which was not wholly to be accounted for by the fact that he had inveigled his feet into shoes a size too small for them. I misgave more than ever, and having once launched Reginald on to the McKillops' lawn, I established him near a seductive dish of *marrons glacés*, and as far from the Archdeacon's wife as possible; as I drifted away to a diplomatic distance I heard with painful distinctness the eldest Mawkby girl asking him if he had seen *San Toy*.

It must have been ten minutes later, not more, and I had been having *quite* an enjoyable chat with my hostess, and had promised to lend her *The Eternal City* and my recipe for rabbit mayonnaise, and was just about to offer a kind home for her third Persian kitten, when I perceived, out of the corner of my eye, that Reginald was not where I had left him, and that the *marrons glacés* were untasted. At the same moment I became aware that old Colonel Mendoza was essaying to tell his classic story of how he introduced golf into India, and that Reginald was in dangerous proximity. There are occasions when Reginald is caviare to the Colonel.

"When I was at Poona in '76" —

“My dear Colonel,” purred Reginald, “fancy admitting such a thing! Such a give-away for one’s age! I wouldn’t admit being on this planet in ‘76.” (Reginald in his wildest lapses into veracity never admits to being more than twenty-two.)

The Colonel went to the colour of a fig that has attained great ripeness, and Reginald, ignoring my efforts to intercept him, glided away to another part of the lawn. I found him a few minutes later happily engaged in teaching the youngest Rampage boy the approved theory of mixing absinthe, within full earshot of his mother. Mrs. Rampage occupies a prominent place in local Temperance movements.

As soon as I had broken up this unpromising *tête-à-tête* and settled Reginald where he could watch the croquet players losing their tempers, I wandered off to find my hostess and renew the kitten negotiations at the point where they had been interrupted. I did not succeed in running her down at once, and eventually it was Mrs. McKillop who sought me out, and her conversation was not of kittens.

“Your cousin is discussing *Zaza* with the Archdeacon’s wife; at least, he is discussing, she is ordering her carriage.”

She spoke in the dry, staccato tone of one who repeats a French exercise, and I knew that as far as Millie McKillop was concerned, Wumples was devoted to a lifelong celibacy.

“If you don’t mind,” I said hurriedly, “I think we’d like our carriage ordered too,” and I made a forced march in the direction of the croquet-ground.

I found everyone talking nervously and feverishly of the weather and the war in South Africa, except Reginald, who was reclining in a comfortable chair with the dreamy, far-away look that a volcano might wear just after it had desolated entire villages. The Archdeacon’s wife was buttoning up her gloves with a concentrated deliberation that was fearful to behold. I shall have to treble my

subscription to her Cheerful Sunday Evenings Fund before I dare set foot in her house again.

At that particular moment the croquet players finished their game, which had been going on without a symptom of finality during the whole afternoon. Why, I ask, should it have stopped precisely when a counter-attraction was so necessary? Everyone seemed to drift towards the area of disturbance, of which the chairs of the Archdeacon's wife and Reginald formed the storm-centre. Conversation flagged, and there settled upon the company that expectant hush that precedes the dawn — when your neighbours don't happen to keep poultry.

"What did the Caspian Sea?" asked Reginald, with appalling suddenness.

There were symptoms of a stampede. The Archdeacon's wife looked at me. Kipling or someone has described somewhere the look a foundered camel gives when the caravan moves on and leaves it to its fate. The peptonised reproach in the good lady's eyes brought the passage vividly to my mind.

I played my last card.

"Reginald, it's getting late, and a sea-mist is coming on." I knew that the elaborate curl over his right eyebrow was not guaranteed to survive a sea-mist.

* * *

"Never, never again, will I take you to a garden-party. Never . . . You behaved abominably . . . What did the Caspian see?"

A shade of genuine regret for misused opportunities passed over Reginald's face.

"After all," he said, "I believe an apricot tie would have gone better with the lilac waistcoat."

REGINALD ON CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

I wish it to be distinctly understood (said Reginald) that I don't want a "George, Prince of Wales" Prayer-book as a Christmas present. The fact cannot be too widely known.

There ought (he continued) to be technical education classes on the science of present-giving. No one seems to have the faintest notion of what anyone else wants, and the prevalent ideas on the subject are not creditable to a civilised community.

There is, for instance, the female relative in the country who "knows a tie is always useful," and sends you some spotted horror that you could only wear in secret or in Tottenham Court Road. It *might* have been useful had she kept it to tie up currant bushes with, when it would have served the double purpose of supporting the branches and frightening away the birds — for it is an admitted fact that the ordinary tomtit of commerce has a sounder æsthetic taste than the average female relative in the country.

