

On his return 'Khalid' who has a top
post in the education department - the
group of students, as if a decoy of his, +

THE NIGHT OF THE ECLIPSE

A forgotten Baghdad

BY

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Pages 1 - 394

a story, as my Khalid had, of all the
Baghdadis he knew, of his present
turning away from his wife and
the child the war was coming. There
is the key to the 'return to Baghdad'
episode - the voiceless, Ali Haida, etc.

Pip Squeak & Wilfred

ref early

Alone, he understands 'the night of the
eclipse' for the first time. ^{the} ^{one} ^{vested}
against his wife is absolute, he
is powerless to alter it, she should
be at his side because this is her
destined place. His pressure of

what has already been written in the Book
makes him enter, unawares, the world of chance.

MEMOIR OF THE ECLIPSE

In what sense were we
alive? Who was to say who
we were? ~~What strange~~
~~antics did we~~ ~~who~~ ~~strange~~
antics were we up to as a
replacement for life? What was
life? Why (or how) did it stand
aside from us — these were questions
we could have asked and indeed
may — true did ask ourselves — he
only in silence, never in discourse, and
then never in 'real' life as we ^{called} it.

→ and still 9 work, having been put outside
us by ourselves, remained outside, namely
where we weren't but where we surely
belonged!

START WITH THE NIGHT OF THE ECLIPSE

The new Night of the Eclipse

When he returns there alone:

— the Assyrian girl in the hotel — the 'cigar' from the Dick mentioned, the 'one' is fair.

— the dancing along what 'swells' have to be a canal, the paradise promised by the desert (stone galleries) and the wooden depot he had never come across — Baghdad.

— the Hebrew brother speaking French.

— the Jew, and his treacherous brother — the Jewish accountants

— The Arabs line the streets when Jews enter

— the Crown Prince at the races
how many months before his execution

— resentment on the horses — in Spain —

— Khalil the eyes of his for execution —
at the warehouse in Beirut
— the girl, why are you throwing yourself
what so much?

— The work all he does has by been
written in a 'book', he is not fulfilling it
and no verbal and word-thing that has been
written, which promises wonder, at the end of
every action, way with, sadness. The Book of

— 2 year deception "The Prince" gives
birth to 'his' baby. He returns London.
(He returned to Baghdad, of because she was
pregnant). Dilemma's ^{feels} could of the
the if I were just

of no lives has already been written,
we simply fulfil it with what a beautiful
concept life vision that was — and it
ring true very moment, and but for the
force of God it could have been
adopted by us Christians during those
marvellous medieval discussions
between Jews, Muslims and us — a
conversation that was building a
civilization, before those talks were
brought low by Ferdinand & Isabella
in Spain,

Make sense of Jid B. B. B.

No beard CLOSEST FRIEND

Hani Arzani

Did he had a way with me. He took
to the all his interest. Pip didn't
know how he knew this - it was
easy in Jid's new phase. He
wanted the sexual contact in bed
to need a more deep himself -
he was close to the same with his
interest, his partnership, his enjoyment
of his enjoyment, his awareness of his
not before the the sex he did.
Pip says what it is with - etc.

lands, his himself is a world many
distances away, ~~that~~ it was little
under the old head of Exited
between the, ~~some~~ miles off all
regions deep points as well as affinites.

BOOK I

CHAPTER 1.

The story of the night of the eclipse - near the Bahama tree

Bas
at this table

On the train from the coast he talked loudly and the other passengers looked a bit intimidated under ^{the} direct fire ~~of his questions.~~
~~When he addressed them~~ they blinked and shifted, ^{all} except a quiet, well-bred young woman ^{opposite} on the other side of the gangway who was evidently used to men shouting, and a woman from Johannesburg, her face ^{sun-dried} dry and lined, from the sun, who ~~sat at his table~~ and looked at him with admiration ~~all the time~~ because he seemed to her such a striking representative of the Old Country, which she had never visited before. When he told her that he didn't think blacks should necessarily live apart from whites she looked stunned and turned away for a moment. ^{He fidgeted} ~~But he went on asking his polite questions of her and the others, turning and twisting in his seat as if the buffet-car was too small for his energies.~~

They entered ^{London's} the still, grey outskirts of London ~~in a~~ ^{with their} deathly shadow that ~~stole~~ ^{stealing} over the train ~~without a sound~~; so it seemed to him ~~as if~~ ^{He turned} underneath his energetic manner. But he didn't turn and look out of the window, because he wanted to keep it at bay a little longer; ^{Aggs air of London} the shadow would steal over him, too, as it had just done over the train, and it would darken him, too, before many hours. ^{soon enough -} He didn't glance to left or right but went on talking like a robust Englishman --- well, he was robust and he was English. ^{want he?} But it was deliberate, he was acting up all the time and there was a note of danger in his voice, which ~~perhaps~~ was what made people glance at him curiously, their eyes slightly narrowed.

He told the quiet young woman about his house in Basrah and the

irrigation scheme that was being planned by the government 'out there'.
 Now usually he would never think of using those words 'out there' ^{it} it made
~~a place seem impossibly far, and thus unreal, and he'd travelled too much~~
~~to think like that.~~ But it seemed more English to say ~~'out there'~~ and he
 was being very assiduously the Englishman.

^{Not many} ~~Only five~~ years before he ^{would have} felt ashamed of being so "English".

Everybody had told him, either as ~~a~~ compliment or criticism, "You're so
 English!" ~~And he'd always taken it as a criticism.~~ ^{Taking the word} ~~It~~ meant stiff and
 aloof, like a man with ice down his back. If you were 'English' and, ~~say,~~ ⁱⁿ
 put your hand on another man's shoulder in a reassuring ^{manner} movement, the

movement wouldn't come off, ^{just} the other man would look at you with a half-
 frightened expression as if death had ^{just} touched him. ~~It was ridiculous, but~~
~~that was what he'd felt.~~ ^{As if} He'd never felt stiff and aloof inside; indeed,

Quite the opposite, ~~always~~ bubbling over, in fact, too hot ^{always} to speak, not knowing
 where to put his hands ~~and so~~ forth! But the sound of those words, "You're

so English!" --- or it might be a glance a foreigner gave him, especially
 a swarthy foreigner with undisturbed black eyes --- always paralysed him and
 fixed his body in a stiffness foreign to it. Try as he might to ease his
 limbs, and look in front of him naturally, he couldn't, and got stiffer and
 stiffer, seeing himself as the condescending Englishman used to being
 served, especially by foreigners. He would try terribly hard sometimes,
 smiling and gesticulating and say 'Yes' and 'No' prematurely, and kicking
 his feet about in a funny way, but it was no good, it only gave an

impression of strangeness. Now a gentleman, an English gentleman, a real
 one, behaved quite differently. ^{gave off} He ~~always~~ had ease. ^{like a first name. Though} He ~~didn't~~ condescend, ^{have}
 not if he was the genuine article. But ^{people like} ~~otherwise~~ and Granville was an
~~otherwise~~ --- you had to fight ^{them} your way ^{up} to it slowly. It didn't matter

incredibly fast, staring at the sky with his head pushed forward, his long, pale hand clutching the stem of the microphone; and as abruptly he stepped aside. The young man in the fountain was arrested and carried shoulder-high through the crowd by two policemen, without his shoes and socks; he kept calling to someone in the crowd by the fountain, craning his neck round, "Bring 'em to the station, cock! Oy, cock! Bring 'em to the station!" Then he looked down at one of the sweating policemen underneath him and said, "Constable, you're hurting my leg, I'll screw you when I get down!" The crowd was laughing, and some of them began singing, 'Let's all go down the Strand, Have a banana!'"

On the other side of the square there was something unpleasant. A police-horse had swept somebody off his feet and he'd started to attack the policeman, trying to pull him down from the saddle. There was a scuffle, and some angry cried, and the crowd in that area moved backwards and forwards as if being pulled as a whole to and fro; some police vans came round quickly, their bells going, and by the look of it a few people were arrested.

Speakers assembled on the platform and an appeal was put out for the Arab refugee fund. Then the speeches started, the usual political stuff where the moral vehemence had its effect on the crowd like clockwork. He walked away, down Whitehall. The voices echoed behind him, rising to the point of moral climax and then falling again. It was all rotten underneath! It was the same with Dick and Linger-Longer, the same with the newspapers, with the solemn, measured, admonitory leading articles that cashed in on every crisis to double and treble the sales --- rotten! And Whitehall was strangely silent and deserted and ancient, without even buses, like a street made suddenly into a church, with idiot-cries for

blood coming in from outside on the wind.

A woman spoke. He heard her call for a 'Middle East Charter' to be signed by all the powers with interests in that area. What a hope! The sound of the crowd, listening to her with rapt silence, then making a subdued murmur of approval, made not a great political roar as it had done with the other speakers, but a more intimate one of outraged decency. Her voice sounded wild, but in a touching way, also nagging, a bit shrewish; she seemed to be grappling with male sex, not just politics --- male sex was to blame at bottom. "I was told last week ---!" Her voice drifted to and fro. "One of our boys ---" The crowd made its roar and he heard her words, suddenly shouted above this roar, "I wonder what his mother ---!" And then there was, "Crying shame!"

Granville hurried along past Westminster Abbey, no longer within earshot.

21.
CHAPTER ~~III~~

As quickly as the panic was off about Hanni's child it was on again: the blue medicine hadn't worked, and she was already in the 'operating room' ~~down at Hampton Court~~ when he heard about it from Pinkie. The operation was a success and Dick had to attend her all night with hot water and swabs, after the doctor had left; again ^{Pip} ~~consistently~~ was supposed not to know, and Pinkie bound him to secrecy. Dick rang her up to say that Hanni was doing well: 'Tomb' was really done for this time, *he said.*

Then Hanni was on her feet again. She ~~took a week off from the office and~~ began coming to the house nearly every day; she sat with him in the kitchen and sometimes they went for walks together by the river, ~~near London Bridge~~; she said she didn't want to see anyone else, only him and Pinkie; she'd had a bad 'stomach-upset', she told him, perhaps from the wine; but at the same time she appeared to realise that he knew and was quite relieved that this was so. /cap

The newspapers had promised correctly: the weather was now dark and windy, with an unpleasant bit/in the air, and clouds lay in a thick blinding mass over the roof-tops. On their walks he took Hanni's arm protectively: the life was knocked out of her; she looked limp and frozen; the comparison with Pinkie was extraordinary --- between a withered ^{stem} ~~flower~~ and a rich, swelling fruit. ~~But very slowly Hanni was taking strength again.~~ there was a staleness round her, something cut short /cap

and stunned; she hadn't the confidence of her body and walked awkwardly; she looked round her with a hesitating, blinking glance, trying to marshal her old steadiness. But bit by bit the dignity returned to her face; Pinkie said she ^{would} burst into tears one evening and couldn't tell ~~her~~ why. Dick called for her every day; ~~and took her down to Hampton~~ ~~Street~~; he was quiet and serious, and brought her little presents. [She ^{h. p.} told ~~Granville~~ ^{Pip} during one of their walks that Clockwork, who ^{se other nicknames was} ~~was also~~ ^(partly) called 'Virginia Creepers' ~~because of the soft way he talked along~~ and because he always told women he was a virgin) was in love with her, but ^a ~~he was~~ 'homosexual at heart' ^{because} she said homosexuality was fashionable these days ~~among young men~~; it provided a cover under which to get women without 'the direct male approach'; it was a good excuse if 'you couldn't make love properly'. ~~She said Clockwork was ^{h. p.} a prideful simple person underneath, and a masturbator, she was the housemaid who would bring him to manhood; there were ^{h. p.} ~~inse~~ ^{h. p.} ~~jobs~~ she added in a sad way. She spoke with a ^{h. p.} ~~deliberate~~ ^{h. p.} ~~firmness~~. She was fed up with every-~~

thing, she said, especially sex; she wanted a long holiday somewhere sunny; she even wouldn't mind going back to Kurdistan for a bit; she could go to see her mother in Beirut but hadn't the money; she ^{had} ~~to~~ come a long way in life, it seemed, for 'a lot of 'dirt' ~~and ^{h. p.} ~~complication~~~~

~~And one day in the kitchen, talking in a way that sounded like an apology to him, she said she was frightened of vehement men, and Clockwork was the opposite of vehement, which was perhaps why she liked him. Granville asked why she was frightened and she replied she felt they were always 'giving way to something'. There was a pause and she smoked at her cigarette with pursed lips, her eyes narrowed against the smoke in her characteristic way that had become for him a sign of long,~~

There was no reply from Nevinson so far, and Dick gave no sign that he knew anything about it. The letter must have arrived, as he'd registered it. He thought it was strange but it fitted in with the dreamy and broken quality of the rest of his life now. Pinkie looked at him searchingly one evening when she came in and asked, "What about your ticket back?" He ought to have been gone three or four days before /o

"Oh, yes," he said, turning away from her, "I must see about that /o" he added, to waylay her suspicions, "I might hang on ~~here~~ for a week. They wouldn't mind. I've got a lot of things to hammer out with Nevinson before I go." / cap

This seemed to satisfy her; she was the easiest person in the world to lie to /o

"Won't you miss me?" he asked in a sudden gay mood.

"Of course I'll miss you," she said defensively, "but if you've got to go back you've got to, haven't you?"

He laughed. "Well, that's true enough!"

He took long walks again, full of a sense of being unseen and secret /o ~~because no one knew what he was up to. Everything looked new to him. Westminster Abbey looked more fascinating than ever before, its vast shadow loomed in the darkness. Some of his walks were in the dead of night, after the buses had stopped and its walls seemed to topple down soundlessly towards you if you stood under them. It was like touching the past all the shops and roads near by, and the lamplights, disappeared, and there was only the giant mediaeval church standing alone in its lawn, and all the noise of London was nothing to it. The square in front was usually deserted when he walked through it, with lights shining between the trees like those of an elegant garden during a fete,~~ →

~~quite grey, like a soft parchment touched by the faintest colours, which would be blown away by a breath. In one of the church booklets he read that a man, Cadwallader, a Victorian, had torn down the old wood and put the hideous mahogany pews in, and there had once been a nice little gallery.~~

→ One evening he walked into the bathroom and saw her standing in front of the mirror naked down to her waist, powdering her breasts.

"What on earth are you doing?" he asked in surprise.

He was about to laugh but she said between her teeth without looking round, "Get out!" Her nipples were hard and unusually dark, protruding from the massive whiteness of her breasts, but perhaps that was an illusion due to the shadows of the bathroom; was she painting them with lipstick, of all things? He left the room meekly; she ~~had~~ ^{had} never spoken to him in such a rasping way. She was out of the house until about eleven that evening, but such was his state of quiet, now he could nurse the secret of his resignation, that he was numb to hurts.

One evening when Dick and Hanni were there Pinkie told him that the pullover he wore ~~was awful all the time these days~~ 'stank to high heaven'. ~~It was the worst thing I ever smelled in my life.~~ He laughed and asked Dick if this was true and there was a pause. Dick considered it and then nodded slowly, without a smile, and Hanni did the same, laughing quickly.

"For God's sake take it off and get another one!" ^{she} ~~Pinkie~~ said.

There followed some talk about smells. ^{she next} ~~Pinkie~~ ranged on Dick and said she ~~had~~ ^{ever} noticed his breath stank when he was nervous; she had

smelled it standing on one side of the kitchen while he was on the other. Dick bit his lip and murmured, looking down, "All right, old girl. That's enough!" and he added, still looking down, trying to smile, "Halitosis runs in the Pollocke family, didn't you know?"

~~"At least Pip never sticks in himself, Pinkie went out in a tight way." "But he will stay in the same clothes for weeks till they're like a sort of pink skin."~~

About this time a new tablet came ^{on the market,} ~~out in the pharmacies,~~ coloured red, which ~~stained the mouth and~~ ^{supposed} was ~~said~~ to remove ~~mouth~~ odours.

There was suddenly a plethora of these tablets in the house, and the four of them would suck them continuously; it stained the tongue and lips a delicate pink, 'the spring-time colour for spring-time people'; ~~the advertisements said~~ there were boxes of them, round and decorated with rose-buds, all over the house, on the tables and mantelpieces.)

~~They also tended to lean over each other more now, as if confident that they no longer bore odorous odours.~~

The strange thing was, Granville noticed, that the more upset his life became, and the more lonely his situation, the more conscious he was of smells, and of the possible smells on his own person. And he wondered if the same applied to the others. All of them had their mouths stained delicately now, which gave them a peculiar puckish and sensual look. He noticed when Hanni was ill that she sat taking her own scent, drawing her own breath into her nose, pushing out her ^w lower lip ever so slightly. Dick did it when he was in a thoughtful and inward mood, his index finger touching his upper lip; it happened when he seemed to be regretting something, to be nursing a lingering, backward-glancing sorrow in him. And Granville noticed that he himself did it when he was pent-up in his feelings and

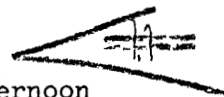
hadn't touched Pinkie for some time; contact with her would be like a release of all his organs, back to their flowing state, and this morbid self-awareness --- that seemed an endemic part of their life --- would depart from him.

He had noticed this self-smelling most strongly at T.I.M. when he went to the office; people would sit at their desks making a little twitch of their lips, or a movement of their finger under their noses; one of the clerks he sometimes had to deal with in the exports-department would actually stop in the middle of a sentence, and a tiny, melancholy and yet fascinated gleam --- hardly noticeable --- would come into his eye as he took his own scent, as if discovering a new intimacy with

himself that was hidden to the outside world --- his unique and solitary possession. *He began to think it was the sign of people leading*
~~Grandie remembered that he had first become aware of this~~
~~stink-consciousness as a thing of words, a phenomenon, depending on a certain~~
~~kind of education, a degree of intelligence, a certain kind of~~
~~his father's~~

~~Dick's farewell treat to him had been put off because of Ham's~~
~~illness, but it now came round, on a Tuesday. They got themselves~~
~~dressed up and set off like a couple of dandies, and sat in the front row~~
~~of the circle. They ate at a French place called 'Le Gourmand', which~~
~~everyone called 'Roman's'. They didn't talk much. Dick had a frail,~~
~~remote look, his eyes delicate. Granville remarked on what good hands~~
~~he had, so pale against the darkness of his suit, and Dick told him he'd~~
~~had them manicured that day at the barber's; it was one of the nicest~~
~~sensations available, and the girl always leaned forward obligingly to~~
~~let him pass down her blouse. He'd tried to date her up but she said,~~

~~the energy. Only a few weeks ago, about the time of his arrival from~~
~~Beulah, he would have been up in arms immediately. But now he just~~
~~smiled and nodded. Dick seemed much more contented in his company~~
~~these days, and confided in him better.~~



A little party developed at Chaworth Road one Saturday afternoon which included the hair-girl; Dick and Hanni suddenly appeared with her;

~~soon after lunch and said that there were a few other people coming, but~~

it made a curious fascinating atmosphere, this sudden afternoon party in the gloomy weather which every now and then let a quick, golden blaze of sunshine through, before the racing clouds closed again. Pinkie wasn't there and ^{Pup} ~~Granville~~ was nervous all the time that she'd come in and assume he'd arranged it all ^{himself; though of course} ~~with the hair-girl; and~~ this increased the excitement for him.

