



M.P. Shiel

*The Evil
That Men Do*

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I. — ON THE SEA

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An interesting question raised by the incident we have to tell is this: How far is it true that children inherit the traits of their parents? The son, the father—a racehorse is usually a racehorse; but is the son, the father, a Napoleon, a Napoleon? On the contrary, history teaches that no great man ever had a great son.

A child's resemblance to its parents may sometimes arise after its birth; for constant intimacy is alone sufficient to produce resemblance. Thus, the late President McKinley came to look like his wife's brother; and so with many couples.

For years the child's existence is all mixed up with its parents'. How many kisses, forbidden hours of sleep in the drowsy mother's bed! Therefore, if either parent has a disease, the child can hardly escape. Later on he will be told that his consumption is "hereditary," but it may have originated since his birth.

No one would question the fact of heredity: we only remark that the extent to which we now believe in it is "not proven" in the case of that mysterious animal, man; and we are led to the reflection by a singular case which happened on board a ship some forty five years ago.

She was the *Africa*, and was one of those Union line mail boats that ply between the Cape and Southampton before the Castle line was formed to share with the Union line half the Government subvention, about 1870. They were small

boats (compared with the present monsters) of 1,000 tons or so, of the kind which it was the fashion to call "tin-kettles:" half steamer, half sailing-ship, brigantine-rigged, with one funnel; and the postage of a letter to the Cape was—one shilling.

The captain of the *Africa*—a certain Captain Denner—was a handsome man of forty, with a large freckled face, who might have done very well for a model of Charlemagne, or some old sea-king, only that his long beard was black. He had a red birth-mark, the size of a penny, across his left temple. His lips were rather thick, and his moustache, parting in the middle, showed their strong pressure there. Though rather taciturn at times he was a good captain, popular with the passengers: and the voyage went well, till they reached the latitude of Madeira. At that time, by the way, it lasted thirty days, not sixteen, as now.

One Sunday morning, then, near Madeira, the vessel moving through a calm sea, the passengers were assembled at prayers, which were conducted by a clergyman who happened to be aboard. Among them were two ladies, a Mrs Drayton and a Mrs Hartwell, both of whom were about to become mothers.

It was noted as an odd thing that the captain was not at the service; no one, in fact, had seen him at all that morning. The first officer had knocked at his door, but the captain, without opening, had called back, in a strange voice, the strange words: "Go away."

However, the clergyman had not yet reached the Litany, when the captain appeared at the door of the dining-saloon, where the worshippers were. Their backs were turned to the

door, but when the clergyman stopped, with gaping mouth, the others looked round and saw the captain.

He had on nothing but a shirt and drawers. Some open ports, with a wellhole communicating with the smoke-room above, gave plenty of light, and he was distinctly seen: his rich, black hair seemed to stand on end, his eyes were wild, and in his hand was a revolver.

As all stared at this apparition he lifted his right arm, uttered the sound "bang," and shot the clergyman dead. He then turned the weapon a little, uttered the same sound, and sent another into eternity. The third shot pierced Mrs Drayton's right forearm; the fourth wounded the purser in the breast; the fifth killed a passenger who was running to seize the madman. This scene somehow affected the witnesses of it, not merely with terror, but with some sort of ghostly awe, which left all the survivors, male and female, in a state of nervous ruin for days. Before the fifth shot, all the ladies had fainted.

A rush, however, was made by the men, the lunatic was mastered, put into irons, and died the same night of the brain disease which had suddenly seized him.

Four months afterwards, in the town of Bradford, Mrs Drayton gave birth to a son; six months afterwards, near Rugby, Mrs Hartwell too, gave birth to a son. And the point which we wanted to emphasize is this, that these two boys, as they grew to manhood, bore no resemblance to hereditary types; but each had a raspberry birthmark the size of a penny on his left temple; and each was the image of Captain Denner, the captain of the *Africa*.