Then there are aunts. They are always a difficult class to deal with in the matter of presents. The trouble is that one never catches them really young enough. By the time one has educated them to an appreciation of the fact that one does not wear red woollen mittens in the West End, they die, or quarrel with the family, or do something equally inconsiderate. That is why the supply of trained aunts is always so precarious.

There is my Aunt Agatha, *par exemple*, who sent me a pair of gloves last Christmas, and even got so far as to choose a kind that was being worn and had the correct number of buttons. But — *they were nines*! I sent them to a boy whom I hated intimately: he didn't wear them, of course, but he could have — that was where the bitterness of death came in. It was nearly as consoling as sending white flowers to his funeral. Of course I wrote and told my

aunt that they were the one thing that had been wanting to make existence blossom like a rose; I am afraid she thought me frivolous — she comes from the North, where they live in the fear of Heaven and the Earl of Durham. (Reginald affects an exhaustive knowledge of things political, which furnishes an excellent excuse for not discussing them.) Aunts with a dash of foreign extraction in them are the most satisfactory in the way of understanding these things; but if you can’t choose your aunt, it is wisest in the long-run to choose the present and send her the bill.

Even friends of one’s own set, who might be expected to know better, have curious delusions on the subject. I am *not* collecting copies of the cheaper editions of Omar Khayyam. I gave the last four that I received to the lift-boy, and I like to think of him reading them, with FitzGerald’s notes, to his aged mother. Lift-boys always have aged mothers; shows such nice feeling on their part, I think.

Personally, I can't see where the difficulty in choosing suitable presents lies. No boy who had brought himself up properly could fail to appreciate one of those decorative bottles of liqueurs that are so reverently staged in Morel's window — and it wouldn't in the least matter if one did get duplicates. And there would always be the supreme moment of dreadful uncertainty whether it was *crême de menthe* or Chartreuse — like the expectant thrill on seeing your partner's hand turned up at bridge. People may say what they like about the decay of Christianity; the religious system that produced green Chartreuse can never really die.

And then, of course, there are liqueur glasses, and crystallised fruits, and tapestry curtains, and heaps of other necessaries of life that make really sensible presents — not to speak of luxuries, such as having one's bills paid, or getting something quite sweet in the way of jewellery. Unlike the alleged Good Woman of the Bible, I'm not above rubies. When found, by the way, she must have been rather a problem at Christmas-time; nothing short of a blank cheque would have fitted the situation. Perhaps it's as well that she's died out.

The great charm about me (concluded Reginald) is that I am so easily pleased. But I draw the line at a "Prince of Wales" Prayer-book.

REGINALD ON THE ACADEMY

“One goes to the Academy in self-defence,” said Reginald. “It is the one topic one has in common with the Country Cousins.”

“It is almost a religious observance with them,” said the Other. “A kind of artistic Mecca, and when the good ones die they go” —

“To the Chantrey Bequest. The mystery is *what* they find to talk about in the country.”

“There are two subjects of conversation in the country: Servants, and Can fowls be made to pay? The first, I believe, is compulsory, the second optional.”

“As a function,” resumed Reginald, “the Academy is a failure.”

“You think it would be tolerable without the pictures?”

“The pictures are all right, in their way; after all, one can always *look* at them if one is bored with one’s surroundings, or wants to avoid an imminent acquaintance.”

“Even that doesn’t always save one. There is the inevitable female whom you met once in Devonshire, or the Matoppo Hills, or somewhere, who charges up to you with the remark that it’s funny how one always meets people one knows at the Academy. Personally, I *don’t* think it funny.”

“I suffered in that way just now,” said Reginald plaintively, “from a woman whose word I had to take that she had met me last summer in Brittany.”

“I hope you were not too brutal?”

“I merely told her with engaging simplicity that the art of life was the avoidance of the unattainable.”

“Did she try and work it out on the back of her catalogue?”

“Not there and then. She murmured something about being ‘so clever.’ Fancy coming to the Academy to be clever!”

“To be clever in the afternoon argues that one is dining nowhere in the evening.”

“Which reminds me that I can’t remember whether I accepted an invitation from you to dine at Kettner’s to-night.”

“On the other hand, I can remember with startling distinctness not having asked you to.”

“So much certainty is unbecoming in the young; so we’ll consider that settled. What were you talking about? Oh, pictures. Personally, I rather like them; they are so refreshingly real and probable, they take one away from the unrealities of life.”

“One likes to escape from oneself occasionally.”