The hair-girl was morose and pale at first, her shoulders hunched-up, and she hardly glanced at him; ~~but~~ she looked at ~~everything else~~ ^{instead,} at all the furniture ^{in the room,} from under her eyebrows, and fingered through the dance-records which had been accumulating lately; she was wearing bright-red, tight slacks with a black shawl ~~like top~~; suddenly she said to him, still without looking at him, only frowning at the coffee-table, "Your wife's uncle's a lord?"; to which Hanni replied on his behalf, "Yes, -- fun, isn't it?" with an ironical smile. Miraculously she and the hair-girl had become 'friends', so Dick said, and Hanni had discovered that there was good to be found even in Arabs, though she qualified this by saying ^{that} the hair-girl had been brought up in London ^{after} ~~after~~

~~===~~

Hanni had been to ^{her} ~~Joy Celestine's~~ flat and found it all neat and 'urban'; no 'night-club tattiness' at all; lace curtains and a nice

persian carpet in the sitting-room, and a real drinks-sideboard; her wardrobe was quite large and didn't stink, in fact the place was cleaner than ~~the house at Hampden Court~~ ^{the Chaworth Road house.}

A dance-record was put on and ~~Grove~~ ^{Pip} brought two bottles of wine out of the kitchen-cupboard which belonged to Pinkie; he was out of money again and looked forward to the superannuation he'd be getting; he worked it out --- two years of overseas-service at five pounds a month, it made quite a tidy sum, enough to live on for a few more weeks, until a further decision presented itself; Pinkie could look after the bills for a bit; he resolved to ask her what the state of her finances was now; perhaps Grove had paid her back; he found he assumed quite naturally that she'd given all her savings to 'Grove Publicity Management Ltd.' He took the two bottles out of the cupboard with a childish sense of theft and realised how afraid of her he was.

The muscular-looking girl came along later with a friend of the hair-girl's, a young man called Larry Vice. Vice wasn't his real name, it turned out. He was called Vice, Hanni said, because he was vice-president of the Marquis, an honorary title; his real name was kept ~~dark~~ as the hair-girl's. She was all eyes the moment he came in; she forgot everything else and kept asking him questions, "You all right, sweetheart?" "Like this place?", "Don't want to go, ~~wine, baby?~~" ^{baby}, "~~Have a nice nice over?~~" "~~What about the wine?~~" "~~What about the wine?~~" "Like this wine?", "Want to play the piano, honey?" "~~Oh, what's wrong?~~" "~~You won't be cold by just that will you?~~" She didn't move from her position on the divan and ~~she~~ ^{he} never once replied to her questions, but stayed leaning against the piano, nodding and smiling, and sipping his wine. He was tall and wild-looking with a hanging jaw and clipped,

flaxen hair, and had his mouth perpetually open in a kind of silent laugh; he never did laugh outright, only made a strange 'Hoo!' noise when anything amused him, which almost everything did. He was someone from show-business, a crooner and tap-dancer, Hanni said. All through the afternoon there was a sustained pattern ~~'Remember, it's a gent'~~ shouted ~~Vice once to something Dick had said, in which the girl shouted across, 'If you're a gent, my husband's a mangle, Vice'~~ to which he shouted back with his own 'Hoo!' ejaculation, 'mangle vice? You mean a mangle wuzel or a mangle, don't you, boy, hey?' ~~and~~

The muscular-looking girl said as little as she had done when ^{Pip} ~~Creaville~~ first met her; she only turned to him once and said in her gentle Cockney voice, "That girl of yours is a peach."

/e.c.

He didn't understand this, since she was looking straight at Hanni/o

"Who?" he asked.

"She looks a peach," she repeated, still looking at Hanni. And after a pause she added, "What a good couple ^{you make."} ~~they make.~~ He glanced at Dick who was sitting two feet away, ~~from them~~, but his face was telling no stories; Hanni also must have heard it, and she ~~also~~ was saying nothing ^{either.}

Later when more wine was brought in ~~from the bar round the corner~~ and the haunting 'Creole Shake' ~~was~~ ^{ed} blaring through the house, the muscular-looking girl went across to Hanni and said, "I think your husband's sweet! What's it like out there in Basrah?" To which Hanni replied without turning a hair, "Oh, it gets a bit hot in the heat, but apart from that it suits us down to the ground/o"

A game started, while Hanni was upstairs getting sandwiches, in which Dick lay on the floor pressing his middle up so that he was balanced

on his heels at one end and the back of his ~~back~~^{head} at the other; the idea was to see how many times he could do it; he wasn't allowed to rest his arms on the floor. Then Joy Celeste ~~came forward~~^{ed} jumping up from the divan, and said, "Half a mo! See if you can carry a passenger, 'Dick!"; whereupon she lowered herself over him so that her body was exactly resting on his while endless Hoo, hoos were being ~~released from the other side of~~^{released from the other side of} ~~bellowed across~~ the room. "This is awfully nice," Dick said quietly, his eyes alight, gazing straight into hers, "just relax and we'll be all set for the joy-ride!" "No, you don't, randy pants!" she cried, keeping her head up and laughing with a deafening bellow which seemed impossible ~~of~~^{from} her tiny, thin figure. "All right, then", Dick said, "here we go!" He lifted his middle slowly, straining, and up she came as well, while the room was silent; then he subsided so that his behind hit the floor sharply, and she was knocked sharply against him; it was well-devised, and he repeated it, up slowly, straining, then down with a wallop. "Hey!" she cried. "This is good!" And she added with another bellowing laugh, "What d'y'er keep ~~in your crick~~^{have} a stick, Dick?" With his eyes closed Dick murmured, "That's my field-marshal's baton, ~~and that's~~, there's one in every corporal's knapsack!"; and he went on raising and lowering himself.

Hanni came back in the middle of it, bearing the sandwiches, and said with a slightly abashed look, "What are you two up to?" And there the game ended; the hair-girl was sweating; ~~she~~^{she} went and had a whispered, confidential talk with Hanni while everyone else attacked the sandwich plate. Vice played the piano, and Dick danced ~~with~~ with the muscular-looking girl, putting his cheek close to hers while she gazed ahead of her with a perfectly vacant expression. When it ~~became~~^{was} dark they didn't switch the lights on and the room was in a dim twilight from the street-lamp outside.

Pinkie came in about midnight and looked thoughtful at first but she never put a damper on ^{my} a party and once a drink was in her hand she ~~was~~ joined in, dancing with Dick. When it was all over Hanni asked ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ wasn't it amusing that 'Alice the girl-with-the-snake-called-Sidney' ~~the~~ (the muscular-looking girl) ~~the~~ had thought she was Mrs. Granville? She hadn't contradicted her because she'd seen a 'closed look' on Dick's face and thought he was up to one of his 'little games'; so she'd kept mum. Dick murmured to this, "Well, you never know, her little mistake might come in useful one day." Pinkie was intrigued: "Who did she think was your wife, then?" she asked Dick. He paused, gazing across at her in a level way, and said, "You," ~~and she was~~

/cap

Afterwards in the bedroom Pinkie said that Dick was showing her 'attentions' of late and she didn't know how seriously to take him; she couldn't believe it, in fact ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ ^{smiled} ~~laughed~~ and said that anything ~~like that~~ was believable coming from Dick. They slept happily; he was glad she'd found a party in progress --- she thought he was responsible for it, and Hanni ~~was~~ let her think so. He tried to see if her nipples were in fact painted with lip-stick ^{when} ~~while~~ she was undressing but as always she turned away from him with a quick demure movement, slipping her night-dress over her head ^{at the same moment} as she slipped her petticoat off. The image of her standing in the bathroom painting herself returned to him in a quick, voluptuous flash, and he burned with fascinated curiosity as to the love she might have given someone else that evening; if he imagined her submitting to love it brought a quick, stabbing pain of desire in him. He could visualise himself pleading with her to continue her infidelity so that he might have this stabbing desire like a white flame licking his

body and consuming him.

He felt so ^{good} ~~easy~~ in his new life that ~~the following week~~ he went over to see the hair-girl in her flat; he hadn't the slightest embarrassment in doing so and asked her on the telephone with a deliberate devil take you laugh if she'd mind inviting him to lunch, she said she'd like to if he came over at once. He'd slept badly and felt horrible, only his mind was quiet and composed, it was working so much apart from his body these days.

~~Her flat~~ ^{it} was hidden behind the Strand and he searched for it with chill feelings; or rather the chill was in his guts and organs, separate from him, not in his frame of mind. ~~As he reached the door he suddenly remembered, for no reason, Maunbury's genial, reflective way of gazing at things; "Will I ever have that?" he asked himself. He put his finger on the door-bell; the flat was in a dingy side street close to a vegetable market, and the staircase was dingy and uncarpeted; but the door itself was that of a luxury-apartment. Maunbury's gaze probably came with the years; he thought, fullness of heart was said to come after a lot of privations, when you needed it. But now, as he waited, ~~waiting for the door to open, just to look and shake his head~~ he felt thin of heart, exposed, and frightfully young, too young to live.~~

~~But~~ ^{she} was there --- a tiny, wan figure in a dark doorway --- and after looking at him briefly she shouted "Hi!" and at once turned her back and rushed into one of the rooms, leaving him to shuffle in and close the door himself.

"Something's cookin'!" she cried from the kitchen, and he went in after her.

/cap

/cap

Everything there gleamed, the pots and unstained saucepans and new plates. He told her what a nice place she seemed to have but as he said it in an uncertain voice, coughing at the same time, she only glanced at him and said nothing, assuming he hadn't spoken at all; there was no paint on her lips; he was aware that she'd made no effort for him at all, and again he asked himself whether he was infatuated with her or not. ~~but the answer was in her face, the thought of her image once or twice at Chaworth Road, changing her a little, making her eyes both sharper and more lavish in expression, and her hair blacker, while depriving her of her jerky walk, but at the same time she remained the same, and her fascination, if he felt it, lay partly in her walk.~~ There

was no scent in the air. She clearly wasn't conscious of him as an admirer; what was their relation, then? ~~Why had she done that?~~ What had happened during their visit to the zoo? Had they warmed to each other? He couldn't remember! ~~What did she expect from him?~~

~~Why had she done that?~~ Why had Dick congratulated him on taking her to the zoo? Surely that indicated something? He tried to keep Pinkie out of his mind; the stabbing pain of desire for her closed his mind to everything and everyone else; he forced himself to show an interest in the hair-girl and even took her hand while she was trying to get a hot frying-pan off the fire, burning her slightly on the elbow and nearly getting a cup-full of steaming fat down his trousers. "Hey, look out!" she screamed, and ^{then,} "Well, fuck that for a lark!"

h.p.

He remembered 'dad' for the first time and wondered if that deafening 'fuck' had travelled to his paternal ears. He ~~laughed~~ sheepishly ~~and~~ told her that water was good for a burn, 'contrary to usual belief', to which she said, "Yak-er-ti-yak-yak-yak-!" and put her tongue out at him

while she grabbed a little pat of butter and rubbed it on her elbow.

She told him she'd ^{been} ~~only got~~ up half-an-hour ~~before~~ as she'd had a late night at the club; he glanced in at the bedroom and saw that the bed was still unmade; the light outside depressed him; ~~the~~ low, dazzling clouds ^{lay} ~~were still there,~~ close to the roof-tops. ~~There were lace curtains across the wide windows of the sitting room, as Hanni had said, and even a carpet on the wall behind the davenport.~~ He asked whether her father was in' and she said, moving swiftly from the kitchen to the room where they were going to eat, "Are you crazy?" He said, "Why ha^s he moved?" And the reply was, "Do you know what you're talking about?"

Then she became charming; he felt sick and giddy; she asked him in a small voice if he'd ^{please} help her carry the food in, there wasn't much but if he didn't mind a 'scrap lunch' there was enough. He gazed at her; she was preoccupied and ruffled, the hair ~~all~~ round her face, uncombed; ~~and~~ there was an anxious look in her eyes; they were screwed-up painfully. She murmured, "I only see dad when he's asleep." She hurried out of the room again, her hair lifting gently off her back.

There were a few potatoes, some scraps of tinned ham and cheese; also she had to hurry up to be at ^a rehearsal. She ate fast and made her deafening, clapping laugh once or twice when she remembered the party and how she ^{had} ~~was~~ lain on top of Dick; "How is old randy-pants?" she asked him. He said, "Working hard," and nothing more; he found he was in an irritable frame of mind. She made no effort to serve him and he forked his ^{sad} way through the tiny meal. ~~gloomily~~

She said that Hanni had arranged the Saturday afternoon party ~~quite deliberately~~ as a ~~blunt~~ 'rebuff' to Pinkie; his ears pricked up at once --- "What do you know about Pinkie?" he asked in a protective way.

But she was unaware of anything sharp in his voice. She said, "That party was to show your wife where 'she got off!'" Hanni was determined, she added, to try and do something for Granville in his present 'ignominious' life; he was astonished at how quickly and fluently she spoke, like an educated woman; the words 'rebuff' and 'ignominious' surprised him. Then she fell into a quiet vein of talk; she'd become friends with Hanni, she said, and now she knew better what his 'position' was. He could hear Hanni's voice in hers; she was certain of her information as if she'd lived through it herself, and she smoked her cigarette a little like Hanni, narrowing her eyes. He wanted to ask her what she knew about his 'position' but she went on talking, this time about Hanni: Hanni had told Dick ^{she} wasn't going to stand the sort of treatment from him that Pinkie 'handed out' to ~~Granville~~ ^{Pip}; she had more pride, and he'd better start revising his ways soon!

10/21/21

She suddenly jumped up from the table and dashed next door, where he heard her telephoning someone. ~~She said in the phone: "You know the guy who fills the spots of little ladies that's... and made her... laugh; the subject was a 'big man' in the night-club world who had to be treated nicely; he might get her out of the Kaaba company into a show all her own, ~~where she could have a little dignity,~~ and therefore would the person she was talking to mind if 'we called it off for tonight?"~~

1 cap

~~Then~~ she returned to the table preoccupied and closed to him, an anxious frown on her face; her shoulders were hunched timidly as when she ^{had} ~~called~~ ^{at Chaworth Road} ~~with the others~~ on Saturday afternoon, making her look like a little girl. There was a hissing sound in the kitchen and he started, thinking it was 'dad', but it was the kettle boiling for coffee and she clattered out again. The moment coffee was over she jumped up again and grasped

1 cap

hold of her hair, looking round for grips to tie it up with, and said without looking at him that she was about an hour late and had to dash ^o a petty mood swept over him and he shouted, "Damn! Why the hell couldn't you let me know that before you invited me over?" He was ~~quite~~ surprised at himself; ~~usually he would just have watched her getting ready in a passive state of mind.~~ ^{and} He expected her to turn round to him in surprise, ^{/e.c.} insulted, but she did nothing of the kind; she ran next door, five or six hair-grips between her teeth, and began humming; and from next door she called out to him, "Come in here, sweetheart, and watch me dress!" He thought this ~~was~~ a change of tune and went in ~~the other way~~. She was combing out her long hair, standing near a dressing table, bending down to see herself; he sat ~~on~~ on the bed while she told him that this 'big man' was taking her out to tea followed by drinks and that she had to look a lady, which was easier in the cool weather than the hot because her arm-pits seemed to have 'automatic douches' inside them the way they sweated ^o. And 'they' didn't like to see you sweat, unless it was between your legs, and then, boy, they weren't so keen on you being a lady ^o. She spoke as if she hated the 'big man' but at the same time flinched from him and would do anything for him.

The idea entered his head that he ought to ^{play the big man himself} ~~be~~ if his visit was ~~to be useful and~~ ^{is to be} not a shameful and empty episode ^o ~~in which he filled the long dog-cot, he must do, but the man was working so much apart from him -- a little voice making its steady exclamation for his head.~~ The flat felt lonely and desolate to him; while she combed her hair the melancholy, dazzling light poured in through the window behind her, and every object in the room looked cold and bare. He didn't feel the slightest inclination to touch her but his mind persisted, and

when she ~~moved across the room to take a dress out of the wardrobe and~~ began slipping off her dressing gown he pulled her gently towards him with a laugh, to lighten the misery of it, and kissed her on the cheek; she leaned towards him stiffly, not as surprised or anxious as he expected her to be; then she tried to push away from him by levering her arms against his shoulders --- "Hey, I'll be late, sweetheart! Now come on!" But suddenly she laughed and kissed him full on the lips; he had a totally different impression of her for an instant, as someone soft; the skin of her mouth actually changed for a moment, yielding and warm where it had been scaly before, pursed and withdrawn from him. "Why, you dirty old man!" she ~~cried~~^{mutmured,} But once again it was, "Hey, look at that time, you'll lose me my job!" She said it in a jarring tone, her lips hard again, trying to push herself away from him. She managed to break free and ran into the bathroom, where she remained for a few minutes washing her face; he glanced in and saw her wiping her armpits with a towel and spraying something; he called out to her, "What are you spraying?" and she shouted, ~~without the slightest hesitation,~~ her voice echoing in the tiled bathroom, "Sweat-neutraliser, honey!" When she returned she wanted to make the bed and told him, "Get up, gee-gee!", which he did; but as she pulled the top sheet off he again made a sally towards her and this time pulled her over with an awkward movement and they both came down in a sprawl on the bed. "Hey, be careful!" She paused: "Dad'll be in!" "What?" he said, lifting his head. ~~Dad's again~~ "Yeah," she ~~cried~~^{said,} "he comes in round about now!" But he was less diffident of 'dad' now and remained lying on top of her; there was a sharp clang of the bed-springs under them and she tried to struggle free; he laughed again, this time genuinely; she tried to tickle him but he pinned her hands down; he was beginning to

enjoy it. To his surprise she had a rough pullover on under her dressing gown, and its flimsy little strands were worrying his nostrils and mouth, but he dared not move in case she wriggled free; she was quick and muscular. She appealed to him more quietly, "Now, then, sweetheart, fair's fair." Her hair fell like a great black shadow over the sheet and she looked into his eyes meditatively for the first time as if trying to find out who he was from a great distance; he had the sensation that it was the first time she ^{had} looked at him; she had her head a little to one side, like an animal puzzled. She moved sideways and he took this as a movement of desire, though he ~~still~~ felt ^{none} ~~nothing~~ himself; the only pleasure he was aware of was from her hair, its endless black shadow and its deep smell; apart from that he was dead of heart, and lay there a dead weight on her, and only stayed there for fear of being ridiculous if he got up.