In that instant of the captain's apparition at the saloon door in that one vivid shock of panic, the nervous beings of the two mothers had leapt, caught, appropriated, and kodaked the captain's image.

And for thirty-eight years after that Sunday on the sea those two portraits of the captain of the *Africa* lived in England unconscious of each other. But after that stretch of time, the winds that blew the lives of men like wandering waves of the sea, blew them together, and they met.

II. — ON THE ROAD

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It was on the road between Cromer and Norwich—a good road, as many cyclists know, but with some steep bits, especially toward Cromer end, and there between Horsham, St. Fay's and Aylsham.

It is late autumn, and all those woods of Stratton, Strawless, and Blickling, are whirls of dead leaves. The sun is setting—bleakly setting; and the storm winds sweeping south wrinkle the puddles in the road, along which one may walk miles and not meet a soul.

Certainly, the country has a desolate aspect this evening; the ground, turned since harvest for the first wheat sowing, looks black and dead with wet. Hardly a tuft of chrysanthemum in some sheltered nook still braves the bleakness of wintry winds. The ferns, and heather of Roughton Heath look scorched by the breath of a fire. The wind seems to have a grey colour.

Go still further north along the road, and you will find all that breadth of sand, where the village girls "paddle" through the summer and catch sea anemones, swallowed up now by the sea. It is blowing great guns inland, and the flat-bottomed crab boats are perched in nooks of the cliffs beyond the range of the breakers.

Beyond Roughton and Aylsham, a motor car comes scorching at a speed of not less than thirty miles an hour; for the wind blows keen and, moreover, the driver of this particular twin cylinder is famous for his illegal pace.

His car is a specially "chic" turn-out, an elongated mass of double phaeton type, brown-painted, upholstered in green leather, with French Dunlops, and lightly pitches forward all that weight over the slushy road a purring Juggernaut—toward Norwich, toward London.

On the front seat are two men, thick as bears in a rug, gloves, and furred coats. Only their noses are cold, but even that little they resent: they do not know that within two hours they will be cold all over.

"Dimmed cold," says one.

"Hang the silly storm," says the other.

They are the financier, James Drayton, and his right-hand man, McCalmont. They have motored together from London to Sheffield to attend a conference on the pooling of some steel concern, but when the conference was over, instead of returning direct to London, Drayton has said to McCalmont's surprise, that he wished to see someone at Cromer, and at Cromer they have accordingly arrived about four that afternoon. But whom it could have been that Drayton wished to see at Cromer, McCalmont, even now, cannot guess. Drayton apparently had "seen" no one at Cromer. He did separate a few minutes from McCalmont, but only to go into the *poste restante*, where he got a letter, which, after reading, he tore up. Why, therefore, they have made this detour to the east of England, McCalmont is still wondering. Drayton must have had some reason.

In silence they pitch and slip ahead. Steadily hums the car, the rough wind instruments make music of dead marches about them, the sun has set and darkness gathers fast.

James Drayton is a big man, with a handsome, large face, florid and freckled, a black beard, and rather thick lips, whose pressure is visible at the parting of the moustache. He, too, would do very well for Charlemagne or a sea-king, as we said of Captain Denner, of the *Africa*, whose image he is. His eyes have a hard, aggressive look, and his appearance somehow tells you that he is a modern city man to the finger tips, who knows the world familiarly, uses it, and perhaps abuses it.

They are now at the elevated ground about Ingworth, whence they can see the darkling valley of the Bure on either hand, and black before them the woods of Blickling. It is a place where many a spill has taken place on account of two nasty turnings where the road crosses bridges, but Drayton proves that he knows the locality by altering his change-speed gear. The car hastens slower, and neatly negotiates the ticklish bits.

At the second turning it splashes a man on the road. He is a tramp—at least, he is tramping. A little bundle in a red handkerchief hangs from a stick over his Shoulder. He has no jacket this inclement night; his boots are ruined; misery is in his eyes, bitterness in his pressed lips. His name is Robert Hartwell.