“That is the disadvantage of a portrait; as a rule, one’s bitterest friends can find nothing more to ask than the faithful unlikeness that goes down to posterity as oneself. I hate posterity — it’s so fond of having the last word. Of course, as regards portraits, there are exceptions.”

“For instance?”

“To die before being painted by Sargent is to go to heaven prematurely.”

“With the necessary care and impatience, you may avoid that catastrophe.”

“If you’re going to be rude,” said Reginald, “I shall dine with you to-morrow night as well. The chief vice of the Academy,” he continued, “is its nomenclature. Why, for instance, should an obvious trout-stream with a palpable rabbit sitting in the foreground be called ‘an evening dream of unbeclouded peace,’ or something of that sort?”

“You think,” said the Other, “that a name should economise description rather than stimulate imagination?”

“Properly chosen, it should do both. There is my lady kitten at home, for instance; I’ve called it Derry.”

“Suggests nothing to my imagination but protracted sieges and religious animosities. Of course, I don’t know your kitten” —

“Oh, you’re silly. It’s a sweet name, and it answers to it — when it wants to. Then, if there are any unseemly noises in the night, they can be explained succinctly: Derry and Toms.”

“You might almost charge for the advertisement. But as applied to pictures, don’t you think your system would be too subtle, say, for the Country Cousins?”

“Every reformation must have its victims. You can’t expect the fatted calf to share the enthusiasm of the angels over the prodigal’s return. Another darling weakness of the Academy is that none of its luminaries must ‘arrive’ in a hurry. You can see them coming for years, like a Balkan trouble or a street improvement, and by the time they have painted a thousand or so square yards of canvas, their work begins to be recognised.”

“Someone who Must Not be Contradicted said that a man must be a success by the time he’s thirty, or never.”

“To have reached thirty,” said Reginald, “is to have failed in life.”

REGINALD AT THE THEATRE

“After all,” said the Duchess vaguely, “there are certain things you can’t get away from. Right and wrong, good conduct and moral rectitude, have certain well-defined limits.”

“So, for the matter of that,” replied Reginald, “has the Russian Empire. The trouble is that the limits are not always in the same place.”

Reginald and the Duchess regarded each other with mutual distrust, tempered by a scientific interest. Reginald considered that the Duchess had much to learn; in particular, not to hurry out of the Carlton as though afraid of losing one’s last ‘bus. A woman, he said, who is careless of disappearances is capable of leaving town before Goodwood, and dying at the wrong moment of an unfashionable disease.

The Duchess thought that Reginald did not exceed the ethical standard which circumstances demanded.

“Of course,” she resumed combatively, “it’s the prevailing fashion to believe in perpetual change and mutability, and all that sort of thing, and to say we are all merely an improved form of primeval ape — of course you subscribe to that doctrine?”

“I think it decidedly premature; in most people I know the process is far from complete.”

“And equally of course you are quite irreligious?”

“Oh, by no means. The fashion just now is a Roman Catholic frame of mind with an Agnostic conscience: you get the mediæval picturesqueness of the one with the modern conveniences of the other.”

The Duchess suppressed a sniff. She was one of those people who regard the Church of England with patronising affection, as if it were something that had grown up in their kitchen garden.

“But there are other things,” she continued, “which I suppose are to a certain extent sacred even to you. Patriotism, for instance, and Empire, and Imperial responsibility, and blood-is-thicker-than-water, and all that sort of thing.”

Reginald waited for a couple of minutes before replying, while the Lord of Rimini temporarily monopolised the acoustic possibilities of the theatre.

“That is the worst of a tragedy,” he observed, “one can’t always hear oneself talk. Of course I accept the Imperial idea and the responsibility. After all, I would just as soon think in Continents as anywhere else. And some day, when the season is over and we have the time, you shall explain to me the exact blood-brotherhood and all that sort of thing that exists between a French Canadian and a mild Hindoo and a Yorkshireman, for instance.”

“Oh, well, ‘dominion over palm and pine,’ you know,” quoted the Duchess hopefully; “of course we mustn’t forget that we’re all part of the great Anglo-Saxon Empire.”

“Which for its part is rapidly becoming a suburb of Jerusalem. A very pleasant suburb, I admit, and quite a charming Jerusalem. But still a suburb.”

“Really, to be told one’s living in a suburb when one is conscious of spreading the benefits of civilisation all over the world! Philanthropy — I suppose you will say *that* is a comfortable delusion; and yet even you must admit that whenever want or misery or starvation is known to exist, however distant or difficult of access, we instantly organise relief on the most generous scale, and distribute it, if need be, to the uttermost ends of the earth.”