Suddenly, getting angry, a dark shadow seeming to flit across her face and twist its expression for a moment, she made another heave; ^{meanwhile} ~~she~~ he plunged his face towards her, trying to kiss her again, but with such speed that their noses collided with a painful thud; they sat up with a springing movement, nursing their faces. "Jesus!" she crooned; behind his hand he asked if hers was bleeding and she shook her head and then took the chance of getting off the bed.

She was again dressing, fixed the grips in her hair with an extraordinary speed like a machine; she flung her dressing-gown into the wardrobe, pulled off her sweater, stepped into some high-heeled shoes and put a flowery, loose-sleeved dress on which made her look frai^l and thin, with her head and hands and legs peeping out of it; she asked him if it was 'aristocratic' enough and he said it looked 'on the big side', but she didn't wait to listen to him and ran next door to get her bag. He

remembered that her chest had felt ~~extraordinarily~~ ^{unbelievably} hard underneath him, and that her hips had been sharp, as if they had thin armour round them. She had painted her lips, a bright, savage mark across her face; ~~and~~ otherwise her face was drawn, flat and sallow, made more so by the red.

He happened to glance at the mantelpiece for the first time and noticed a quaint cylindrical bottle with an object dimly shining inside, floating in liquid, like a piece of skin; he went closer and to his astonishment saw ~~that it was~~ the embryo of a tiny child, no bigger than a man's fist, the umbilical chord ^{d.} floating away, waving lightly in the water as the hair-girl thumped through the flat, disturbing it. The embryo was a few months old from the womb, its tiny legs bent, and its hand held up to its mouth, with the tiniest suggestion of a thumb. When she came in he asked, pointing at it, "What's that?"

All her haste disappeared at once and she approached the mantelpiece softly; yes, she said, it was hers; didn't he think it was like her? It was a 'little boy'; she knew he would have been a darling! It was Larry Vice's! Couldn't he see Larry's face there; he only had to look closely, put his face right up to the glass and he'd see?

He did so and, indeed, there was the shadow of Vice's hanging jaw, and the shadow of his silent laugh, combined with the darkness of the hair-girl's eyes. He raised himself up again, not knowing what to say. She had to 'get rid' of him, she said, she ~~hadn't been able to~~ ^{couldn't} afford a child, ~~and~~ she had rehearsals all day; she ^{had} cried all night after ~~wards~~ ^{the operation;} every morning she came in and said hullo to him, and she never went to bed at night without imagining he was at his prayers, bent up in that way.

They left the flat and he said good-bye ~~to her~~ at a bus-stop in the Strand; as she got on the bus she gave him a little glance as if to

confirm what she'd told him and to underline the sadness; she made a hardly perceptible nod, with a serious look in her eyes, as the bus sped away. At night he thought of the embryo again and imagined the knife cutting the chord; Pinkie was at his side, already asleep; he put his arm round her; her cheeks were flushed with health and her stomach was just beginning to swell; ~~she'd only been sick once or twice~~, he had a placid sensation of thanksgiving, that the child was coming further and further to the light, while her breasts swelled, waiting for the birth, without fear of a knife; nothing else was important.

Next day Hanni congratulated him with a chuckle on 'penetrating' to Joy's flat, which only Vice had done; Joy had phoned her and said that ^{Pip}~~Granville~~ certainly 'knew a trick or two'; ~~also the hair girl~~ ^{she} had put clean sheets on the bed that morning, and there'd be 'extra laundry' this week. The inference was clear; they'd slept together, and ^{Pip}~~Granville~~ said nothing to contradict it.

Dick ^{was}~~had~~ also ~~been~~ told, and he invited ^{Pip}~~Granville~~ for a drink that evening; he said he was 'relieved', with a little twinkle in his eye; ~~and~~ a lot of fun was in store for them both! ^{Pip}~~Granville~~ asked Hanni afterwards what Dick meant by saying he was relieved, and she said they were both glad he was 'standing up for himself at last'; ridiculously, a tremor of pity for Pinkie went through him when she said this, though he nodded with a laugh; he was getting into the habit of making an ineffectual little laugh nowadays, and he wondered how long it would be before his mouth looked like Vice's. There wasn't real amusement in the laugh but on the other hand it wasn't hollow; it stated a general rippling attitude to life, of detached frivolity; particular amusement wasn't necessary, it seemed to

say.

Pinkie also got hint of the news; it came to her that the hair-girl had 'fallen head over heels' for him and that he was next in line after Vice'. When they were alone in the music-room she asked him, a frown flickering painfully on her brow while she gazed at a point half-way between them on the floor, her lips tight together, "How is your girlfriend, by the way?" He was confused and had the impulse to laugh under her gaze; it was like being tickled, ~~and reminded him of the occasion on the night of the arrival when she had asked for the dried lemon and had stood crowding down at him from the door while she had fiddled about in his suitcase.~~ He asked her who she meant by 'girlfriend'. "Oh, well," was the reply, "if you don't know who your various girlfriends are, I'm sure I don't!"

19.ital

She stalked up to the kitchen; he felt an odd nausea. Wondering if his own jealous rages had made her feel the same, he resolved not to indulge them again even if the energy ^{was available.} ~~came back to him.~~ It was a grim nausea at the pit of his stomach, ~~like being caught in family.~~ He wanted

to do something immensely free; was that ^{how} ~~not~~ ^{Rad} she ~~felt~~ ^{felt} when she ~~suddenly~~ ^{suddenly} dashed out of the house that morning straight from his bed?

19.ital

He went upstairs and began ^{taking the mike out of her,} imitating everything she ^{had just} said ~~to him~~ in a burlesque way while she cooked the evening meal; ~~"By the way, how is your girlfriend?" he said, facing her playfully, and when he went through the words as if they were a part in a play, advising her how to stand, where to place herself,~~ he thawed her out quickly, and she laughed.

She said that Elizabeth had rung up about ^{an} the annual ball, ~~wanted them to go to~~ 'the most fabulous and fashionable thing' that happened in the year/0 She ^{had} ~~already~~ got ^{for them all} the tickets and it was to be a 'Tail-and-

Hoof' ball; ~~that was what it was called~~ You had to come wearing a tail / e.e.
 of some kind --- it might be a donkey or a lion, an elephant, a horse ---
 and hoofs. Granville asked if the hoofs were obligatory, supposing you
 want as a lion or elephant, for instance; and she said she thought so, yes.
 She added that she wanted him to go as a faun, with a little fluffy tail
 and pointed ears; ~~hoofs would be necessary for that~~ though
 she hadn't worked out the details yet.

What would she go as? She hadn't made up her mind but it would
 be something that hid 'a huge belly'. ["It isn't huge at all!" he said. *hip.*
 "You can hardly see it!" [She felt enormous, she replied, but didn't mind *hip.*
 it if a nice-looking child came into the world; he asked with a laugh
 if she thought it was going to look like him. She blinked and said
 quietly, "Well, one always hopes so, doesn't one?"

There was a problem of where they were to get their tails, ~~for the~~
~~best~~ and Pinkie decided against trying to make them herself; she would
 go to a theatrical costumers. She then announced casually ~~that~~ she broke
 two eggs into a bowl that Grove was coming round for a drink the following
 evening and he, trying to answer with the same casual air, said, "Oh, good!",
 so loudly that he seemed to be crying out with pain; they had the light
 on, because of the gloomy weather, and it glittered for a moment in her
 eyes as she turned to glance at him quickly; but she seemed not to notice
 anything unusual in his tone. [There followed a burst of relief for him
 that Grove ^{couldn't after all be} ~~wasn't after all~~ intimate with her, since ^{in that case} ~~it that had been the~~
~~she~~ she clearly wouldn't invite him round/0 At the same time, together
 with this relief, ^{he felt} ~~there was~~ a little spasm of disappointment, touched with
 the pain of yearning and desire, that she was still his own, ^{his} ~~the~~ flesh,
 and hadn't been transported into mystery by another man's touch; it made

her look dull for a moment, standing by the stove; her body ~~was~~ lost its glow for him; its secret light inside, of the forbidden sexual touch, had gone; he was aware even of resentment --- how could she stand in the bathroom putting lipstick on her nipples for no purpose; ~~or make it seem she was doing so~~ how could she snatch the mystery away like this? And he was to have a child in the ordinary circumstances of family-life; how disgusting! It would go on, year after year, the two (or three) of them ~~stuck~~ together in a tiny house, revolving round each other; and she ^{had} had this remarkable offer from fate --- from 'Grove' --- which she'd turned down, of a journey into the jungles of voluptuous and forbidden touch! And what were Dick's 'attentions' to her? Were they only polite and frivolous? Was he going to be robbed of them as well?

There was no wine in the house and he asked if she'd been to the bank recently; she said, no, she hadn't a sou/o. So he was without wine, without a job, without a woman/o. Just a faithful wife! It was the flattest evening he could remember since his arrival; the trembling he'd done in the last two or three months appeared to him ecstatic and desirable now.

But the following afternoon he had his wish, and the familiar trembling seized him as the hour of Grove's arrival drew nearer. He sat quivering in the kitchen. Hanni and Dick were to come as well. Grove arrived before them, smiling at the door. There was something so boyish and friendly about ^{him,} ~~Grove~~ the moment he presented himself downstairs, that ^{Pip's} ~~Grove's~~ trembling went at once and he found to his surprise that the other man was in a most peculiar way a solace to him; he felt no ^{to} restrictions on his own behaviour; nor was there any need to explain himself. It was like having his own brother in the house; he at once thought of what they

were going to do together, not immediately that evening, but in general, in the future, as their friendship developed. Grove gave off the promise of future activities --- ^{these hung} ~~they were all~~ round him, like a fresh scent. A party might develop, he might go off somewhere, he might get tickets for the theatre (someone he knew --- just come back from a big tour) --- you didn't know what might not happen; but one thing was clear, that you ^{would} ~~be~~ included; his presence gave you the ^{silent} assurance that you ^{it all} wouldn't be left out. He was available; even his fixed appointments, when he talked about them, seemed to have something ~~soft~~ pliable about them. ~~They wouldn't mean him dashing off in the middle of some thing~~

~~He was available for people --- that was his passion.~~ He was available for people --- that was his passion. All this ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ was aware of in the first few seconds of seeing him again, and the ^{energies} ~~fire~~ that had lain dormant in him for the last few ^w weeks flooded back solely under Grove's influence. And 'Grove' was ^a ~~the~~ name he'd been afraid of!

At the street-door Grove ~~said~~ said to him, "Hullo, there! We met on the stairs once, remember? You look ^{ed} miserable!"

Granville stared at him for a moment, unable to collect himself: "Did I?" he asked in a helpless way; and at once Grove was in the house, as if he'd been there a twelve-month.

Hanni and Dick followed a few minutes later, and they all greeted each other like ^{old pals,} ~~familiar~~ and settled at once into chatter in the music-room. He remembered Grove as deathly pale but couldn't imagine how he ^{had} ~~got~~ got the impression; he was quite brown in the face, with slightly flushed cheeks, and his eyes had a keen, healthy light! He still had masses of shining, black hair, and ^{Pip's} ~~Granville's~~ first impression of the back of his neck, with soft, curly hair like a baby's, was true; and his nose

was not unlike Pinkie's, small and fine, but sharper. He pulled off his jacket at once; Hanni smiled and asked him why he always liked to show off his 'wasp-waist', to which Grove only laughed in a good-natured way; it was quite chilly in the room, and the electric fire was on; Hanni raged him gently, speaking between tight lips, and asked was it true that he wore a corset? He said quickly, "Only on my transvestist nights!", and turned at once to Pinkie, giving her a little smile. There was a certain pallor in his black eyes; Granville noticed it again; it was in the nature of his gaze, which was always beyond people even when he looked at them in an intimate fashion, as just now with Pinkie. It wasn't that his eyes passed quickly over objects or were superficial in their attention, on the contrary, he was in the habit of gazing long at things, but he seemed to be looking at a vague point behind and beyond people, even while he looked at them fixedly; nor was it that he was reflecting about them; he hadn't reflective eyes, and his attention rarely strayed from people; he seemed to be looking at something universal behind people, where there was no colour. Also his eyes were sad. He kept up a volley of jolly talk, leaning against the mantelpiece; his fingernails were bitten and nervous, ^{Pip}~~Granville~~ noticed.

"When are you off again?" Grove asked him / ~~gazing at him~~ with his universal charm.

Pinkie answered for him: "It should have been about a fortnight ago."

But Grove didn't look at her, only gave him another polite glance and said, "Oh," non-committally.

Pinkie's interjection quite took ^{Pip}~~Granville~~ aback; he really had assumed that she, like Dick, had overlooked the expiry of his leave; he'd

thought life had become a dream for them as well!

Whenever Grove joked with her she smiled in a tired and slightly exasperated way, ~~ast~~with a boisterous child; this, too, was to ~~Grove's~~ ^{Pip's} satisfaction; it showed that they didn't share a real intimacy. Later they all went along to the Jazz-club ~~and~~ ~~in~~ in ^{l.c.} Islington, and there ~~Grove~~ ^{Pip} saw that, on the contrary, she was ~~all~~ ^{all} ~~in~~ ^{property} Grove's ~~property~~; the familiar contained trembling started in him, which gave the evening a tone of forbidden excitement as strong as in the pre-Meedham days. ~~When Grove asked her for a dance she seemed to have no power of refusing; she got up in a tired way, even unwillingly, and leaned against him while she danced; Grove now had a different explanation for her not smiling at Grove's jokes.~~

But still he couldn't believe that their relation approached the intimacy he ~~shared~~ shared with her himself. Whenever Grove made a movement towards the tiny dance-floor she got up in obedience; the others were remote for her; he watched Hanni ask her a question and get no reply.

There was a hopeless, flickering look in Pinkie's eyes; she was floating in misery, it seemed --- but this was ~~a~~ ^{her} tragic mask, she was dramatising ~~her~~ herself; there was happiness and thrill underneath. Grove, on the other hand, paid equal attention to Hanni, not that the relation between them was particularly good. She looked at him in a level way and spoke to him disbelievingly; 'I know your game', she seemed to say. This hurt Grove's pride and he tried to joke all the more with her; but his antics fell flat with her. ~~Grove~~ ^{Pip} and Dick laughed --- though Dick in a reserved way.

~~Once when Pinkie and Grove were dancing~~ ^{During} an unusually slow ~~number~~ ^{dance} he ^{h/p.} saw Grove lean over and kiss her neck softly, whereupon an old giddiness

took hold of him, like the blood suddenly rushing up to his head, and he had to grip himself tight in his chair to ^{keep his balance.} ~~become normal again~~ Pinkie had her eyes closed in the tragic expression and her mouth was trembling; she seemed to see herself under the gaze of numberless people who were following her tragic development with sympathy. He found he felt an irritated anger against her but not against Grove at all; about Grove there was something so disarming and boyish that you couldn't take offence. His kiss seemed universal like his charm; dancing with him was like dancing with anyone, that was the impression --- there were no narrow interests contained in him; the dancing was a gesture beyond people, at the same time as it contained and enveloped Pinkie; ^{his} ~~Grove's~~ lips weren't personal, they didn't make a predatory assault. There was no interested, personal thrust behind his actions. When they sat down again Grove kept his arm round her, with a glint of universal satisfaction at the back of his eyes. Meanwhile ^{Pip} ~~Grove~~ whistled to himself and made deliberate conversation with Dick and Hanni, trying to make the arm on Pinkie's shoulder seem an ordinary thing; there was only a telltale, livid flush on his face, and his lips were puffy and quivering. His eyes bulged out of his head. There was no drink, only lemonade and Coca-Cola. He and Dick decided to slip out to a pub, ~~to the pub~~.

"What the hell are you up to?" Dick suddenly said to him in an alarmed way as soon as they were outside.

^{Pip} ~~Grove~~ knew what he meant at once --- he ^{had} found out about his resignation!

But then Dick was surprisingly cool. There was even a twinkle in his eye, perhaps of admiration. "Do you know what you're doing, you boob? I hope you do!"

"I don't know what I'm doing, no!" ^{Pip}~~Cronville~~ told him with an obstinate pout. "I haven't any idea!" And then when they were standing at the bar, after their beer was in front of them, he said, "Buy me a whisky."

When it arrived he tipped it into his beer with a reckless motion, while Dick watched him.

"What are you going to live on?"

"Oh, there'll be enough for a couple of weeks or so!" ^{Pip}~~Cronville~~ said.

"Then what?"

"I'll see!"

"Well, I admire your guts!" Dick said with a little breathless chuckle, giving him ^a~~the same~~ look of intimacy combined with curious interest. ~~and training school years before, yet now, Cronville thought, they knew hardly more about each other than in those days.~~

He didn't deny that his resignation had taken 'guts'; he needed all the good opinion he could scavenge. What did Pinkie feel about it? Dick wanted to know.

"I haven't told her."

This impressed Dick; he laughed and said he'd like to see her face when he broke the news ^{to}

The drink put ^{Pip}~~Cronville~~ in ~~quite~~ a devil-may-care mood for a few moments and when they were back in the hall he danced gaily with Hanni.

Grove began telling stories about his powers over women; that very day, he said, he'd been sitting on a park bench and the 'most fabulous' woman he ^{had} ever seen ~~had~~ passed him and throw^ed a note at his feet, asking him to come up to her hotel-room.

Dick intervened quickly, a sharp look on his face, and said,

"What number?"

"What do you mean?" Grove asked with a smile.

"The number of the room, tell me quick!"

"Four hundred and ninety seven!"

They all laughed, including Grove.

"A large hotel!" said Hanni.

Pinkie smiled in a lazy fashion and without looking at Grove extended her hand and murmured, "Where's the slip of paper?"

"In my other coat!"

She took him gently under the chin and pulled his face round towards hers: "You bloody liar," she said slowly, with the same smile, and then let his face go.

Another story was that he'd once had a job as an insurance agent and a woman he'd called on ~~him~~ found him so attractive that she almost fainted and had to sit down, all without saying a word.