And because of the slowing-down of the motor, and because some greyness still lingers in the dark, therefore Hartwell sees for a moment that face of Drayton, though Drayton and McCalmont do not observe Hartwell. And Hartwell thinks to himself, "Well, that man might be my brother!—ah, but you seem to be happier than I, my friend!"

The motor vanishes down the hill towards Blickling, the lessening voice of its flight still haunting Hartwell's ear drum like a wasp—till that, too, is gone. And on he tramps, muttering bitter at heart, in the same direction as they—towards Norwich, towards London, and the tortoise shall yet beat the hare.

Past the mill, past the farm among the trees, the bridge, the old gabled manor-house, hedges loaded with the storm, heron, crop and grebe by the solitary pool, with bat and white owl in the air, the strange screams of madness in the winds that now fill a darkness unrelieved by moon or star—Hartwell continually puts his feet into puddles without seeing them and sounds come from his chest!

Meanwhile, the motor has not gone far upon the main road, for soon after crossing the Bure, it has turned aside into rather obscure country tending to bracken and heath, Drayton having said to McCalmont: "There ought to be a place just in there somewhere, which I remember from long ago. Suppose we go and get a glass of ale, and light up."

McCalmont is surprised, for there is champagne on board, if Drayton is thirsty, and it is surely not necessary to go to a tavern to "light up!" but he say, "As you like," and soon Drayton takes a lane to the left.

A mile in this direction, and they come, to a house behind the shoulder of a hill—a rather high house, black with age, with a physiognomy both picturesque and sinister. The roofs are quaint, on different levels, some quite small; there are broken external steps; some of the windows are broader than long, latticed, small or irregularly placed, and two are dormer windows. Along the front runs a gut with some water

trickling among rocks, and beyond this a hillside of rocks, pines, and a couple of old huts. Some special dismalness here causes McCalmont to shiver at the cold, as they draw up.

"What place is it?" he asks.

"I think it is called 'The Anchor,'" says Drayton.

Some rain begins to be mixed with the wind as they go into a bar parlour, with a floor of earth stamped hard, and sanded. The light is dim, but a turf fire burns brightly in the grate. Only one man is there, a laborer, with his tankard on the bench beside him; and from his happy posture one may conjecture him not sober. He is the driver of a manure cart whose horse is enduring all the storm yonder at the house side. He has still a long way to fare, past Aylsham, almost on to Marsham, and the entrance of the rich men rouses him. He pulls himself together, braves the outer night, mounts and sets off, not un comforted, for he has a can of beer with him. We shall overtake him, again be overtaken by him, and again overtake him.

Meanwhile, the landlord has drawn some cider for Drayton. Cider is not McCalmont's taste, but Drayton duly sips his cider.

"By the way, landlord," says he presently, "just take me to a room: I want to write a letter."

McCalmont is really surprised now. Why on earth—But Drayton knows what he is about: he knows that Letty, the landlord's daughter, is listening behind the inner door, hears what he says, and will act accordingly.

Barnes, the landlord, has never before seen Drayton, nor Drayton Barnes; but Letty and Drayton have met this

summer on Cromer pier.

Drayton says to his friend: "Shan't be long," and Barnes says to Drayton: "This way, sir."

Barnes is a powerful man with a red beard, and a constant frown. He has a certain air of self-importance above his station, as of "one who has come down." He and Drayton mount some creaking stairs; some paper and two candles are placed on a table in a dingy old-timbered room, then Barnes retires.

Drayton, however, writes no letter, but waits, and in a minute Letty looks in. She is twenty or so, middle-sized, fair, plump, and pretty—not the prettiness of a doll—there is character in her face. She is neatly dressed in grey and has quite the air and speech of a lady, save for a countrified word here or there. Her hair is firmly built, she has some jewellery, watch and chain, and smells of lavender, as Drayton puts a kiss on her cheek.