The Duchess paused, with a sense of ultimate triumph. She had made the same observation at a drawing-room meeting, and it had been extremely well received.

“I wonder,” said Reginald, “if you have ever walked down the Embankment on a winter night?”

“Gracious, no, child! Why do you ask?”

“I didn’t; I only wondered. And even your philanthropy, practised in a world where everything is based on competition, must have a debit as well as a credit account. The young ravens cry for food.”

“And are fed.”

“Exactly. Which presupposes that something else is fed upon.”

“Oh, you’re simply exasperating. You’ve been reading Nietzsche till you haven’t got any sense of moral proportion left. May I ask if you are governed by *any* laws of conduct whatever?”

“There are certain fixed rules that one observes for one’s own comfort. For instance, never be flippantly rude to any inoffensive grey-bearded stranger that you may meet in pine forests or hotel smoking-rooms on the Continent. It always turns out to be the King of Sweden.”

“The restraint must be dreadfully irksome to you. When I was younger, boys of your age used to be nice and innocent.”

“Now we are only nice. One must specialise in these days. Which reminds me of the man I read of in some sacred book who was given a choice of what he most desired. And because he didn’t ask for titles and honours and dignities, but only for immense wealth, these other things came to him also.”

“I am sure you didn’t read about him in any sacred book.”

“Yes; I fancy you will find him in Debrett.”

REGINALD'S PEACE POEM

"I'm writing a poem on Peace," said Reginald, emerging from a sweeping operation through a tin of mixed biscuits, in whose depths a macaroon or two might yet be lurking.

"Something of the kind seems to have been attempted already," said the Other.

"Oh, I know; but I may never have the chance again. Besides, I've got a new fountain pen. I don't pretend to have gone on any very original lines; in writing about Peace the thing is to say what everybody else is saying, only to say it better. It begins with the usual ornithological emotion —

'When the widgeon westward winging. Heard the folk Vereeniginging,. Heard the shouting and the singing'" —

"Vereeniginging is good, but why widgeon?"

"Why not? Anything that winged westward would naturally begin with a *w*."

"Need it wing westward?"

"The bird must go somewhere. You wouldn't have it hang around and look foolish. Then I've brought in something about the heedless hartebeest galloping over the deserted veldt."

"Of course you know it's practically extinct in those regions?"

"I can't help *that*, it gallops so nicely. I make it have all sorts of unexpected yearnings —

'Mother, may I go and maffick,. Tear around and hinder traffic?'

Of course you'll say there would be no traffic worth bothering about on the bare and sun-scorched veldt, but there's no other word that rhymes with maffick."

"Seraphic?"

Reginald considered. "It might do, but I've got a lot about angels later on. You must have angels in a Peace

poem; I know dreadfully little about their habits."

"They can do unexpected things, like the hartebeest."

"Of course. Then I turn on London, the City of Dreadful Nocturnes, resonant with hymns of joy and thanksgiving —

'And the sleeper, eye unlidding,. Heard a voice for ever bidding. Much farewell to Dolly Gray;. Turning weary on his truckle-. Bed he heard the honey-suckle. Lauded in apiarian lay.'

Longfellow at his best wrote nothing like that."

"I agree with you."

"I wish you wouldn't. I've a sweet temper, but I can't stand being agreed with. And I'm so worried about the aasvogel."

Reginald stared dismally at the biscuit-tin, which now presented an unattractive array of rejected cracknels.

"I believe," he murmured, "if I could find a woman with an unsatisfied craving for cracknels, I should marry her."

"What is the tragedy of the aasvogel?" asked the Other sympathetically.

"Oh, simply that there's no rhyme for it. I thought about it all the time I was dressing — it's dreadfully bad for one to think whilst one's dressing — and all lunch-time, and I'm still hung up over it. I feel like those unfortunate automobilists who achieve an unenviable motoriety by coming to a hopeless stop with their cars in the most crowded thoroughfares. I'm afraid I shall have to drop the aasvogel, and it did give such lovely local colour to the thing."

"Still you've got the heedless hartebeest."

"And quite a decorative bit of moral admonition — when you've worried the meaning out —

'Cease, War, thy bubbling madness that the wine shares,. And bid thy legions turn their swords to mine shares.'

Mine shares seems to fit the case better than ploughshares. There's lots more about the blessings of Peace, shall I go on reading it?"

“If I must make a choice, I think I would rather they went on with the war.”

REGINALD’S CHOIR TREAT

“Never,” wrote Reginald to his most darling friend, “be a pioneer. It’s the Early Christian that gets the fattest lion.”

Reginald, in his way, was a pioneer.