"What did you do?" Dick asked.
"Everything that duty required."
~~"I talked to her reasonably."~~

/ Ital

"Yes," Pinkie said with a chuckle. "I can imagine you doing that!"

~~Grove replied that as a matter of fact she did have more to say to her than that, after all he wasn't all that much an Englishman.~~

The impression was that these stories, invented or not, weren't about him in any particular way; so ^{that} they weren't real boasting; nor did they mean vanity; ^{they were} ~~it was~~ again a kind of universal gesture, with a vein of sadness, ~~and~~ perhaps ancient ^{sadness,} ~~tiredness~~ underneath.

/ Ital

On the way back Grove walked ahead of ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ with his arm round Pinkie, kissing her hair now and then. ^{He} ~~Granville~~ wanted to rush up and tear them apart; he blinked and felt giddy, unable to walk properly.

Anger subsided; then it rose again, and went down again. All the while, as they walked along, Hanni held him in conversation, talking quietly; it was impossible to tell from her expression how much she saw of his feelings at the moment --- how much he hid them, as well. ~~Was he like any other person walking along the street? How far was his own face composed when the anger rose in him, he was on the point of striding forward and tearing Pinkie away, but then he died as quickly and he concentrated his attention on making steady remarks to Dick and Hanni, and to repeat these remarks afterwards she couldn't have done it.~~

When ~~the others had gone and~~ he was alone with Pinkie ^{again} he said ~~to~~ ~~her~~ in a hissing way, "Are you sure that's my baby, you filthy bitch?" She asked him what he meant by 'filthy bitch'; this was in a controlled voice; the tragic misery --- which had been soft --- had left her face, and a set look, touched with hardness, replaced it. He asked her, couldn't she 'behave' even when he was sitting in front of her, walking behind her --- did she have to turn the knife in the wound? Why didn't she made a clean sweep, not keep him dangling in the middle of this ambiguous situation, one man's wife and another man's mistress? He prevented himself raging at her; he held himself back, remembering the nausea she ^{had} made him feel when she ~~asked~~ asked him about the hair-girl; he refused to be responsible for creating nausea in her; he would ^{never} ~~set~~ limit her freedom ~~to~~.

But at the same time that was exactly what he wanted to do. Free, she was an insult to him; imprisoned --- dull! He said to her, "Surely i can't be just an empty thing for you? I must have a heart like other people, don't you think so? How can you bear to do that sort of thing?" He meant accepting Grove's embraces while in front of him. But she asked with a pale face, her mouth open, "What sort of thing?" And now he found

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he couldn't bring himself to mention it; though he knew that she knew he'd witnessed it, he had to treat it as a closed subject which might not have taken place; he allowed it to fall into the dream-zone of so much else that had happened in the last two or three months.

He hardly slept that night, aching for someone to talk to. Dick had a talk with him next day, trying to persuade him to go back to the firm, but ~~Greenwell~~^{he} shrugged ~~everything~~^{it} off. How did he like Grove?, Dick asked him. He said, ~~yes~~^{yes} "I liked him!" Dick said ~~that~~^{yes} 'old Grove' was an amusing fellow but he certainly carried a 'big load of corn' around on his shoulders.

That evening after Dick had gone, ~~Greenwell~~^{he} found some nude photographs of Pinkie in one of his own drawers; he imagined ~~they~~^{Grove} must have ~~been~~^{them} taken ~~by Grove~~. One showed her with her breasts thrust out in a gently challenging and yet submissive way; one of her nipples was pointed straight into the camera, dark and round, and he wondered if that was why she had painted them; another showed her from behind, low down, ~~with her~~ ~~peeping round with a downward glance~~, her flank round and white, ~~one of~~ ~~her breasts just visible~~. As he looked from one to the other his legs ~~were~~^{ed} trembled so violently that he almost toppled over. But still his mind was clear, working in its thin and satisfied way, apart from him, and though he was troubled he was also intrigued --- and thrilled (but he took this for granted now) --- and perhaps, slightly, with a fierce edge, amused; this thin self went on so much in separation from him that he had to concentrate hard ~~something~~ before he knew what he felt.

When she came in he told her he ~~had~~^{had} offered his resignation and would be staying on in London in view of the baby. She didn't take it very seriously, contrary to Dick's expectation. The first thing she said was,

"Well, I hope to Christ we'll have money enough to live on." Oh, he replied, he'd find something soon. She even seemed happy that he was staying; "That means we can have lots of fun this winter," she said.

"Don't you care about the Basrah office?" Dick asked him when they were together again. To delay an answer ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ asked what he meant.

"Well, do you mind leaving it like that," Dick went on, "without winding it up properly? It must be in chaos! There's been nobody there for a couple or three months!" He added that it wasn't ^{would} what he ~~could~~ expect of

Granville; he ^{had} ~~was~~ always known ^{as} him ~~as~~ thorough and hard-working. Didn't it offend ~~him~~ his sense of tidiness to leave the job in this way, apart from throwing away ~~his~~ his years of training, and his references? ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~

answered that he was worried, yes, but only ^{is} about Mohammed; that was all.

Dick asked him who that was, unless he meant the Prophet himself? ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ said, "My assistant out there."

"Why don't you fly out there and wind things up?" Dick asked him suddenly.

It was a strange question and ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ gave him a look. After a pause he said, "Why, is that what they want at the office?"

Dick turned away from him: "God knows. I haven't spoken to anyone."

But he left ^{Pip} ~~Granville~~ with the impression that he had.

~~He told Dick that Nevinsan hadn't replied to his letter of resignation yet, to which Dick said that this was 'quite in order' as no contract had been broken, he'd only failed to sign a new one. Granville murmured that he thought Nevinsan would have taken more interest in his work than that, but then, he added, "I imagine much that isn't true."~~

Elizabeth sent ^{two} ~~two~~ tickets for the Tail-and-Hoof ball, and he hired a tail and a pair of cloven hoofs for thirty shillings; Pinkie decided

to go as a 'devil-ess' and wore ^a forked tail and a horn with pointed ears; cloven hoofs were too much, she said, ~~she~~ went in high heels. All legs would be uncovered, she'd heard; she wore a pair of tights, with a blouse tucked into them, and her tail swished about behind her, attached by a belt she usually used when she had the curse.

Most attention she concentrated on ^{Pip} ~~Clockwork~~, when the night came. She said she wanted him as her own 'faun' tonight; and Hanni remarked that if only he kept his mouth shut more and just ^{oo} ~~looked~~ round him in a mysterious fashion he'd make a 'first-class faun' and all the girls would 'want to rape' him. Pinkie nodded as if this was more than a light remark; she busied herself smoothing his hair down at the sides so as to make it like a faun's head; she made him wear a pair of her tights, darker than hers and all over these she painted faun-like hair; his arms and neck had to be bare; he must wear a shirt ^{of} ~~she got out of a trunk which was~~ a roughly faun colour, and she cut the collar off, then the sleeves; she painted red lips all over him, on his arms, his chest and his stockinged legs; and finally the cloven hoofs ^e ~~went~~ on.

"I wish you were like that every day," she said to him. And she ~~then~~ started on his face; by the use of mascara she gave him long, faunlike eyes, and his lips a touch of red; the eyes interested Hanni most and she helped by making them even longer, curling his eyelashes with an instrument she always carried in her cosmetics-bag. To their surprise she was coming to the ball as well, but later; Clockwork was taking her; he never missed anything fashionable, she said. She hadn't started dressing yet; she hated fancy dress, she said, and had to work herself up to it by drinking a little beforehand; Clockwork would be coming round to Chaworth Road with a bottle of whisky and she would see what the mood brought her by way of

ideas. Pinkie looked delicate, her eyes small and glittering, as usual when she dressed up; she took no pains to hide her slightly swollen stomach; she was ~~was~~ proud of it, she said. She stalked around on her high heels, skirtless, her tail protuding ~~around~~ at the back; her pointed ears kept coming off and Hanni clipped them on, ~~for her~~ after much trial and error, with paper-clips and ear-rings, ~~the paper-clips and ear-rings which~~ ~~with paper-clips and ear-rings~~ Her eyes flickered with nervousness and whenever she looked at him she chuckled or leaned forward and kissed him; she said it would be her one night with a faun, and she meant to enjoy it.

~~The evening was wild and boisterous, and~~ ^{they} ^{certainly} let themselves go ^{with} /n/p/cap
 with ^a vengeance. He danced with a young woman called Helen ~~she had~~ dark, greasy hair down to her shoulders, ^{framing her} ~~and a~~ deathly-pale face; her nickname, apparently, was Hell. Every ^{body} called her that. She kept her eyes closed all the time ~~she danced~~ and whirled round blindly, holding on to him with ~~one~~ one hand. Her head was lowered so that her hair fell in two long strands round her cheeks, sometimes hiding ~~the whole of~~ her face ^{entirely,} and she made a moaning noise under her breath, smiling in the strangest way; whenever ^a ~~the~~ dance came to an end she woke up slowly and would smile her thanks at him and drift off at once, then would appear in front of him again, her eyes already closed, the moment the music started again; once she dragged him off to the bar and shouted (to a group of people who showed no sign of hearing her), ~~only looking at her in a mild way,~~ "It's Hester ^{Alderste's} ~~faun!~~ faun!"; she swung round as she said this, smiling in her strange way, and, having a glass of something in her hand swished most of it in ^{it} his face and over his bare neck. He decided not to notice ~~this~~ and, to

save himself embarrassment, tried to behave in as blind a way as she, drifting off back to the ^{main} ~~dancing~~ room, dabbing a handkerchief over his face. Occasionally someone bellowed at her while she danced, "Hell!" and she waved her hand blindly; ~~and~~ once a young man with immense shoulders and a red, moist mouth strode on to the dance floor and thrust his hand into hers with, "Hell! It's Giles! You look wonderful! Where's Cerberus?", and without getting a reply strode off again, a fixed expression on his face; he was dressed for dinner and had no tail or hoofs.

Hell had drunk half a bottle of gin before coming; Pinkie, ~~was~~ ^{had} ~~known her off and on for a long time,~~ said she ~~was~~ ^{had} 'passed out' downstairs but was always quick to recover; once she'd passed out with a full bottle of brandy in her hand and when a young man tried to get it out of her grip she woke up and swiped him across the face with it, then passed out again. She had a boy-friend known as Cerberus because he was always 'at the gates of Hell'; ~~he had 'three heads' because he seemed to be looking in all directions at once; he had the~~ ^{his pet} habit ~~of~~ ^{was} going to the wrong house for a party and staying there all night. He had a mother universally called 'moms' who sent him a packet of fifty pound-notes every month ~~which~~ which he was in the habit of 'handing out to people' when he got them; 'moms' appeared in London rarely but when she did she had a 'three-day drunk'; once she'd vomited her false teeth down the lavatory and pulled the chain --- that was in Belgravia on a Sunday morning, and by the time she ~~was~~ got in touch with the ~~sanitary~~ ^{sanitary} people ^{to fish them out of the sewer} the teeth were just passing under Hyde Park Corner; they ~~sanitary people got them back~~ ^{were quite} unharmed, and the joke ~~was~~ ^{'cutting into} circulated afterwards ~~was~~ that 'moms' had been ~~putting her nose in~~ ^{putting her nose in} other people's business again'.

Hell ~~had~~ ^a come as a nanny-goat with a little fluffy tail which was

only partly there now, and a flimsy white beard was stuck under her chin so that sometimes when she had her eyes closed she looked like an Armenian priest. The ^{ed in} ~~dancing room~~ was a kind of banquetting hall at the top of an imposing flight of stairs, where people ^{sat} and drank; the long windows opened ~~and went out~~ on to a balcony ^{over the} ~~where the lights of Charing Cross and Pall Mall; could be seen~~; the band was mounted high up on a platform ~~at the other hand~~, in tiers nearly to the ceiling; ~~and~~ there were ~~tables and chairs and dim~~ glowing lights all round the dance-floor; many of ~~the lights~~ ^{these} had been pulled over or their wires torn, and there were broken glasses and forgotten hand-bags ^{everywhere.} ~~on the tables~~.

The bar was working at a ferocious speed, with all the drinks prepared in rows; a number of rollers had been installed, operated by the bar-waiters, on which ~~the~~ ^{ready;} the drinks stood when you took a glass the waiter gave the roller a slight turn and the gap you ~~made~~ ^{was} filled; likewise, when empty glasses were to be returned they were put on a roller that worked the other way, and the bar-man rolled them towards him to wash them up. But after an hour or so this system had turned in on itself; ~~so to speak~~ filled glasses were being taken haphazardly from anywhere on the roller, so that the waiter had to lean, swearing quietly under his breath, and put ~~the~~ ^{is} newly-filled glasses in the haphazard gaps; and then, having taken a drop or two himself, he would move the roller a bit too smartly towards the customer and push a few of the end ones over the side of the bar; also a customer discovered that all the rollers worked both ways and that there were interesting results if he gave one of them a push or two towards the bar-man. This grew into a sport and a police-officer had to be called up from the street; he took his helmet off and was at once surrounded by people who said he ~~must~~ ^{must} have a tail and hoofs, / Ital

and pinned hair and fur on to him from behind. He suggested 'paralysing the action of the rollers in some way', to which the head barman said he'd like to bloodywell paralyse the guests, one by one. The man who ^{had} hit on the idea of revolving the rollers the wrong way said that the head barman, ~~had definitely~~ ^{having} lost control of the steering wheel, ~~and~~ should have his licence endorsed, 'the bastard.' He was a big, flushed, burly man with immense dewlaps, and a deep county accent. It was surprising that the policeman didn't touch him --- but somebody in the crowd said that the police didn't like arresting 'big' men, this man being something 'big' in politics.

Suddenly a small, slim young man pushed through the crowd and, clutching the policeman by one of his chest-buttons, shouted, "Arrest me, ~~you attractive blighter.~~ I'm queer!" And the policeman said, "Do you mind ^u just taking your hands off my button?" "Listen to that --- he made a proposal!" the young man shouted back. ~~No, I won't touch you by the button.~~
~~Not with you, big horny bastard!~~

There was a smiling throng round the bar, and glasses were being smashed on the floor. The policeman was lost sight of, and a game of tail-pulling started; nearly everyone's tail was off in a jiffy!

"I've got an elephant!" came a cry.

"Bag's a pony!"

~~dear, dear,~~ "I've got the sweetest little deer!" ~~dear, dear!~~

^{But} In the body of the hall there were still many ~~intact~~ tails --- buffalo-tails, donkey-tails, cow-tails and golden horse-tails; the hoofs were of every colour and design --- some ~~were~~ wooden, ~~others~~ others high-heeled shoes adapted, others short rubber boots with hair painted on them; one man had a great hairy hump on his back and a camel-cloth; a woman had

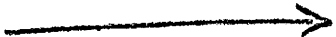
h.p./e.c.

come dressed as a giraffe with two little ~~hairy~~ horns between her ears and a blouse coloured orange with dark spots. Most of the women had taken advantage of the required animal-element and were without skirts; some had dyed or hair-covered knickers, ~~and with stockings, and~~ others wore tights of every colour like Pinkie's. [Hanni suddenly appeared at the top of the stairs in ~~perhaps~~ the most fantastic costume of the evening: she was a zebra, striped all over, ~~even down her stockings, all done~~ in such a thorough way that her black eyebrows meeting together over her nose looked like another stripe; she had two vast ears and a long, thick tail which she could operate and turn one way or the other without touching it directly. She came in supported by Clockwork who was also a faun, but without the red kisses that had been painted all over Granville. A crowd collected round them, ~~at once~~, cheering and lifting their glasses to Hanni; she ~~smiled and~~ laughed as if she'd had her full share of Clockwork's whisky, ~~her head tilted~~, while Clockwork softly and expertly piloted her through the drunks; a high-heeled shoe suddenly appeared and then a bottle of champagne; Hanni was being invited to drink out of the shoe, but she shook her head with a grimace; the champagne was poured into the shoe unsteadily and then it spurted out of the toe in a fizzy spray, through a hole. ~~Suddenly a young man with a vast, bushy lion's mane round his neck pushed himself towards Hanni and said at the top of his voice, "I'd go anywhere for a girl like you, being a lion!" and then as she disappeared, "See you back in Abraca, you lovely piece!"~~ Clockwork took ~~it~~ with a slight, easy smile, his eyes seeking out the people he knew; then Granville saw him usher her ~~to~~ to one of the tables where there was a quiet group; people stood up and shook hands with her, none of them in fancy dress. *They seemed to announce that they were very special people, in their little card-playing circle, immune to the boisterousness all round them.*

h/p.

Elizabeth looked superb, her hair done up in a kind of mantilla, with long ear-rings; she wore a long black gown and had made no effort at fancy dress apart from a flimsy horse-hair tail, also black, that hung from a lace bow at the back. Pip whirled her round the floor at a breathless speed. The band looked down from their tiers in a gingerly way, not showing the slightest amusement and seeming to go higher and higher as the evening went on.

Pinkie said that Clockwork's set regarded fancy dress as an 'uncool' thing to do; they wore dinner jackets and their expressions were tired and casual, as if (but only as if) from repletion of the senses; she said that 'pallor' was 'the thing' now—you couldn't even sunbathe when you found yourself in the south of France; you had to look 'fainting'. Hell was more or less in this set but she danced too much; if she could just sit and 'sort of wilt' at a card table for four or five hours in the evening she would qualify. Hanni's brilliant zebra costume stood out in the dark card-room like a precious carpet; Pinkie^e said that this was quite all right because Hanni, being 'exotic', could do nothing 'uncool', she^e was almost 'pure decoration.'



BOOK IICHAPTER 8.

Philip Granville was born in Abbott's Road in West Ham, not far from where he lived now; his parents had moved there from Bethnal Green just before the 1914 war, when there were still traces of the old village, though even then there were few. When they moved in there was an orchard opposite their home but by the time he was born streets covered more or less the whole district, formed into oblong blocks, one door after another with a few feet of garden in front for evergreen bushes, then iron railings and the pavement, stretching for miles, with nearly all the trees felled.

Abbott's Road houses were a better class than those of Bethnal Green, where the front door opened straight out on to the pavement and the streets were much longer and bleaker; also the houses of Bethnal Green were smaller, with a tiny asphalt yard in the back instead of a garden. Abbott's Road had quite nice back-gardens. Some of the old village trees were still intact there, by an oversight or perhaps by the contractor's mercy, standing in the middle of the narrow strips of garden, huge elms casting their shade on the roofs and swaying slightly in the wind with a grand, solemn movement that always seemed to give warning of storms. There was always talk of pulling them down but it never came to anything. He noticed as a child that sometimes people talked about them with grudging dislike, as if they were human, a moral affront one didn't talk about loudly. "Those damned trees," they would say. "Those blasted trees, when are they going to pull them down?" But in the summer they would

lean out of the back-windows gazing at them, smoking, the men in their shirt-sleeves.