"We mustn't talk here," she whispers, "come—"

She leads him by the hand through darkness down a back stair into the open. Nothing is said till they are beyond the kitchen garden, the stable, the fowl house, the pigs. Then there is a hedge with a gate, then a plank bridging a rill, then a fir plantation. Among the firs they stand.

Rain smites their faces, winds catch away their words. Now, too, there is a vague sound of thunder somewhere, but they heed none of these things. Each is fully occupied by the other.

"We have only a few minutes," says Letty Barnes.

"What's it all about, my girl?" answers Drayton. "I got your letter at the Cromer *poste restante*, but you are cool to

expect a man like me to be running after you."

"Oh, you drop all pretence of love, then, I see?" says Letty.

Drayton puts his arm round her waist.

"Kiss your old man. I love you all right, girlie—honestly, I do, but you mustn't be a bore, Letty. I am prepared to do a lot for you, if you only know how to manage me—"

"But I do know how to manage you, as you are going to see! I have found out! Not by begging, but by commanding! With all your experience, you seem to know very little about women, really; and as to me, you don't know me one little bit! I look like a lamb, don't I? Aren't you really going to marry me, then, after all?"

"Don't be a goose, Letty; don't be a goose."

"You did promise though, I think, didn't you?"

"Let me see: I forget now."

"Ah, a great scoundrel!"

"Little Letty, little Letty."

"A bitter devil, James Drayton!"

"Let not your angry passions rise, my Letty! I'm a sixty-horse-power for angry passions myself, you know."

"And I! and I! and my father!—when he finds out. Do you think, then, that you will be getting off scot free this time? How silly! We are not common people! Compared to a clown like you, we are respectable folk, though poor. You dare, James Drayton! Pity yourself, if you won't—pity—me—"

She suddenly covered her face, and the winds bore away one sob.

"My good girl," says Drayton, "don't cry, because crying depresses me; and don't threaten me, because I don't like it,

so don't do it."

"Selfish brute! I never knew what it was to hate—"

"Look here; be quick. What; is it you want with me?"

"Keep your promise!"

"That all you got to say for yourself?"

"What happens to you, if you fail to honor a signed promise to pay at three months' sight for value received, James? You become a dead man commercially, don't you? Well, your promise to me is more binding in my sight than a thousand pieces of paper, and your failure to keep it shall have the same penalty, my friend—death—social death—"

"Pooh! I am going—"

"No, don't go. I didn't make you come here to quarrel, and waste words, but to tell you that you are quite in my power. I have discovered about your engagement to Lady Methwold; you are to be married in three months, aren't you? But listen to this other fact: I have taken a trip to your place, Corton Chantry—"

"You!" whispers Drayton; and now his face is suddenly pallid.

"Ah, that touches you near, James," says Letty. "Yes, I have been to Corton. It is only nine miles from here, you know. You must be a scoundrel, really. I will marry you, but within seven months from now I shall be divorced from you. I shouldn't live with you for all the crowns—"

"You been to Corton, girl! What ever for?"

"I don't quite know why: some instinct took me. I had heard that you kept the place running wild, with only one daft man, named Steve Anderson, to look after it. That

stirred my curiosity, for lately I have believed you capable of any villainy. So I went, and I heard screams—"

"By gad!"

"Yes, screams—a woman's—in that north tower—"

"You little beggar!"

"Take care! you touch me! you dare! Look here—can you see?—this is a letter which I have ready to send to Lady Methwold—"

Drayton is a man of action, and the instant that white object appears through the murk, he makes a catch at it. His hand meets Letty Barnes' wrist and seizes it. But he has not to do with a weakling. Letty is strong, and they proceed to fight like two men, though there is no reason why they should, really, for if this letter be got from Letty, she can surely write another, but they are speedily in that state of mind in which men no longer reason.

Passion possesses them, pants in their breath, stares in their eyes.