None of the rest of his family had anything approaching Titian hair or a sense of humour, and they used primroses as a table decoration.

It follows that they never understood Reginald, who came down late to breakfast, and nibbled toast, and said disrespectful things about the universe. The family ate porridge, and believed in everything, even the weather forecast.

Therefore the family was relieved when the vicar’s daughter undertook the reformation of Reginald. Her name was Amabel; it was the vicar’s one extravagance. Amabel was accounted a beauty and intellectually gifted; she never played tennis, and was reputed to have read Maeterlinck’s *Life of the Bee*. If you abstain from tennis *and* read Maeterlinck in a small country village, you are of necessity intellectual. Also she had been twice to Fécamp to pick up a good French accent from the Americans staying there; consequently she had a knowledge of the world which might be considered useful in dealings with a worldling.

Hence the congratulations in the family when Amabel undertook the reformation of its wayward member.

Amabel commenced operations by asking her unsuspecting pupil to tea in the vicarage garden; she believed in the healthy influence of natural surroundings, never having been in Sicily, where things are different.

And like every woman who has ever preached repentance to unregenerate youth, she dwelt on the sin of an empty life, which always seems so much more scandalous in the country, where people rise early to see if a new strawberry has happened during the night.

Reginald recalled the lilies of the field, “which simply sat and looked beautiful, and defied competition.”

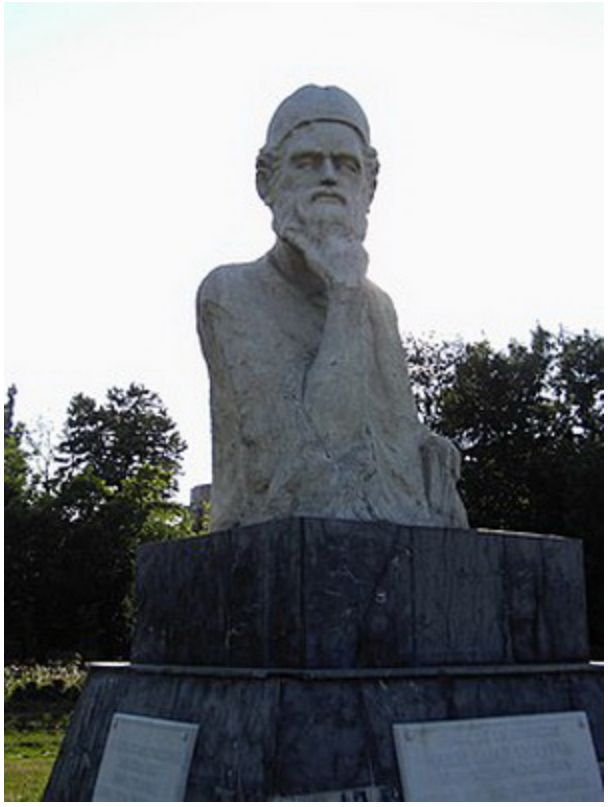
“But that is not an example for us to follow,” gasped Amabel.

“Unfortunately, we can’t afford to. You don’t know what a world of trouble I take in trying to rival the lilies in their artistic simplicity.”

“You are really indecently vain of your appearance. A good life is infinitely preferable to good looks.”

“You agree with me that the two are incompatible. I always say beauty is only sin deep.”

Amabel began to realise that the battle is not always to the strong-minded. With the immemorial resource of her sex, she abandoned the frontal attack, and laid stress on her unassisted labours in parish work, her mental loneliness, her discouragements — and at the right moment she produced strawberries and cream. Reginald was obviously affected by the latter, and when his preceptress suggested that he might begin the strenuous life by helping her to supervise the annual outing of the bucolic infants who composed the local choir, his eyes shone with the dangerous enthusiasm of a convert.



Reginald entered on the strenuous life alone, as far as Amabel was concerned. The most virtuous women are not proof against damp grass, and Amabel kept her bed with a cold. Reginald called it a dispensation; it had been the dream of his life to stage-manage a choir outing. With strategic insight, he led his shy, bullet-headed charges to the nearest woodland stream and allowed them to bathe; then he seated himself on their discarded garments and discoursed on their immediate future, which, he decreed, was to embrace a Bacchanalian procession through the village. Forethought had provided the occasion with a supply of tin whistles, but the introduction of a he-goat from a neighbouring orchard was a brilliant afterthought. Properly, Reginald explained, there should have been an outfit of panther skins; as it was, those who had spotted handkerchiefs were allowed to wear them, which they did with thankfulness. Reginald recognised the impossibility, in the time at his disposal, of teaching his shivering neophytes