The village had been called Abbott's Blenchley. It had straggled along the banks of a delightful little river called the Abbott which was dark and rank now, hardly more than a stream and completely hidden by shops and houses, with the waste from the Blenchley Road factories pouring into it. But here and there a grassy bank remained, strangely quiet, like someone peeping out from the past. An orphanage also remained, and the original Green behind Abbott's Road, made square now with iron railings round it, and the Common at the top of the hill near Tatlin Broadway. The Common was rough, with untidy bushes and little ridges and hillocks, and as a child he used to go to the centre so that he could look all round him and see no buildings at all, only trees and goarse grass.

Cattle still grazed in the orphanage grounds and it was possible to stand in Tatlin Road, which ran by the side of it, and imagine oneself in the country. Even Tatlin Road had a country-look at times; there were only houses down one side and these were detached, standing in their own gardens.

Tatlin Broadway was a shabby, crowded shopping-centre where everything used to be squeezed into one narrow street --- trams, wheelbarrows, Woolworths and Marks and Spencers, cinemas and cake-shops and crowds of people. He was always excited when they went there on Saturday afternoons to do the big shopping for the week. The lights blazed on both sides, one bright shop-front after another; and people pressed together on the pavement, talking and smiling, calling after their children in the wonderful glow. There were long, roofed-in markets leading from dark archways, like immense corridors with blazing gas-jets, and there one could

see everything, vegetables, toys, clothes, furniture, sweets and tall boxes of biscuits and shining glassware all in a massive array, while the market-men's voices rang out, exhorting the women to buy, "Now come on, sweetheart, you won't get a chance like this again!"

One always came back from Tatlin Broadway loaded with bags; everything would be put out on the table first, then checked with the shopping list and put into the larder. His mother would mix a cake for Sunday, while the fire shone white-hot in the grate, before they all went down to the local Co-op for a dance or whist-drive; these usually took place at a school at the end of the road, called Abbott's Road Junior School, where he and his brothers went until they were eleven.

At the end of Abbott's Road there was still the village inn from two hundred and fifty years before, with a cobbled yard in front of it. The river ran behind, at the foot of the garden, where there were tables and a bowling pitch in the summer. Even the stables were still there: also the Smithie, in a small barn shaded by a huge oak. He always heard the hammering from his classroom in the junior school, which was exactly opposite; and sometimes he would go across and watch the horses being shod. He was always astonished that they didn't cry out, having long nails driven into their feet. They stood there placidly, old cart horses with fat bellies and lovely long manes, blinking and shaking the flies off, their bright coats twitching, with one leg tucked up, while the trams rocked and screeched outside. That was about ten years before the 1939 war. Afterwards one saw few horses about, unless they were the huge brown dray-horses that were still kept by some of the breweries for old times' sake. The stables were torn down after an incendiary bomb caught one of the timbers during an air-raid. Also the junior school was removed by a

land-mine in 1944. All the windows in the street were blown out when that land-mine fell and the road was knee-deep in rubble for nearly a week afterwards. The windows of the inn had been blown out, too, and much of the roof destroyed. But the tiles were put back carefully and it all looked much the same as before, except that it was cleaner, like everything else in the district, without the old griminess, and the cobbles in front were removed to make an earlier parking space for cars. The walls in Abbott's Road before the war were more smoky and dingy, and this had given them a more mysterious look.

Every house was divided into flats, one upstairs and one down, and his family used to live in an upper one. The back-rooms looked across the gardens and were level with the thickest branches of the great elms. They were hot and tiny, and all the family-life went on in them. Along rails over the fireplace handkerchiefs and socks were hung to dry, and in front there was a brass fender where his father's slippers were left to warm before he came in from work. In the middle of the room there was a table big enough for eight people at a squeeze, with a thick brown cover over it, under a tasselled gas-light. And along one wall was a big dresser where all the crockery showed, and opposite this, set in the wall over the back stairs, was the larder, where he and his brother hid when they were playing hide-and-seek. In that larder there were bags of dried fruit that his father brought home from the docks on Friday nights.

He and his brother did their school-work in the back room, spreading their books over the table and telling each other "Shut up!" now and then or "Put a sock in it!" Next door, by the larder, there was a scullery with a deep copper for boiling clothes, and a gas stove. His mother had the boiler removed, to the distress of the landlord, but soon

after the war started the rest of the street followed suit; she was often quicker in her ideas than other people. She said the boiler was a 'blasted old-fashioned thing' and 'the only creatures who liked it were the mice!'

Trams ran along at the end of the street and he could hear their heavy clanging noise from where he slept. Opposite his window there was a line of roof that stretched uninterrupted the whole length of the street. Everything was regular and fixed like this. There were chimney-pots at regular intervals and beyond them the empty sky. But even so the street had a small, intimate look sometimes and on summer evenings when the sky was angry and low it would seem to be indoors, exciting, as if an enormous glass roof had been constructed over it, like the Crystal Palace. And when there was thick snow it looked like a tiny village-street. He hated people to come out and shovel the snow into the gutter, which they nearly always did, making nasty black marks on the pavement; but then sometimes the snow came again and made what they did ridiculous. One day the Crystal Palace burst into flames and he went out into the street and saw the glow of its fire rising and falling in the sky, making the evening red.

The street was nearly always quiet, like the countryside. Now and then, in the evening, especially in the winter, there came the sound of a piano from behind drawn curtains on the other side, hesitant and out of tune, melancholy like someone crying, without an audience. He and his sister, younger than he was, slept in the spare room overlooking the street, while their two brothers shared a bigger room overlooking the side-yard, where drains gurgled all day.

One of the family got to a university --- that was a great event; it was his eldest brother, and all hopes were centred on him, as the

cleverest of the four. Granville tried to repeat the success but failed. His other brother went into a stockbroker's office at the age of seventeen and later became quite a successful business-man.

In a way Granville had an easier time than either of his brothers. They felt protectively towards him and were always trying to groom him and prepare him for the world. Both he and his sister basked in grown-up adoration. By the time they were ten and twelve his brothers were already bringing money into the house. The first struggles were over and things felt safer.

Through his brothers he met middle-class people when he was only a child, so that he came to know sooner than they did that outside Abbott's Road there was a world quite different from his own. He was better prepared for the shocks than they were.

After the university his eldest brother was almost crushed. He became a drunk and went down to Abbott's Road asking for money. He had filled Granville with his dreams of what life could be like outside Abbott's Road. It was to be so glorious! Then the dreams collapsed, or rather they were worn slowly down, and he almost went to pieces. But then as suddenly he mended and became quiet and sober. He started a family and took up a job with a mining company in South Africa, in mathematics. His learning always intimidated Granville. He had a natural grasp which he, Granville, couldn't imitate. As for his sister, she married and he hardly saw her now. Sometimes he remembered her quiet face from his childhood and wished he'd married a girl from Abbott's Road.

The family often used to go over to Bethnal Green when they were children to see his father's family. At first they used to go every

Saturday night. Life was more in the open at Bethnal Green; there were ragged children everywhere, in loud, scrambling groups. And the streets looked wider and more hollow, flattened out to the sky, with a raw, smoky air that grimed everything and yet made it like a new lurid countryside, iron-coloured and dusty, very still and solemn like a strange ghastly and fascinating monument. The rooms there were dark and small, and in the summer people sat in their doorways or on benches put out on the pavement, the women suckling their babies. At night about ten o'clock old women with laced-up boots used to shuffle down to the off-licence for their jug of stout. His grandmother used to pull the shawl round her shoulders and set off with her flower-painted jug gripped tight in her hand, her lips pursed mutely together and an obstinate look in her eyes. She was small and pale, with an extraordinary iron obstinacy.

After the pubs closed there were usually fights, too. The police kept out of the district on the whole, and it was a law to itself. There was the smell of cooking from the faggots-and-peas-pudding shop round the corner, and outside the pub where his uncle went there was always a man with a horse-and-cart selling cockles and winkles; he used to call out, "COCK-les end WINK-les!" in a sing-song voice like someone yodelling. The trams rumbled past with their yellow lights, up on the big road, where the darkness of these streets, that rose and fell in deep hills as if they'd been poured on to the earth like lava, ceased for a time. The streets were always dim at night with a wonderful mysteriousness, because the lamps were few, much fewer than at Abbott's Road. It was still really the Victorian world, whereas Abbott's Road belonged to the era of the first war when people wanted to end the old scrambling life. His mother's ambition had always been to achieve the new order, of clean streets and

doors that remained closed. She said the words 'Bethnel Green' with a touch of contempt, as she said 'King George's Dock', where his father worked. She wanted an end to the ould rough life. And those were her words for roughness.

In Bethnel Green there was a dusty, vagabondish, warm atmosphere. When he was a baby the women still wore wide hats and veils over their faces, and gaitered boots which they used to do up with eye-hooks. The men wore dark suits with high collars and bowler hats.

Going over to Bethnel Green on Saturday nights was an unquestioned habit at first, but his mother always seemed to want to draw her children back from the life there, with a certain grim distaste. And he hated going there more and more, as if in obedience to her. He and his sister would be taken while the older brothers stayed at home. Even as a child he felt his mother was giving him and his sister a silent directive about Bethnel Green life. She joined in it, singing and laughing, but she seemed to be telling them, as they kept close to her, that she was reserving another future for them.

They all crowded into one tiny, stifling room --- his cousins, his grandmother, Aunt May who was his father's sister, and sundry husbands and other sisters. The men were slow and blinking, except May's husband. Granville went there with a divided fascination even as a child, beeling the division in his mother.

Aunt May, next to his father in age in a family of eleven, was a kind of queen to them all. She had golden hair which she did in braids, and a soft, long, beautiful face. Sometimes he watched her take out her braids until she stood there like a child with golden hair down to the middle of her back. He adored her with that haunted physical passion of

childhood. He followed her wherever she went, listening to her voice, that seemed to be eternal. She shouted everything, her head lifted up, with moist, red lips, but her voice never lost its gentleness; she seemed to be crying or singing. She swore with nearly every sentence, with a deep, ribald look in her eyes. The name 'May' always had a special sound, seeming to cover things deep in the past of the family, like a wonderful, golden memory of something long ago, not a person at all. She and his father were the closest in the family; he had a clean, wholesome look which May admired, and when he appeared in the doorway she would shout, "Well, bless my arse! There's Alfred! Come and give your sister a kiss, duck!" Everything she said had a tone of rich, sad, understanding love. Together she and his father used to smile at the rest of the family for being 'doughy'. They were both quick, with the best looks as well. Granville's father was spellbound by her like everybody else, though they'd grown up together, and a dreaming look came into his eyes when he said 'old May'. She used to make lavish suppers, and once he heard his mother ask as they were going back home, "Where the devil does old May get the money to do all that?" His father said she'd always been the same. She'd got the knack!

May would swing him up in the air when he was a baby so that he caught his breath, then hold him above her and shout, "He belongs to May, doesn't he, the little bugger, eh? Eh?", her eyes flashing. Outside, dark smoke would drift across the street from a shunting yard round the corner. Men would pass in heavy boots, from work, with silver chokers round their necks. Then she would turn and shout at one of his cousins, "Now put that bloody iron down!" or "For Christ's sake leave off, I'll put my hand round your mouth in a minute!" The irons were on the stove and

her two sons used to pick them up when they were feeling devilish, and menace people with them. Yet her voice seemed to encourage them.

By the kerb there were carts with their shafts up, and in the next street there were stables for the horses. May's eldest son worked on a cart when he was old enough and sold vegetables. His legs were weak when he was a child and he had to wear iron struts. He was big-boned, with a bulbous nose and a rather adenoid way of speaking, and he was always getting into trouble. He was clumsy and lanky. His father used to take him into the back-yard and give him a good hiding with his belt, and come back smiling. All the children had pale, sunken faces but clear and quick eyes. The beatings had no effect on him and he slouched about insolently when they were over. May used to say between her teeth, "That boy's a proper little sod!"

The last time Granville saw May was when he was about sixteen, in Abbott's Road. She'd come on a visit and he went downstairs with his mother and father to see her off. The Saturday evening visits had stopped by that time. It was a summer evening and she was wearing a light hat and a print dress, rather loose and flowery. He could still remember watching her back as she walked slowly away from them down the street after saying good-bye. She had an easy, soft walk. Only it was a little stiffer now, compared with her young days. And as if she knew what they were thinking she stopped and turned round to them with a smile, and at the same time jaunty. Her cheeks were smooth and slightly flushed, as always. Her eyes had a steady, dark gleam and there were wisps of light brown hair over her brow. And she said, putting her hand lightly on her hip, "Not too bad, is she?" Then she walked on and didn't turn round again.

Her favourite swear-word was 'bleed'n'. "Mind my bleed'n corns!"

she would cry if one of the children came too near. This word had a vicious, forbidden sound to his ears. His mother forbade its use at Abbott's Road and only said it herself, shyly, when she was with May. She would try to loosen up in May's company. She would lean forward and talk with narrowed eyes, using all the swear-words she could think of. "I said to her, I said, now don't you come your sodding larks with me," she would murmur. She had a delicacy that was crushed when she used these words deliberately. She needed to be angry, but in May it was an understood manner of speech. It ran in the family, perhaps, for his father was the same. He was fond of the words 'shit-house', applied to people. "He's a real shit-house," he would say during one of his dockyard stories, and his mother would lower her eyes and murmur reprovingly, "All right, King George's dock ..." At other times she would say, "That's enough, Bethnel Green!" His father would look at her with his mouth open and his eyes bewildered, as if unconscious of what he'd said.

Sometimes May would talk about her husband. "I do love my Sid," she would say. "He's lovely! I don't know what I'd do without that bugger!" And, "Sid does me good!" They never seemed to quarrel. Sid was a lean, handsome man, not unlike Granville's father to look at, and on Saturday nights he set out to get as drunk as he could. They would all start drinking at the pub, with the children waiting outside eating potato-crisps and sipping ginger beer. Then at closing time everybody would pour out, stumbling and singing. There would be froups of people all along the road, rolling and bumping into each other. Sid would always bring some more beer home with him, in bottles. The men would fall about, leaning over the women and shouting. Usually Sid looked for someone "to take into the yard". He always liked a fight with bare fists when he was

drunk and he would choose one of the men who might be getting 'nasty'. Together they would go out and there would be sounds of scuffling from the yard, and dull blows. Granville and his sister would cling to their mother, trembling. Then Uncle Sid would come back, smiling as he did after beating his son, and say, "He's out!" He was always the victor and once or twice left the other man quite unconscious in the yard. After a time the other man would return with a bleeding nose or a black eye, sober.

May had a daughter called Eve, who was a little older than Granville and was a special friend of his sister. May always called her 'young Eve', in the same lingering way as she talked about her husband. From the earliest times May and Eve went shopping and did the housework together, and were allies in everything. There was the same softness in Eve as in her mother, and one could even see in her, as a child, some of the jauntiness as well. She protected her mother against the boys in the family and hated Bethnel Green in the same spirit as Granville's mother did. She had the same kind of delicacy in her, too. She never swore like the others and had a gracious, quiet manner. On Saturday nights she would lay the supper in the kitchen and see the youngest children to bed. Now and then someone would ask, "Where's young Eve?" There was a great deal of sadness in her eyes, and she gazed at things for a long time as if trying to see their meaning. She was a little ashamed of her lolling brothers, who said 'bu'er' instead of 'butter'. Granville's mother used to imitate them on the way home from Bethnel Green sometimes: "'Bu'er, bu'er, wa'er, wa'er!" Those boys are proper gentlemen, aren't they?"

Aunt May had a special game for the boys of the family, to chase them round the room and make a sudden dive for their trousers, to catch their 'little winkles'. Then she would hold up her hand, showing them

her thumb sticking out between her fingers, and cry, "I got it! I got it!" And the boys always looked down at their trousers, half-believing. This game excited him. One evening, without any consciousness of what he was doing, in the passage-way near the door, he suddenly stopped while she was chasing him and turned round to face her as if to say, 'You needn't chase me, it's yours for the asking!' She stopped, too, and raised herself up slowly, gazing at him with a slowly dawning expression; then a look of utter disgust came into her eyes, the only one he ever saw, and she walked slowly away.

Eve was the only one of the family he'd seen since the war. She lived near Wimbledon now, in a suburb like the U.K. Compound in Basrah, with a husband and four children. Her cheeks were rosy now and she was quite plump. Much of the sadness had gone out of her eyes but they still had a baffled, searching look. Aunt May had died some years before, suddenly. Whenever Granville talked to Eve he saw flashes of her mother's face in her and almost gasped. There was the old rich tone, and the jauntiness. It was in the way she lifted up her head sometimes, smiling, with bright eyes, when she made a joke or shouted at her children, seeming to encourage them just as her mother did. Her children were quiet and well cared for, with her rosy look. She'd coolly made it the ambition of her life to get May and the rest of the family out of Bethnel Green, and she'd succeeded. The 1939 war gave her the chance, when the bombing got really bad. She levered them slowly out of the district they loved, from the tiny dark house they belonged to. By that time she and her father were earning decent money and she found the Wimbledon house. It was a detached house and nobody could imagine May living there. But she loved it and even started looking after the garden. After her death Sid

moved away and Eve was now alone with her own family. She had a spotlessly clean home, with nice furniture, not at all suburban in taste.

Eve turned to him once when he went over for tea and said, "Do you know, I can't help feeling swindled with life? Do you know what I mean? I feel I've missed something - been swindled out of it! Perhaps I'm just getting old!" May's shadow, jaunty and sad at the same time, came into her face for a moment. "Then I think it might have been the war. But I don't know ---! I've got everything I want but I'm not satisfied and I don't know what it is!"

Her husband said he thought it was the war. It had taken five years off people's lives, he said. But she wasn't satisfied with this. Granville thought he understood her. But her husband denied it. They had everything they wanted, he said, and they must be grateful; there were other people in the world, many of them, less fortunate than they were!

"But I wasn't thinking about other people," Eve said quietly. "I was thinking about myself! And I'm sorry to say it I don't care about other people! We're always being told about other people, it seems." And she gave her husband a sharp look.