"Let it—go you—shall!" pants Drayton, stooped to her hand; but Letty's fingers are a vice. Though if it were less dark, one would see her failing, as with bitten lip and many a jerk and stumble she endures that rough usage to which Drayton is subjecting her.

And every moment, as they fight, up and up climbs the temperature of their rage. The striving for that letter becomes a mania. Where will it end?

This way frenzy lies. But neither will yield and their breaths grow louder than the winds.

"Give it—up you—shall—"

"No, you—devil—"

But Letty is white; her hands are sore and burning; she feels herself going, going; and now she sends out one shriek upon the night.

McCalmont, who is pacing in the tavern-bar, awaiting Drayton, says:

"What's that?"

"Where?" asks Barnes, the landlord.

"Didn't I hear something like a cry somewhere?"

"Ey, it's the wind," says Barnes; "rough night, rough night. I'd not care to be out on the road, sir."

But by that cry of Letty's, Drayton has been startled, and in a moment she has wrenched her hand free, and is gone flying. He catches her, but misses her, and panting to himself, "No, you don't," is after her.

She has run back toward the rill and the board-bridge, but she never reaches it. He has caught her, his hand in the collar of her dress behind.

"Going to—drop it?" he pants at her ear.

But she cannot answer. He is choking her. She tries to say that she yields, then to say "pity," but no whisper comes. Now a thousand words throng in her throat—only to speak would be Heaven—but no more comes than from dry suction-pumps that caw and gurgle. Her poor eyes stare in a horror of panic, seeing Eternity upon her, and the sudden grave yawn to receive her youth.

"Quick! going to drop it?" he repeats. But how can she answer? She cannot answer! and her silence adds fuel to his flame.

But the end is not yet; there is a rent of cloth. Something gives way at her neck. She dives and is running free.

Away from the rill this time—and he runs after her: but neither runs fast—they cannot—there is a certain impotence in their run, as when in dreams one would hasten, but cannot, the limbs are so hampered and heavy.

But of the two it is she who runs the more feebly, and his legs are long. He gets near again and makes a blow, but a feeble wild blow, made too soon, which only touches her. She dodges, and is gone in a changed direction.

And again he is after her, with that same feeble obstinacy, so deplorable to see. If she can only escape his sight one instant, how lucky, for she will be lost to him in the dark. But the wood is fatally sparse, and he never quite loses her. Anon they stumble for the ground is rough with game-holes, thistle, fern, and furze, and once Drayton is staggering backward with arms a-struggle in the air. But he saves himself, and is soon impending again while she, feeling him near again, with a panic now boundless and lunatic, throws her soul into the scream:

"Help! he is going—!"

They are a longish distance from the tavern, but such a scream as that, that Barnes, her father, behind the bar, cocks an ear and says to McCalmont, who is pacing with his hands in his coat-pockets:

"Well, I thought I heard—Heard anything, sir?"

"No," says McCalmont, "no. Thought I did a while since, though."

"Ey, it's the blessed wind. It cries out behind the hill at times, like a woman in trouble."

But Drayton has made another blow at the poor victim, again without effect. She is nimble, though failing, and

during his momentary stoppage she evades and is off in yet a new direction. But her end is not far; she is tumbling too frequently—and all at once, with a mortal little last cry, she is down. Instantly he is on his knees over her.

His right forearm presses on her windpipe—he does not look at her at all, nor admit to himself that he is killing her. He looks away sideways, as if interested in something yonder among the trees—

Presently he picks himself up, leans his back against a fir-bole, peers this way and that and recovers wind a little.

At the bottom of the plantation runs a bend of that same gut which passes before the tavern—a square-cut opening in the ground about ten feet wide and fifteen feet deep. Their run has brought them so near it that Drayton, leaning against a tree, can see its edge. He thinks that it is a river, but a mere thread of water trickles through it.