At Tatlin Broadway there were two cinemas, one of them like a huge, gilt palace inside with thick twirling columns and an organ that came out of the ground. Sometimes there was a stage show as well, and once even a circus. He used to be taken there once a month or so, usually on Saturday afternoons for the one o'clock performance. But sometimes his mother would take him and his sister to the other less grandiose cinema on a week-day; the fact that it wasn't huge and gilt like the other one seemed to affect the film and made it less convincing for him.

Once when he was about thirteen his father came home helplessly drunk, on a Friday night after he'd been paid. He had to crawl up the stairs and made a frightful clattering noise. It was two or three hours after his usual time and Granville and his sister were already in bed. They heard their mother rush down from the back-room and shout from the top of the stairs, "God Christ almighty, look at this!" Then she said in a scolding voice that sent a shiver down their spines, "Come on! Come on!", and more quietly, "What the devil have you been up to?" They'd never heard her speak to their father like this before --- just as if he were a child! And so she went on while he made a grotesque mumbling noise, trying to keep his balance on the stairs and pulling the rods out. "Look what you're doing!" she cried. "Why, you rotten drunken bugger!" But at the same time her voice was mild, with pity and a touch of rapt interest. "You ought to be damned-well ashamed of yourself!" Then one of Granville's brothers came out and helped him up, saying quietly, "Come on, dad, that's all right." He wasn't a bit alarmed and after that their mother said little. She only murmured, "I don't know, I don't know!" to herself while their brother hurried up and down the corridor getting hot water and a face-flannel, after they'd got him on to a bed. Neither Granville nor his sister dared get up. They only sat quite still on their beds staring before them, their mouths open, nudging each other when there was a new sound. They heard their mother say briskly in the bedroom, "Turn over! It serves you damned-well right!" and their brother murmured, "That's all right, mum, leave him alone now."

Apparently, his face was covered with blood because his glasses had been smashed. There were still tiny pieces of glass embedded in his forehead and their brother spent a long time getting them out, with his usual

patience and kindly good will, while his father snored. "He's just had a good time, that's all," they heard him tell their mother. The next day they found out that he'd fallen down the whole length of the stairs at Tatlin Road station; these thairs were very steep, and were edged with little steel studs. He'd landed on the asphalt at the bottom and said that as far as he could remember he'd slept there for some time. Anyway, no one had helped him up and he'd had to crawl home on all fours --- "keeping to the wall of course," he said. He waited whenever he had a road to cross, looking left and right as the safety-first posters advised. His knees were cut and his trousers torn. "It was that damned cider did it!" he said. The next morning, it being Saturday, he brought tea round to everybody. Granville took his in silence and didn't say good morning; this was about the time when his horror of Abbott's Road was beginning. His sister asked quietly, "How do you feel, dad?" for there were scars and a graze on the upper part of his face. Then Granville regretted not saying hullo and laughed. But their father was ashamed, like a child. He went about the house quietly and cooked a huge breakfast of sausages, eggs, tomatoes, bacon and fried bread for them all. In a way the episode was a fling into the old life, which he never repeated again; or perhaps it was only the cider!

The visits to Bethnel Green gradually stopped. Now and then they went back into the mystery of the old life. He remembered being taken to a men's club and seeing music-hall turns on a tiny stage; the room was tall and Victorian with a massive fire-place, and the ceiling had elaborate plaster-work all over it. Everybody joined in the songs that always made him feel say --- "Hold your hand out, you naughty boy!", "My old man said foller the wan!" and "Who were you with, last night?" They were

rollicking and generous, with such unbearable tenderness and sweetness in them. The gas-lamps had gaudy tasselled shades with beads, and the room had a hot, dark, solid feeling.

Every night when they went to bed Granville's mother took him and his sister to her lap, standing by the bed while they kneeled on it, leaning against her, and said the Lord's prayer in a soft voice, with another little prayer that went, 'God bless mummy and daddy, uncles and aunties, soldiers and sailors, tinkers and tailors, gran'mas and gran'dads.' The God she spoke to seemed a different God from the one in church. This God in her prayer was deep in the past, of enormous volume like the sun or the wind or the dawn, with unlimited patience and pity, looking after everything in a kindly way.

When his father talked about the docks, they also seemed far in the past, though he might have been there only an hour before. He would talk about the biting winds that came down the river past King George's wharf, and the grimy brick walls of Silvertown, and the swaying tram that took him through Blackwell tunnel soon after dawn every day, while the sky was heavy with smoke and river-mist. He would stand at the back door for a moment after he got up in the morning, gazing into the blackness of the garden that was like a great beast outside. His movements as he made tea and put scalding water into his shaving bowl all had something devout about them, with an extraordinary relish and glow. He would stand by the kitchen table with his cup of tea, his eyes lost as he blew the steam away before each sip, making a loud sucking noise of which he was unaware. Then there was the brisk walk down to the trams and the swaying voyage through the dim, mysterious streets of West Ham and Plaistow and Canning Town, with people just stirring about, yawning and stamping their feet,

muffled up.

His mother always talked about the old days in a grudging numbed way. "Some people talk about the good old days," she would say, "not me!" But when she talked about her father, whose nickname had been 'the gent', there was a sing-song richness in her voice that reminded him of Aunt May.

She had a dream of what it was like to be rich. It was a compound of all the ordinary things whose taste and touch were cosy --- the table-cloth that went on for tea, the bread-and-cheese and pickles at bed-time, the sound of the crowds at the Tatlin dog-track on Thursday evenings like a vast sigh drifting across the back-gardens, the crackling of Guy Fawkes fires on the Fifth of November, the fillets of plaice she sometimes brought in for tea as a special treat, the front-room which was used on Sundays when there were visitors with its deep armchairs and settee and bowl of nuts on the table while the street lay silent outside and the sound of the muffin-man with his bell came through the window closer and closer. Richness was the accumulation of all those little moments into one long pause without any more worrying or skimping. She couldn't believe that rich people had any worries; some people had it perfect! That was her dream and she stuck to it grimly. Money solved everything.

In the old days, she said, people were 'just goods and chattels'. You never dared to raise your voice against the 'higher-ups', she said. You had to bow down to nearly everybody - to your own parents, to policemen, to shop-keepers, even to well-dressed passers-by in the street! Every little pleasure was a privilege in those days! A privilege to be employed at half-a-crown a week! She'd been sent out to work at the age of twelve,

working as a kitchen-scrivvy, and her mother had waited at the corner every Friday night to take her half-a-crown.

Granville was taken to see his maternal grandmother a short time before she died, and remembered a tall, gloomy and yet awesome and fascinating room full of knick-knacks and velvet curtains and lacework. She wouldn't part with her money and died on it, they said. One of the brothers called Charlie, a regular in the army, whom Granville's mother called 'doughy', cut the money out of her mattress a few hours after she died and went oversea back to his unit with it. Nobody knew how much there was but it was said between fifty and a hundred pounds, quite a tidy little sum for those days. Other people said that the old girl couldn't have saved so much because 'the gent' liked his drop too much. Every Friday night when the money was in his pocket the gent used to leave the house in a top hat, with a smart cane in his hand, tall and impeccably dressed, and would return after midnight 'as drunk as a fiddler's bitch'; the children would hear him pass their door in his socks. He never got a speck of dirt on his evening clothes, it was said. Like Granville's father he used to work at King George's Dock; when he was drunk he called dockers 'a lot of bloody riff-raff and bugger the lot of them!' He was greatly loved at his work and it was said that he could bring barges into dock like a magician. At the end of his life he was a tug-man and the rough work, which exposed him to river-mists and gof, killed him.

Granville's mather was a slim, good-looking man with smooth, dark hair. He loved the huge elms that swayed with the wind in the Abbott's Road back-gardens, and said he'd like a forest full of them outside the window; he used to lean on the window-sill gazing out on summer evenings. Other people's gardens were always mysterious; some were well cared-for and

others like tropical scrub; Some had an unknowable, dark look because their owners were unknown. These gardens were most exciting on Guy Fawkes night when tall bon-fires were lit and fireworks whizzed into the air, lighting up the still trees, and sparks drifted about, and silver St. Catherine's Wheels hissed and whirled round and round while all the windows glittered and there was the sound of children's voices and repeated crashes and smart bangs and pops that were like a man frantically beating on drums in the sky! Effigies of Guy Fawkes with a wide-brimmed black hat, his jacket swollen out like a pumpkin, were raised up and then let fall with a last reclining movement into the flames, which always made him catch his breath.

Granville's father only had to think about flowers at night to fall asleep. Sometimes on the tram-journey to work he would start planning next year's garden in his mind. "I think of all the colours," he would say, "and I feel all right!" He was against picking flowers for the house and said the garden was a place for flowers to life and breathe in. Half-way up Tatlin Road, opposite the orphanage grounds, he had an allotment for vegetables, one of many little narrow plots covering a whole field that always looked untidy and bleak. In the summer Granville and his sister would go up and help him with the lettuces and radishes for Sunday tea. They would bring everything back in a wheelbarrow. Sometimes Granville lay in the sun with his eyes closed, at the side of the allotment where there was a grassy path, listening to the oak-trees swaying in the breeze on the other side of the road and imagining himself in hilly, spacious country far from London with the sea glittering near by. He connected the countryside with summer weather and never thought of it otherwise.

There was a bitter scrape for money at one time, during the Depression; his father was laid off at the docks. Strangely, his mother stopped grumbling about money as she usually did, and was mute and pale instead. She was rigid with an old fear that chilled her bones and plunged her in doom and shame. There was a superstitious horror of unemployment in Abbott's Road, and while this period lasted they got no visits from the neighbours at all. Unemployment was like smallpox or fever.

Uncle Sid, May's husband, said that the Granvilles were fools to keep their children at school so long. "I'd give them education!" he said in a vehement way. "They won't thank you for it! They'll only turn up their noses at you!" His parents were quiet and firm. They listened, and his mother nodded her head in agreement. But in his father's eyes there was a gleaming, distant look, almost smiling, impervious to Sid's arguments.

But things got better just before the war; the old pinched feeling went. His two brothers were now at work; and the whole district round Abbott's Road seemed to share the bell-being. The district had a life quite its own: the lending library glowed cosily in the evenings, and sometimes the street-lamps gave the impression with their intimate twinkle of numberless exciting things about to happen. Saturday evening was the most exciting, before a dance: his father would hurry up and down the corridor asking for his cuff-links or a new starched collar, while his mother sat quietly in the bedroom before the mirror powdering herself with only a petticoat on, queenly and still. And this bustle gave everything a luscious, thriving look, especially in the back-room where the fire blazed white and the tasselled lamp-shade cast a shrouded light over the

table. At the school where the dance was held there would be ham-sandwiches, cakes and lemonade in one of the class-rooms, and someone would be sprinkling french chalk on the floor when they arrived, and the women in the cloak-room would be talking and laughing in undertones, opening and closing their hand-bags with a sharp clicking noise in the silence before the band started. The hall would look bare and seem to be holding its breath, with chairs along each wall. Once his father was Master of Ceremonies, and there was nearly chaos. He got the Paul Jones, the 'spot' and Sir Roger de Coverley mixed up in some way, and in the raffle the serial-numbers of the tickets in the hat were different from those he'd sold to the audience. But it was much more comic than an ordinary evening and the band stood him three pints of best winter ale in the pub opposite during the interval, and he could hardly keep to his feet for the rest of the evening. He preferred to watch people, his eyes glowing, with a smile from ear to ear, than arrange things.

CHAPTER 9.

Granville's horror of Abbott's Road grew like a ghost over his life, from outside, independent of him. It happened after he left the junior school at the bottom of the street; he stopped looking at Abbott's Road as his natural home. In a few years he was quite torn out of it and couldn't go back: his consciousness was changed for good.

It wasn't what he'd expected at all. When he was eleven he took his scholarship to the secondary school eagerly, thinking it would be much like the school at the bottom of the road, where you were always happy more or less. He took the exam in a dream. He wrote an essay about snakes and what lovely colours they had, though he'd never seen one. And a few weeks later, at prayers, in the hall with tall windows at one end and a parquet floor, the headmaster read out a list of those who had passed and gave them permission to run home at once and tell their mothers. It was a clear, wintry, sun-lit day and everything looked extraordinarily wide-open to the sky. Sitting on the floor of the hall listening to the names being read out slowly and clearly he had the impression of a great flash when the letter G arrived and then, after two or three other names, he heard 'Philip Granville'. The flash seemed to extend, in an instant, across his whole future life, that was now quite changed.

When he got home with the news his mother had just finished cleaning the stairs and the front door was open. He'd run all the way, along the kerb with one foot on and one foot off, bouncing up and down

with happiness. He called up from the door, "Mum! I won a scholarship!" She turned slowly at the top of the stairs and a long time passed while she gazed down at him in silence, and then she murmured almost in a whisper, "Oh, my son, you have ... That's a good boy! Come upstairs and let me give you a kiss." And he saw tears beginning to fall down her face.

Then, afterwards, he became aware of Abbott's Road as a locality for the first time, apart from him. The glow went out. It became physical: there were just roofs, tram-lines, pavements like a hard picture in front of him! A frightful emptiness and drought fell on his life.

The higher school was called a 'public day school', which meant it wasn't a real public school but an imitation. And this was the whole atmosphere, of imitation; conducted by people who didn't know the original, either. A 'gentleman' was someone who never said anything spontaneous or rash.

He was miserable as he'd never been before in his life and never was again. A numbing wretchedness of spirit persisted from hour to hour every day under the eyes of adults who rarely vouchsafed a glimpse of their humanity, though there were one or two exceptions --- poor devils who'd sold their lives to this little fake-castle of ignorance! It was more an ignorance of the possible graciousness in life than lack of book-learning, though this was mostly faked, too. Learning was dished-up in the style of high-class goods not to be touched easily by the sons of Bethnel Green, Mile End, Stepney and Walthamstow, of whom the school consisted. The moment he got there he felt the shadow of a kind of original sin: it was the street where he was born -- a matter of 'background'. That word had an unpleasant ring, rather like syphilis. And this gradually had to be wiped out and the manners associated with it

gradually replaced by an air of half-sneering irony. Those who got on best were the boys who locked everything inside them and spoke staccato little sentences like pettets being spat out of their mouths; also they had to play sports, though with ascetic grimness --- muddy and hard-eyed; even on the playing field relish wasn't allowed. Nothing 'soft'! In the summer there was a choice of two sports, rowing or cricket. Rowing was frowned-on, perhaps because of the grace a boat had when it skimmed through the water, like a delicate sheath of wood. The headmaster was a quiet, charming man who gave the impression of smothering his real life behind pale, fixed lips; he glanced about him nervously and sometimes yelled at the top of his voice, between the same fixed lips, as he swept through the corridors in the lunch-hour, pencil in hand, his gown flowing behind him. He had a hard job grooming the sons of working people into class-habits that weren't even the best class-habits!

The headmaster always wanted to 'raise the tone', as he called it. Straw boaters were worn in the summer. There were Field Days, Old Boys' Dinners and House meetings every Friday evening after school, and houses called 'Mafeking' or 'Punjab'. There was a dining hall, a tuck shop, a chapel with an organ, and once, before the 1914 war, there had even been a few boarders. The grounds and the school itself, which was Victorian gothic, red brick, with ivy over the front and mullioned windows, were quite pleasant. Sometimes they had the air, especially in the evening, with the tall trees and bright green lawns, of being in the country and of being really old. The foundation of the school reached back to Tudor times and this was made much of by the headmaster. In a way, the boys had to make up for the social disappointments of the teachers.

He lost his confidence. He saw his mother and father as some of

his teachers might see them. The back-room at Abbott's Road seemed tiny and stifled him. He was bored. The old life was small and uneventful. Nothing happened in the street; he was always waiting for something new to happen; a nervous concept of life as on a rapidly moving belt of time was being implanted in him. He couldn't read a sentence in a book without his mind wandering. He'd been given a mind, but it did none of the things education required it to do. It spent most of its time thinking about women. Enjoyment was suspect in any case --- one really had to do better than enjoying books!

Abbott's Road was now a kind of prison-yard for him. 'Town' was the centre of London where everything important went on. In his own district nothing counted. What people said and what they did hadn't the slightest influence. The newspapers decided everything; they came to Abbott's Road from outside, like the radio. Everything came from outside, informing one about the real state of things! But education had elected him to a new position --- supposedly, at any rate: he was now among those who could influence matters! Except that nobody, including himself, really thought so.

He was always being criticised at school for his accent. He was asked how verse could be recited in such a voice. He started having dreams that his real voice broke through his genteel voice and talked obscenities which showed everybody where he 'came from'. Everything was now part of a map in his consciousness, even his own existence and his own body. He watched life from outside, in stillness. There was no further movement in his life. He was bleeding for the touch of another creature; there was no one he could speak to any more, after all. The language of his mother and father was foreign. Everybody in the district

was a foreigner. He started to fear going outside the door. The district was like a huge monument with nothing growing in it --- terribly hard, made of concrete and slate, angular, without a soft curve anywhere. His whole spirit sank down and everyday was like the opening of a severe cross-examination. This was so in term-time; during the holidays there were a few pleasant and even happy days as before. He had a growing sense of unworthiness and wrong-doing. He felt he hadn't the slightest human status. He blushed helplessly in front of people and stood paralysed and speechless with fear, quite giddy, his eyes staring out of his head. These were some of the glorious effects of education, which the middle classes were holding up as a passport to health and joy!

Not that there was any slave-driving at the school. It was quite liberal, in fact. There was an up-to-date theatre with the best stage equipment. Russian was taught, before most schools started it. The caning was moderate, but energetic when it happened. One was 'taken to the bathroom' for a caning. The master ran the length of the bathroom to get a decent momentum. But this practice was dying out. Granville had it only once, and went about with four cuts across his arse for a week afterwards. On the whole, masters shrank from doing it. The atmosphere was kindly; or rather, it was hesitant, as if nobody was quite sure of his authority.

His mind was a complete mess. He had no idea what they were trying to teach him! All he got was the names of things! In history there was the divine right of kings, mercantilism, the rotten boroughs, the balance of power, the rise of nationalism, electoral reform, the factory acts, the Irish question, all in one big dirty heap! Not a face, not a human creature to be seen! Well, Henry VIII and Elizabeth were allowed faces --

but that was from his first school. Now they were squashed under a Star Chamber --- he never knew what the devil that was! He got all the Jameses mixed up. And the word 'Jacobean' --- that beat every other word in the curriculum! It was so like 'Jacobin', which seemed to mean something absolutely different, even French! There was also 'Jacobite'. By association with the French word 'Jacobin', and because of an image that persisted in his mind of James II escaping from England without his trousers on, having just thrown the Great Seal (whatever that was) in the river Thames, he thought sansculottes were the king's supporters, namely, Jacobites --- a bizarre mixture!