He goes to the body again, takes the letter to Lady Methwold from her hand, tears it up, and is about to throw the pieces upon the wind when he considers himself and puts them into a pocket. He then draws her ten yards to the gut, over the edge. He listens for a splash, but hears neither splash nor thud. The winds are in his ears and it is as though he had thrown her into an abyss of darkness. She is gone from him.

Now he runs—thievish, but quick—back toward the rill, the bridge, the hedge-gate, past the pigs, the kitchen garden, up the dark back-stairs. He re-enters the room which he had left with her. There burn the two candles as before, quietly, as if nothing had happened meanwhile. He looks at his hands, at his clothes—no blood. He takes off his

coat and shakes off the water. But his face! that looks a bit wild; he sees it in a spotted piece of mirror that hangs from a timber of this old room. He can't show such a face to McCalmont; there's a scratch, too, under his left eye. The little beggar must have scratched him somehow.

She is dead, then! He has killed her dead—unexpected thing. But it has happened, it is so. He cannot at all recognise himself, paces the room, misery in his face. Pity he ever met her that night on Cromer pier; pity he came to her this night; pity she was ever born—and he.

"Well, that's as it may—" He pulls himself together, glances again at the glass. He will wait a little longer.

Now he has the thought that the number of the sheets given him may be known to the landlord. He will therefore take one—will even write a letter, since he came for that and has time. His mind is in a state in which thought is fairly active, but not with perfect rationality. Standing, he covers half a sheet with writing; but the words are nonsense words, to fill up space. He blots them on a Life Assurance almanac, in which leaves of blotting paper alternate with memorandum leaves.

Now he descends and, as he enters the bar, McCalmont says:

"By Jove! you must have written ten letters, old man."

"Only one, boy," answers Drayton, "but that wanted some thinking, you see. All ready to be off?"

McCalmont has lighted up; all is ready. Drayton slips a couple of shillings into the landlord's hand and, stepping outside, they hear Barnes call "Letty!"

Off goes the motor round the hill, down the lane, out upon the road; and now the darkness is lit by an occasional lightning flash.

Within four minutes, near Blickling, they come upon Robert Hartwell, who has tramped thus far with his bundle and stick. He is aware of the gathering hum of the two dragon-eyes staring nearer upon him and, stepping aside, he mutters as they dash past.

Five minutes later, they overtake the manure-cart of the laborer who had left "The Anchor" on their entrance. He sends a drowsy shout to warn them as they grow near, for he carries no light. And past him, too, they dash. But he shall overtake them, and again be overtaken by them.

III. — ROBERT HARTWELL'S SIN

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We left Hartwell where the road crosses a bridge in the Bure Valley, and he has tramped on to the second encounter with the motor, wondering how much bitterer the weather will become, and if the world is a place designed to torture and oppress the poor. All the time he is on the look-out for some barn or hollow tree, in which to rest his frame.

He is a big man, about the size of Drayton, the same age—two months' younger—the same black beard, a longish oblong of hair; on his left temple the same raspberry mark; his moustache flows sideways in the same way, showing the pressure of rather thick lips, and a definite point in the middle of the upper. They have the same straight noses, freckle-splashed faces, glossy hair. Hartwell's photograph would do very well for a photograph of Denner, captain of the *S.S. Africa*, dead thirty-eight years since. So would Drayton's.

Only Hartwell's hands are different from Drayton's. He is not, however, a working-man of common type; his father was a nail manufacturer; he himself has spent three years at Rugby School, though Rugby has receded many a thousand miles from Hartwell now.

When he was seventeen, his father failed, and died. Then for three years he maintained his mother by hard work as an under-clerk in an electrical machine-makers. He was steady—at one time even religious—had abilities and rose higher in his firm. But his mother died and, alone in the world, he fell in love with a pretty work-girl, who induced

him to marry. She was worthless, and drank. One day she appeared at the office and made a scene. He was dismissed. Falling now into misery, he took work at the factory in whose office he had been a clerk. He has been a working-man ever since.