He even had the sansculottes fight a pitched battle --- without their trousers of course, but perhaps they wore kilts --- at Killiecrankie against William and Mary. There was another James called the Pretender but that was best left alone. A sentence he found, 'the grace and elegance of the Jacobean', had him baffled for over five years. He couldn't see why bloodthirsty French radicals should be called graceful and elegant.

But the name that introduced our epoch --- ah, that was something! The Industrial Revolution! Like a huge cloud so vague and dark that you could say what you liked about it and it was luck if you were right or not. That name gave off thousands of others like a heap of rotten garbage proliferating with white worms. Also there was a new master. He was going to teach history the modern way! No more kings and queens and prime ministers --- the people had to be studied, the lives of ordinary people! But that was even worse! They turned into even longer names, such as Wage Levels, Mortality Rates, Sanitation and Living Conditions! And, of course, the Industrial Revolution wasn't really a revolution.

But of course not? Did you think that in our high-class school we actually said what we mean? Oh, no! It was a 'process'. That was the name you used if you wanted to be really superior --- and under it, quite inexplicably, there was a little crowd of men, called Arkwright, Watt, Murdock, Stephenson, jumbled up with spinning jennies, the Stockton-Darlington line, a 'Rocket', and God knows what else! Then there were the 'Factors'. These were the worst of all! When you heard that word you knew there'd be a list a mile long. The 'Factors' were Speenhamland (but of course! this was so obvious that he never knew what it was!), Cottage Craftsmen, Turnpike Roads, Canals, Coal and the Steam Engine! As for the spinning jenny he didn't even know it was connected with yarn or cloth in any way. It was just --- well, the spinning jenny, you know! Years later, by accident, he opened a child's encyclopedia and read that the wife of a poor weaver had one day dropped her spinning wheel on the floor and her husband had noticed how it spun round and round as it lay there, which gave him the idea of the first spinning machine; and the wife's name was Jenny! Simple! But not if you're a bit of a cut above everybody else, of course you don't tell that sort of thing! And Arkwright had been a hairdresser! When he heard this he asked himself with astonishment how a hairdresser had been allowed in such an important-sounding list of Factors! A hairdresser --- started the Industrial Revolution!

No wonder he felt he was floating above life all the time instead of learning about it. He began to get a sense of the world not as men and women and trees and things like that but a system of names held high above real life. First the system, then the things themselves! Even his mother and father changed --- they were now little units in a vast 'working class'.

It seemed that all life was only an example of something higher that had no taste, no sound, no heart and no face. And a chill grew in him. It was living in a world of ghosts. His mother and father gradually began to seem a bit childish and innocent in his eyes, and they felt this new attitude in him. They lived so deeply and wholly in the street where he was born that he now seemed --- in his knowledge of all the other streets that existed, and the map of names that covered them all--- far in advance of them! His eyes had been opened! He could see the whole map on which they were only a tiny mark! At the same time he saw that they were better people than himself; better than his teachers, too. A frightful neutral misery came into his life.

He had the impression even at the time that he wasn't learning to think at all, only how to think in a certain way; and he had an inkling that perhaps this wasn't the way people had thought in the past or a natural way of thinking at any time. It was special in some way. He felt he'd inherited one world through his birth and another one through his education; and they were different from each other to the point of requiring entirely new ways of perceiving, even of smelling, seeing and hearing.

There was only one thing of interest at school - masturbation. It was the great school sport. There was no need to take an examination in it; everybody would have passed with honours, anyway. But it was still competitive. A team was started once in which prizes were given for the wickest orgasm --- self-abuse to start from the stop-watch. It was funny to hear the headmaster talk about 'raising the tone' to a stupendous male whorehouse where a brisk and noisy trade went on all day. Occasionally the staff issued a warning about 'bull-fighting', a euphemism for 'ball-

fighting', in which a group of boys would tear someone's trousers off and toss him off, watching his struggles turn into grateful acquiescence. One boy, a vast rugger-playing 'man', said there was nothing better than a pound of liver nailed to the wall for the pleasures of a wife. He did it every evening and went round to the butcher's every week to get his 'pound of pleasure'.

Sex was the only pleasure school left intact. It was the only little frail power and dignity left to you. Otherwise you were just a poor, pale, wilted thing crammed with facts. You didn't have to learn it. It was something you could actually do yourself, without having some pot-faced misery telling you you needed more style! You could do it with your own hands!

There were a few serious 'marriages' at school: a couple would stay together and have an agreement about being faithful to each other. These affairs seemed to have more passion and tenderness than one saw later in life. One famous 'marriage' took place while he was at school between a good-looking boy nicknamed Strumpelpeter, because of his shock of blond hair, and another called 'the Gordian knob' because his real name was Knott and he was reticent and difficult to fathom. These nicknames ran through the school and lasted a certain time. One master, a shy, worried-looking man, was nicknamed 'The Hand' because when he called out a boy to his desk to run through an essay he always put his hand up his trousers and fondled his balls. Another, the geography man, was called 'The Kipper' because he liked to organise camping holidays and would ask any boy he had his eye on to 'kip down' next to him at night.

Boys with real homosexual appetites often did well at their work. They didn't ache to get away home as the others did; they lingered in the

changing-rooms and the dining hall afterwards, watching their fellow-voluptuaries walk by. They lived in an atmosphere of Latin primers and glowing Victorian rooms with coloured shields on the mantelpiece, and gas-fires at dusk when there was extra study, and the smell of stale tea in the evening from the kitchens. They had everything they wanted. But Granville was among the majority whose sexual pleasures at school were only vicarious, and usually solitary. Only when a local girl's school paid a courtesy visit did he come to life: he poured a cup of hot tea down the headmaster's wife's back in his nervousness and blushed so much that his face tingled afterwards. His ears were still bright red when he woke up next morning. He tripped over people's feet, grinned sheepishly and gawped at the girls, completely speechless.

His failing matriculation was the first real blow. There'd been hopes that he might go to a university, but failing matric put the kibosh on that! He was too shy even to walk along the street properly and he spent hours trying to pluck up the courage just to leave the house. He blushed and faltered if a passer-by happened to throw him a glance. The bus-rides to school were a real torture. He spent five years at school virtually listening for the bell at the end of each lesson.

His only other pleasure was rebellion. He was known at school as a 'fire-eater' and 'against' almost everything. He hated England and he hated the Church. Those were his two platforms. One term-report ended with the words, 'Lack of patriotism is not enough.' It stung him because it was true; the cut went home.

He turned to music. He first listened to one or two records his brothers brought home, then he started going to concerts. Music always made him feel calm and resolved afterwards. He began to need it like

fresh air --- to keep him alive!

He started having what he called giddy fits. He couldn't describe them because they weren't physical. But they had physical effects. They always started when he was alone. He might be sitting in a chair reading, then slowly he would seem to lose connection with the things round him and would go into a state where his self would actually seem to disappear and his mind float high above his body. He banged things furiously to bring himself back. Or he shouted for the people downstairs. The sight of a person would restore him to life again at once.

Even to his parents and his brothers and sister he seemed a stranger now. They looked at him in a puzzled way. The fun he'd always had with his sister stopped. He gave her the same look of loneliness that he gave everyone else.

He went to Cambridge to see his brother and this had a devastating effect on him. For the first time he actually came face to face with that other world he'd dreamed about so much! So his vision of it was true! It did abound with grace and love, just as his brother had always promised.

He loved the narrow cobbled side-streets and walked along King's Parade again and again. There was nothing to remind him of Abbott's Road. Not one grimy wall! The lawns were neatly kept --- extraordinarily bright! And the quadrangles of the colleges, enclosed and utterly quiet with some of the windows glowing warmly and casting a light on to the cobbles below, were like a dream he'd always had but never been able to define! He lived in one of these rooms on the second floor --- they were the guests' rooms --- and spent hours sitting over the fire imagining himself an undergraduate. While his brother went to lectures he walked by the river behind the

colleges where everything was laid out like a superb garden and nothing seemed to move, even, from a distance, the river, shining like glass between the lawns. The dons had quiet and reflective faces as he'd always imagined the faces of those who belonged to the other world! Every time he passed one of them he tried to make his own features as gentle and lost as possible. He imagined them living magnificent lives with everything they said and thought subtle and quiet, their manners always perfect. They understood all thoughts! No delicacy escaped them. It was as much as he could do to speak if one of them addressed him!

His brother's college had a fountain in the middle of the front quadrangle, and the trees near the river were just visible over the roofs. The scout built him a big fire every evening when he came in, and he took tea in his armchair, gazing across at the latticed window, a tremendous luxury. The room, too, was a dream. It was small with a low ceiling and heavy beams, at the top of a very narrow wooden staircase. An arched window overlooked the quadrangle, tiny and high in the wall so that little light came through and the room was always mysterious. By the door there was a bookcase and near it an ink-stained desk. The carpet was worn but thick, and there were two great armchairs and a settee. He could think of nothing more wonderful and wanted to stay in the room all his life! It was specially marvellous on the second morning when he woke up and found bright sunlight streaming through the window on to the carpet so that everything glittered and the whole city outside seemed to exist inside a kind of sparkling eternity and to promise extraordinary happenings during the day. The traffic had a special sound in the distance and he felt sure, by a peculiar premonition, that a room like this would one day be his.

He imagined sitting in hall at dinner in the evening with a gown over his shoulders, and going back to his room afterwards with a friend and sitting talking over the fire all through the night, surrounded by books and papers, his legs stretched out; they would make tea or cocoa in the wooden corridor outside, where the gas-ring was, and make quiet jokes while the rest of the college slept. He would think about books all day, and the sun would come glittering through the window; there would never be a painful thought in his life again!

There was a feeling in him he'd never be able to shake off, perhaps --- that he couldn't understand things that came easily to other people! He watched the other boys in hall and wondered how they could behave so confidently, so much as if the world was comprehensible! He had to work harder than anybody else, so he thought --- because he could understand less!

He was told by his history teacher at school that he must stop 'flying too high' in his essays. When he talked --- when something interested him --- he ran on hotly, in the manner of Abbott's Road. But that wouldn't do for school! You had to be neat and cool. So he tried to write bluntly and to cut his feelings as short as possible. To achieve the history teacher's coolness, which was only mediocrity, he distorted and damaged the thing that was best in him. At the same time he knew this wasn't natural or good. He began to find that when he wrote palely, with only a small part of his energies, he got good marks. So he went through all his essays afterwards cutting out the strong and direct-sounding words and putting hesitant ones in, like 'on the whole' and 'so to speak' and 'perhaps' and 'rather' and 'quite' and 'taking all in all'. He imitated what he thought was the necessary cool style. It felt like

blasphemy and self-betrayal.

But while he was sure something was wrong, he knew no other way of learning. And he was influenced by his school enough not to be able to credit anyone he read about with a real life like his own. If he learned the word accidie or a phrase like the night of the soul from a potted history of the Middle Ages he would never connect them with the feelings of emptiness he himself had at Abbott's Road! So he barred himself from real learning before he started. The moment he set foot in the world outside Abbott's Road --- by going to high school --- a mental world started in him in which his own flesh and experience, not only his accent, were flung out of service: both were infra dig!

The attitude grew up in him at this time that his parents lacked full moral responsibility for their own actions. Compared with the people of the higher world, few of whom he'd met and none of whom he knew, they were blind to life and were moved along by it in an automatic way. The people higher up carried about a conscious moral map of the world in their heads and applied the principles deliberately, while his mother and father were vague as to what they stood for. They didn't approach other people with a deliberate air. They only did what seemed right to them, apparently in blindness, when the occasion arose: but before and after such an occasion their morality was hidden. And this didn't seem to him a real morality.

Definite perceptual differences began to grow up between him and them. He no longer had any idea what it felt like to be them. He couldn't imagine, for instance, what it was like to do the same work every day and live in the same street and not ache for something more. He knew

it was possible and he knew he'd felt the same in his early years: but he couldn't remember what it was like. How far did his parents have his insight into things? Had they a deeper or a lesser insight? For while he attributed a lesser moral consciousness to them, he also suspected that in their silence there was something deeper he could no longer grasp. They had a steadiness, both of them, which he knew he'd lost. He relied on their goodness every day as a constant and unchangeable factor. Yet he couldn't see it as full moral responsibility. They were 'blind'. And he had no insight into this blind world he had once occupied; he could only see his childhood like a wonderful landscape in the farthest distance.

The people from the other world looked at you clearly. That is, their eyes showed a quick sensitivity to everything you did. This he called having a delicate understanding. But in Abbott's Road there was always a certain vagueness in people's eyes. His own eyes had it, too, and he began to regret it while he was at school and to try to diminish it, by pinching his look into what he thought was a down-to-earth look. And there was this vagueness in his work, too, he thought --- the same thing -- 'flying high', as the history-teacher called it. One mustn't fly!

When he stood in front of someone from the higher world he felt acutely and morbidly aware of himself. More than this, he felt that hidden questions were being asked about him, in the silence of the other person's head. Deductions were being made from his appearance. These questions concerned his true personality, underneath --- what was his character like? was he clever? was he good? That was what he meant by their approaching people deliberately, unlike his parents! He was dazzled by this! It was a curiosity about other people which he'd never found in Abbott's Road. He thought of it as an acute appreciation of other people,

though at the same time he was disquieted by the process that took place inside him when he was faced with it. One thing was clear: the moment he stood in front of someone from the other world he knew, even without them speaking, that they were from that world! They created a tense psychological relation. It was even in the form of their eyes, which had a more scrutinising quality than those he was used to. He was aware of middle-class people as creatures entirely distinct from himself whom he recognised by the state of lowered energy, his best self neutralised, into which he at once fell. Their presence was like an invisible wave paralysing his actions, which he attributed to his not being worthy of their level of understanding.

Whenever he met a middle-class person he softened himself unduly, to the point of lisping. He hung back, smiling and nodding agreement. He was never at full strength in their company. Often, far from attributing 'roughness' to him, as he thought, they put him down as soft in the head. From about his twelfth year on it became his constant discipline to curb his real self. Only with intimate friends did he argue and shout and move about freely. But the moment someone from the other world appeared he went quiet. And all the time he smiled and lisped he thought they were divining his real feelings perfectly. He included in that other world everyone from the local priest to the conservative M.P. who called at the door at election-times. They were all 'nice'. There was something of the same awe in his mother's voice when she said someone was 'a real gentleman'. He was tongue-tied in their presence as if under a great beneficent light.

Once he saw a well-dressed man step out of a car with a young girl, apparently his daughter. "Now - are you all right for money, darling?"

the man asked. She was about to go into a gateway that might have been a school or convent. "Yes, thank you," the girl said, "I think so!" But the man looked into her eyes searchingly and then put his hand in his pocket. "I think you'd better have a bit more," he said, "to be on the safe side." It was such a safe world, so exclusive of the terrors that went on outside, and for a moment Granville felt included in the safety, so strong was the atmosphere round the car, the man and the girl! 'She can't feel naked to the world like I do,' he thought. What a marvellous life it must be, with someone above you who could provide for everything! How wonderful never to have to aspire beyond your own parents but think of them as the leaders of your world! Tears came to his eyes as he stood there. He always remembered the incident as a little image of the world beyond Abbott's Road in its beneficence and strength. There was also a touch of cruelty in its exclusiveness and it might well have been this that brought the tears to his eyes; but he wasn't conscious of it at the time.

His brother talked glowingly about everyone he knew at college. It seemed to Granville that his brother was invested with the same brightness as those other people. Granville couldn't imagine his brother being defeated or thwarted in any way. All the world outside Abbott's Road seemed to him a unity, of which his brother was now an accepted part. He, too, with luck would move into that world. It wasn't the world of a better class for him; on the contrary, he was full of socialism at this time. Just a world in which grace and love abounded!

The visit to Cambridge made Abbott's Road even worse for him. It was like the death of all the impulses. He was numb, void of anything

like desires: there seemed no chance for them, no way out! The silence over the streets was worse than ever before. The moment he was back everything became unreal for him, even the memory of Cambridge. The raw industrial light, glaring and yet never really sunny, made the streets look dead and forlorn. He watched pieces of paper drift along the gutter. He wandered about for hours, his hands in his pockets. Cambridge was now like all the other useless daydreams he'd had. He tried to read but the activity now seemed absurd. How could he ever get out of these streets now? He had no money in his pocket! A friend of his brother's at Cambridge had said to him, "Just leave! Just run away!" A nice suggestion with a couple of shillings in your pocket!

And getting a job would condemn him to the streets once and for all. He knew no one outside these streets he could go to.

His mother and father were silent at this time. They had no suggestions. They only knew their own world, not ways of getting into the other, except through school and scholarships. The Bethnel Green camp had won. His mother wanted him to get an office-job at least. But Granville refused. He would work with his hands, in the open air, or not at all! So it looked like the docks, where he would start at a lower wage even than his grandfather, who'd never known how to read or write!

CHAPTER 10.

War suddenly brought this to an end. Nothing so miraculous had happened in his life! All the sixth-formers of the school were sent to the country as potential officer-cadets, to act as lookouts in the hills near the south coast in case of German invaders. They would get classes as at school but fewer of them, and they would look after themselves more or less. A contingent of twenty boys, of which he was one, travelled down to a village in West Sussex and were distributed among the houses, about three to a house. It all happened so suddenly that he couldn't believe it!

It was a tiny, silent village fitted snugly in to the side of a hill. All of a sudden it was full of life, like a city in which trees and hills had been preserved so that coloured lights fell on the leaves outside and homely voices could be heard across the fields! His life changed at once as if he'd only been waiting for this moment all his life! He sat in his room upstairs looking out of the window while he wound the khaki putties round his leg. All at once he was a soldier as well. It was marvellous! There was a slight mist below his window on the first day, and beyond a narrow gravel path he could see apple trees, the earth black between them. There were cheerful flowery curtains across the window and a glowing Persian carpet. A fire had been lit. The house had a sturdy, oaken look, with a wood-panelled bathroom. When he was in

his room he rarely heard a sound from the rest of the house except the creaking of boards.

The house was at the edge of the village, where the road sloped round the side of a hill, and behind it were steep woods protecting it from the bitter winds that came in from the sea. The owner, whom they were told to call Major, was retired from the Indian civil service and lived quietly with his wife. They went for long walks every afternoon dressed in tweeds, with stout walking sticks, followed by dogs. At meal-times a great golden gong from India was beaten in the hall downstairs by a pale, sturdy-armed maid, and the three cadets would sit down between the Major at one end of the table and his wife at the other. By her foot was an electric bell for the kitchen. Everything was done in a quiet and formal way, and little was said at meals. They heard the swish of the gardener's scythe outside, or the farm-tractor up the hill. The Major was tall and grey-haired, with a stern yet kindly expression in his eyes. He treated them with perfectly consistent respect as if they were his own age. It was the first time he'd come really near the coolness of the other world and he was fascinated. The rooms seemed so spacious! For nearly three days, apart from meals and his stints at the guardhouse, he did little but sit at his window looking out.