But, an excellent specimen of his class, his remarkable mind has not rusted. He has been a student, a keen watcher of the world's march in science, thought, invention, social changes. He knows a great lot about chemistry and biology, reads German, has filled a pile of note-books with notes at science classes, knows Darwin, Haeckel, by heart. He has been a sober, sagacious workman, bringing up his son, Bobbie, as respectably as he could, ever since his wife died ten years ago.

But he has had misfortunes—disaster after disaster just lately, and the iron has entered into his soul. He has seen Bobbie hungry and one memorable night Bobbie has seen him drunk.

Electricity makes such progress in these days!—it flies. The workman can hardly keep pace with the bewildering changes. What is new to-day will be ancient history to-morrow, and the older types of craftsmen, their pursuits and habits of mind, already fixed, see younger men step in and take their place.

Hartwell has made two inventions from each of which he hoped for wealth, but he lacked the few pounds to patent either. One was patented for him by a manufacturer, who has given him £20, making thousands himself by it. The other is still in the air.

He has seen door after door close in his face, and hope has pined. Too many people seem to be born! something is wrong with the scheme of things, and there's a "fault" in the Machine. His thick firm lips pressed together on that Norwich Road, hisses are on his breath, and now is the winter of his discontent.

Partly by train, partly tramping, he has come from Birmingham to Cromer, allured by the hope of getting employment in a gentleman's stable, for an acquaintance had written him of a vacancy there. But it was filled when he arrived. He is now tramping for London with the vaguest hopes though, certainly, his boots will never outlast that length of road. Already his feet are soaked and congealed. The foxes have holes, but he nowhere to lay his head. His vitals scream for food.

He does not blame himself—he knows that he is little to blame; he does not blame man, nor the devil; his rage is against the nature of the world. But it does not break out—he is not of that sort. Till, just as he comes to that lane leading to "The Anchor," where Drayton has turned in, some rain, as we said before, begins to be mixed with the winds and this little thing, though his mind is of the strongest, irritates Hartwell to fury, and now he breaks out.

"Curse the rain," he mutters, looking up.

And as on he plods, taunting words come to him, mockeries of Nature. "A metal-worker's apprentice would have conceived it better!" he laughs. But the rain only gets worse; there grows a sound of thunder somewhere in the dark; he breathes a wish that lightning may strike him dead—if it can. The lightning can, but is busy.

During the next two miles, his lips are never silent; and while he goes muttering James Drayton is doing what we know to Letty Barnes.

Then again Drayton passes Hartwell on the road and, this time, that motor-car has upon the usually cold mind of Hartwell an effect like madness. How brazen a power the thing is! domineering in its approach, obtrusive in its passage, triumphant in its swift translation from sight. It has the eyes, the smell, the wings, the mutter and meditation of an Ogre. It is like a daughter of Mammon.

Wealth! Hartwell knows what it is, he has stood in mansions. He knows poverty. As the proud chariot of iron flashes past him, he has in his consciousness at one and the same moment both houselessness and the palace, rags and furred robes, the crust and the fat of turtles. It is a double vision almost, which he has, and a lust for wealth, more crass and ugly than he has ever felt, arises and boils in his breast. To shoot in motor cars, anon crushing some wretch on the road—to roll in luxury, while multitude's starve—how good, he thinks!

"Give me that!" he says, and now he is down on his knees, frowning, his hands clutched in his hair, for though his fires are slow to kindle they burn hot and strong, like hard anthracite and he is praying, but not looking up, looking down, not praying to heaven.

"Whatever your name Mammon—Power of the world—give me that! Say ten years, five! I will serve you gladly—say five years—from to-night. Will you? Can you? Are you there? No, you are not there, but if you were—I offer myself: only cloy me—"

His head is bowed right down, frowning, but he rises hastily, ashamed of himself, muttering:

"No! let it not be said that I have entered my second childhood at the age of thirty-seven."

But he goes on his way a worse man. Between Blickling and Aylsham a thought comes into his head of his son, Bobbie, whom he has left at Birmingham with an old friend. He has tenderly loved the lad: but he mutters now:

"Selfishness is the law, my friend, I must not care for you."

Presently, near eight o'clock, he is passing through Aylsham, his fires burned out now, or only sullenly smouldering within him. And again in Aylsham he has overtaken James Drayton, and sees him. It is at the old coaching-house, the "Black Boys;" the motor is before the door, and since the thunderstorm is over, and hardly any rain left for the wind to play with, half-a-dozen admiring boys and girls are gathered round the motor, and Hartwell, too, stops to admire. In the room behind that window, Drayton and McCalmont are dining, and there is a space under the blind by which Hartwell, stooping, spies Drayton, full face.

"Well, certainly," he breathes, "this is odd! there is the same man again, my own twin brother, as I live. It is said that everyone has a double. Ah, lucky person, lucky person!"

Five minutes he stoops there, peering, absorbed in the contemplation of this marvel. Then, with a sigh he straightens himself, and goes his dreary way—through

Aylsham—down the railed footway by the lych-gate and
down the hill beyond.



IV. — SO SOON?

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Down the long hill trudges Hartwell, his eyes bent upon the ground in gloomy reverie, and now this thought occurs to him whether, on the strength of the resemblance between him and Drayton, it might not be a good thing to turn back and beg a shilling of the rich man. He had never begged before—but hunger and weariness grow pressing—

He regrets the idea, but it recurs, and he is again considering it, his eyes on the ground, when he strikes upon something, and his walk is brought to a stoppage. What is it? a cart lying across the road, no horse, no driver. It lies tilted, like a stranded ship, one of the wheels is off.

It is the manure cart of the laborer who left "The Anchor," fuddled, when Drayton and McCalmont entered it. We said that they should overtake them, and they did; we said that he should overtake them again, and he has, while they dine at Aylsham; but they shall overtake him again—or, at least, his cart.

"But the dolt!" thinks Hartwell, "to leave the cart in the middle of the road this dark night!"

At the breakdown the driver has unspanned, mounted the horse with all its hames and trailing harness, and gone on to his farm near Marsham to seek help, for he cannot move the cart: and he has gone at a walk, happy, singing, and full of hot spiced ale.

Hartwell walks round the cart, lingering, thinking what to do. He decides to return to Aylsham, and tell some one. But as he turns to climb, he hears, he sees—with an alarm which

quickly grows into horror. There is a humming song somewhere, then two dragon eyes quick coming, and above the dragon eyes two little adder eyes, clear cut, in the darkness—the glowing ends of two cigars. At 25 miles an hour they come. Hartwell forgets his vow to do no good.

"Stop!" he howls, waving, red-faced, running a little up. He implores as for his own life, "Danger! Stop!"

But in vain. If they hear, they do not understand, nor heed. There is no time. Drayton has fuddled himself at dinner that he may forget what lies in the gutter behind "The Anchor." On hums the motor, and suddenly Hartwell is no more shouting to save others, but skedaddling to save his own skin—down again to the cart—beyond it—like one pelting from pestilence. Nor does he stop till he hears behind him the shock—a bumping hubbub, then a rattling and throbbing—and his eye-corner catches sight of a sheet of flame vanishing like lightning flash into the dark.

Then all is still—all but the wind. Drayton has gone to meet Letty Barnes.

It was the high side of the tilted cart that had been turned to the motor, but even so, McCalmont has been shot clean over it, a long way, like an arrow; and when Hartwell turns back toward the scene of the ruin, it is upon McCalmont that he first comes. He finds that the dead man's head has made quite a hole in the ground, and his neck is obviously broken. Everything can be seen, for the car has ignited in one spot, and yonder on the road and in the roadside field are several flames dodging about from the rain, as petroleum does on contact with water.