The docks were bombed, and his father's job ended. It happened on a beautiful, sun-lit Saturday afternoon, and the German planes, one wave after the other in perfect formation, looked like tiny, silver fish high in the blue sky. When his father went to work on Monday morning he found the whole of his area cordoned off by the police. One of the policemen asked him, "Did you work there, mate?", and when his father said yes he told him grimly, "Well, I reckon you can take a year's holiday

without pay, mate --- there's a million or more money gone down the drain there!" The yard where his father worked, and the whole of dockland from Woolwich to Tilbury, was a mass of twisted girders and rubble, and burning food. All the workers were laid off that day and his father took a job in East Ham with a catering firm connected with the army.

The guardhouse was in an outbuilding belonging to a farm, and when he was on night-duty he slept on the floor, doing two hours on and two hours off. The job of the cadets was to guard an area of railway line about a mile long. The farm stood among trees with a cobbled courtyard, and near by there was a fenced bridle-path that ran straight across country, with flat fields on either side. He looked at everything dreamily, seeing only vague outlines.

At night, when he was on guard, he climbed to the top of a steaming silo and sat there staring before him, sometimes imagining a movement in the darkness below. A breeze would stir the leaves and sometimes a cow would cough or low softly in the next field. A wonderful warmth came up from underneath him and his cheeks were flushed with health. He always looked forward to the huge breakfast of eggs and bacon and tomatoes soon after dawn, and the slow walk home when the day-guard came on, along the fenced bridle-path, past the mossy church at the edge of the village. The maid would just be up when they got in, lighting the stove and shivering a little. He felt strong and clear-headed.

One morning about six when the sky was already sunny and clear, with the slightest mist lingering among the trees, he walked to the railway line as part of his dawn inspection. He liked this spot especially. A bridge ran across the tracks, which were in a deep, grassy embankment.

He looked down on to these lines from the bridge as into a deep, endless ravine going in a perfectly straight line north and south as far as he could see. And something in the nature of a baptism into the countryside took place on this bridge. It was all so immense, and the fields were laid out so splendidly to the sky! He'd never known such spaciousness! The bridge was only used by farm vehicles going from one field to another, so that an intimacy hung about it. Its walls were of brick, mellowed by the weather, golden and red in the early sun. And between the bricks grass and moss had grown in places. It wasn't a bit like a bridge in the Abbott's Road district where the intimacy had been taken away and great trucks roared through. He could hear birds singing in the near by trees. And he had the impression that this immensity round him, unlike the immensity of things in Abbott's Road with their iron struts and spans, didn't exclude him. It was quite a discovery! Despite the massive early light falling on everything like a shroud he had an intimate sense of ownership. This bridge, too, had stout spans underneath, but they were made of brick and the size didn't confuse or belittle him. Some of the fields were yellow with corn not yet harvested, and the morning breeze made slight ripples across them. He could see the sea, a hazy blue in the distance beyond the hills. There wasn't a sound except for the birds. How strange that it could have been missed out of his life all this time, since early childhood!

He started taking long walks when he was off-duty. Then there were club meetings in the village to which the cadets were invited. Films were shown there, in a hall with huge beams that had once been a barn, and lecturers came down from London. Once or twice a week they went to the nearest market-town, where there was a bookshop with a low ceiling and

Tudor-style windows, and a snug room where you could have coffee. In the village there were two pubs, one of them with deep black-leather armchairs and settees where they sometimes sat in the evening, gazing into the fire. The leaves were just starting to fall, and there was a touch of winter chill on the air. Some teachers from the school had been evacuated to the market-town, and they came to the village several times a week to give lessons. But they weren't like real lessons. They were held in ordinary rooms, usually in one of the cadet's billets, with a blazing fire in the hearth, for only five or six cadets at a time. He seemed not to belong to school any longer. The world was up to something much bigger, and some of the teachers would be called up like the cadets after a year, and so there was an equality and freedom he hadn't known before.

One room where they took lessons had a great sycamore outside the window with dark-green spreading arms, motionless like a monument. He always sat with his back to the window, in an armchair, and the silence was so great that turning over the leaves of his book made a sharp sound. Nothing was too small for him to notice now. In London everything he'd read about had become just ideas, floating over him in a dead and neutral way! But here the leaves and the silence --- which was quite unlike the silence in Abbott's Road, perhaps because of the birds and the rustling sound in the trees whenever a slight wind blew --- made thinking and reading seem natural, even necessary! He found he could really enjoy a book for the first time, leaning back in his chair and letting his mind go where it wanted to. He used his eyes more. The world outside was closer: he could touch the leaves and in the morning he sniffed the air deliberately like a farmer.

He started really reading and learning for the first time. Knowledge poured into him. He always took a book to bed with him when he wasn't on duty; books were like listening to people talk, but in the silence, without time pressing down on you! And he listened for the first time in his life. He really listened, all poised, and quiet, not strained as he'd been in London. There hadn't been this leisure in London, this rhythm of leisure, slow and pausing; there'd only been an underground roar all the time, of the city, taken for granted like the smoke. He thought he could even have got a Cambridge scholarship now if he'd tried! It was remarkable for him to be able to read what he liked without feeling higher on account of it!

The shadow began to lift from his life. He made new friends. There was a teacher at the local school called Philby and his wife, and a few people his own age who came to the club, not cadets. The Philbys had a small house at the far end of the village and he started going there when he had a spare hour. They had two babies and a child of five. Quite a crowd gathered there sometimes. Usually Philby went up to bed early and left them talking. Jean, his wife, would be curled up on some cushions by the fire listening. She was the centre of the group and said once that she felt cheated of her youth by having children too early; yet she was only twenty-seven or so. Sometimes they talked all night, four or five of them together, drinking one cup of tea after another; it was a select group to which only Granville, of all the cadets, was admitted. Sometimes Philby would bang his shoe on the floor in the middle of the night if the talking was too loud, but he never came down, and Jean took no notice.

Jean Philby had a soft, smiling face and uncannily pale eyes.

There was a hurt look in them that came and went. She always gave Granville her special attention as if he were her charge. Once at table she asked her husband, "Don't you think Philip looks very un-English?" Being un-English implied romantic qualities. And Philby snapped, "No! I think he looks like an ordinary English schoolboy!" But she took no notice as usual and replied to this, "Oh, I think he looks like somebody who's just come from abroad!" It was the first time anyone had shown appreciation not of his qualities but of his being a person in himself at all! Really she brought him to life! When he was with her he never felt the old lurking sense of unworthiness, for the first time.

He became friends with a girl in the group called Kit and they fell in love. She lived in the village but her parents were usually in London, due to her father being an archivist for the war-office. She was usually at Jean Philby's for the all-night talking. But for weeks at the beginning he and she hardly spoke to each other; they would only gaze at each other sometimes. Then one hot night the following summer they stayed talking until nearly dawn, alone --- Jean had slipped up to bed with some excuse. They didn't put the lights on and he was aware of her as a shadowy form, mysterious in a way that made him catch his breath. It was nearly full moon and a vague silver light came from outside. Now and then there was the hoot of an owl, straight and neat-sounding, followed at once by the silence. Behind the house was a steep hill with woods at the top, now a tall black shadow. And there was high grass outside that came as far as the walls. They left the house together and kept a foot or so apart, afraid to touch each other, and took a path across the fields, going round the village to get to where he lived. They passed through a copse of young trees with a stream running through it, and there they

suddenly kissed each other shyly and uncomfortably, and stood there until they were chilled to the bone. The dawn was just starting to come up; for the first time they really looked into each other's eyes, and Kit said it made her feel giddy, like looking into a chasm that was marvellous and inviting but yet at the same time dangerous because one would never come back if one fell into it. She was still a tom-boy, with a lively and pretty face. She threw little stones at him and laughed. Before them there was a gravel path which became more and more yellow as the light grew, revealing bushes on the other side. The birds sang louder and louder in the branches above them, startling in the morning silence. She had black, glittering eyes and very white teeth that flashed when she smiled. They ran home shivering as the sun appeared --- to the Major's house, because her mother was at home. They tiptoed through to the kitchen where he wrapped an overcoat round her shoulders and put the kettle on for tea. He prayed the maid wouldn't come down but at the same time didn't care if she did: life was so different for him now --- a stupendous light had spread over everything and he was in a state of trembling ecstasy which he'd never even imagined before.

Kit was slower to say she was in love. He went through a week or more of frightful apprehension, during which he hardly slept; but even that was ecstatic, and at night when the warm air drifted across his room from the fields he had the satisfaction of dreaming about her face and of the way she walked. He always remembered the kitchen afterwards with its scrubbed wooden table and tiled floor and the perfect stillness of everything in it --- the cups and willow-painted plates on the tall dresser, the marble sink and the wooden ladles and spoons hanging by the stove --- and how the brightness growing outside made the copper pans glow with a

wonderful mellow warmth. That day, in the afternoon when there was hot sunlight, and the drowsy clip-clipping sound of the gardener's shears drifted in through the window, he wrote her a little note beginning, 'The beast has reared its ugly head! I'm in love with you.' He didn't know why he mentioned a beast. There was something fabulous about the phrase, he felt; and it made it clear that he wasn't responsible for his love in case it inconvenienced her. The following day she came to the house and stared at him for minutes on end, sitting on his bed while he lay back on the pillows. She said she could feel nothing. But slowly she came round and one afternoon looked at him with sudden recognition, smiling brilliantly.

A year or so afterwards, when they were hardly friends any more, she working in a factory in Liverpool and he a soldier now, Jean Philby told him that she'd always seen them as belonging together from the first; and now she regretted having 'made it easy' for them! "Look at the suffering you've both been through!" she said. But this annoyed Granville. He felt the suffering was part of his love, the other side of it, so to speak. But Jean Philby clung to an ideal view of life, and saw it only as a mistake.

He and Kit met at her house continually in the first months, sometimes staying the night on a narrow divan. When they did so she went up to bed early. The all-night talking became less. One morning Philby came downstairs early when the heavy dew was dripping from the trees outside and, leaning over the divan, gave them an intimate wink. Sometimes Kit came to the Major's house and sat in his room with him. Usually no one saw her because he had a key of his own. But once the Major's wife passed them on the stairs and looked right through her. She said nothing

afterwards but the Major gave him an embarrassed glance at dinner that evening. Probably they didn't care to pull him up because he'd be a soldier soon; people expected another trench-war when all the young men would be wiped out, as in 1914.

The Major's wife was friendlier to the other two cadets than to him. They took the dogs out for long walks and in the evening joined her and the Major for cocktails and bridge. The Major often told anecdotes about the 1914 war over dinner, describing plans of attack with the help of playing cards, and addressed most of his remarks to the other two. His wife described Granville as 'dreamy', with a trace of bitterness, though she also smiled; the Major always showed disapproval of personal remarks -- he would purse his lips and look down, quite stiff. She said once at table to the other cadets, "Granville seems to have packed up his troubles in his old Kit-bag, doesn't he?" And she laughed and sang, "Oh, smile, smile, smile!" To her mind he took not nearly enough interest in the war and so there was a double meaning here. There was also something delicate and melancholy in her. She would gaze before her in her armchair for minutes on end sometimes. She had no children; perhaps that was why.

One day he was astonished when Kit said to him, "You're always on top of the world so, aren't you?" And once in London when they were walking through the grounds of Kensington Palace a uniformed attendant crossed their path, holding up his hand and said, "I'm sorry, there's no way through here!" And for no reason at all Granville began blushing, rooted helplessly to the spot as he'd been in Abbott's Road! Kit and the attendant stared at him, for a moment united in a common human curiosity. And afterwards when they were walking away she whispered to him, "Phil! That's the first time I've seen you go red! I didn't know you could!"

She seemed to think of him as an impregnable sort of person! He was astonished and didn't correct her. He wanted to seem uncaring and gay all the time! And ironically, it was the main reason why Kit left him later on. He refused to be serious, she said --- for instance, about politics.

He spent quite a lot of his time with a fellow-teacher of Philby's called Walsh, who had a small, neat cottage near the church and was often at the local film-shows and discussions. He was a dark, reticent young man with a loping walk, and usually he had a pipe in his mouth. Something in Granville intrigued him, though there was little real sympathy between them. He was much more Kit's friend --- she was the one who introduced them to each other.

Walsh would watch him in silence, sucking his pipe. He never raised his voice, and spoke in a precise way, considering everything he said and sometimes taking the pipe out of his mouth to scrutinise its bowl while he thought something over, as if the idea he was after lay somewhere in the dirty ashes. He was the son of a big corn-merchant in the north country and could have had a large private income if he'd wanted it, but he preferred to teach at a small village-school and live on what he earned. His rooms, three of them, plus a kitchen, were religiously simple. He never took a first-class railway ticket - or a taxi, even late at night when there was a mile and a half to walk from the railway-station. His clothes were old but neat. He even refused to go into the saloon bar of the local pub, and preferred drinking mild beer in the public. He disapproved strongly if a friend of his took a short drink there - gin or whisky. He would say in a cutting voice, "I always used to like this

place, you know, when it was a four-ale bar and no more!" And he tried to blunt his accent into a common one. The farmhands and workers who collected in the public bar were beyond criticism or reproach for him, and when with them he would try to disown his own past. He seemed to be ashamed of Granville if they went there together, and he would try not to notice fellow-teachers sitting in the saloon bar, which was visible through a large hatch. He would call out, "A pint of old-and-mild, Tom!" to the publican in the same style as the others. And his pipe would begin to look like a clay pipe from the way he sucked at it there.

The Major's wife called Walsh 'the village-bolshie', and he described himself as a 'militant socialist'. This was the cause of his intrigued curiosity about Granville, as someone who had come from the 'right' class; and it was the ground he shared with Kit, who was beginning to believe in communism, partly under his influence. Philby said with a dry laugh that Walsh wouldn't mind a bloody revolution if other people shed the blood and didn't tell him about it beforehand! Of course, the Philby house was looked on as a nest of thieves by the bigger houses. Russia's pact with Germany was a big blow to Walsh and he lost face for a time. The Major's wife made capital out of it and told Granville she wondered he had time for a friend of the Nazis!

Granville never knew when he was going to say something of which Walsh would disapprove. Sometimes Walsh would be silent for minutes on end, sucking his pipe, his eyes fixed on a point in front of him, and Granville, his stomach turning over with a quaint fear, would go back over the conversation in his mind trying to find out what he'd said wrong. Walsh's silence made him feel sheepish and sometimes frightened but he never thought of reproaching him, much less of getting up and leaving;

nor, for that matter, did he reproach himself or change any of his own ideas! Walsh only showed inner anger: it made his eyes glaring and a little smoky, with a terrible fixity. He never had an outburst. On the contrary, his voice was quieter when he was furious.

Walsh always seemed to have secret thoughts hovering behind his set face. And the puffs he took at his pipe seemed to mark time to his silent thoughts. He would gaze at a point on the ground, shooting a quick glance now and then at the other person. If Granville spoke without preparing his words carefully beforehand, or in a precipitous way, with conviction, leaning forward, he would recoil at once and appear strangely exhausted, his eyes wandering away. So Granville tried to curb his manner in his presence with the result that, just as Walsh sat with a fixed expression, his thoughts going on in silence, so did he! This was, perhaps, his first real contact with the psychology of the other world. And he even seemed to realise this, but only as a dim feeling, not at all articulately. When they were together a third element was always present. There wasn't just the two of them in direct talk, saying whatever passed through their heads. There was this third ghost in the silence of the brain that made Granville's occasional departures into direct speech --- his words getting the better of him --- seem strange and unhinged. This ghost followed them wherever they went; and he knew quite well that it was started by Walsh, since he'd never experienced it before and hadn't found it in anyone else. The moment he was away from the man this ghost was gone also. He was in the true world again, his blood flowed properly and his joints were no longer stiff!

Walsh planned every day neatly. That was another thing Granville noticed: he always seemed to be sniffing life in order to form a plan for

the next step forward; he seldom just went to a place. If he had to go to London, as he sometimes did on a teaching job for the Ministry of Food, he reserved his seat well ahead. Before they went for a walk he would look up at the sky in a careful way, wondering whether to take a macintosh. He kept a large stock of medicines in his bathroom cupboard to cover any eventuality. He knew where every hospital in the district was and what means of transport was available in case of an air-raid. Even when they were actually out walking there had to be plan behind it, to see a church that had excellent stained-glass windows, or the ruins of a Roman villa that had just been unearthed. If he had to stay at a hotel he would book-up beforehand and discuss the price in a firm way. Granville felt quite ashamed of himself sometimes --- he was so untidy by comparison, and he did drift along so! Walsh had a neat way of dismissing all his practical suggestions.

It was sometimes difficult to get Walsh's attention, because he was so wrapped-up in his thoughts. Once they walked up a hill called the Mountain locally --- Walsh, Kit and Granville --- but Walsh talked and sucked at his pipe all the time and looked perfectly astonished when Kit pointed out the view of Chichester harbour in the farthest distance. It was best to be in a room with him, alone. Then a certain snugness was possible. It brought all the world within the compass of the brain. There were consolations in that. Once Granville asked him, "Don't you think Kit's simply lovely?" and he looked away at once with, "Oh! I've known her a long time, you know!"

Only after he was in the army and a long way from Sussex did Granville know, through a letter he got from Jean Philby, that Walsh had been in love with Kit but had refused to let this interfere with his

liking for Granville, or what he thought was his liking. They never met again. There was something moving about Walsh which he always remembered afterwards. He wasn't a happy person nor even was he good-willed, but yet he had this moral preoccupation that made him like a servant for others: he allowed himself no tantrums and he never turned people away from his door even half-way through the night. Morality was like a monster sitting on his shoulders. He had no real friends and spent hours alone in his front room. Every visit to him was a fresh beginning: Granville was as shy of going into his cottage after a year as he had been the first day.

Granville's nickname in the Philby group was 'the drifter', and Walsh was always on about this.

"Are you a socialist or are you not a socialist?" he would ask. "In our world you have to decide!"

There would be a pause and Granville would say with a laugh, "Yes, I suppose I am!"

Walsh talked a great deal about the revolution that would inevitably come at the end of the war. He went through a list of social schemes that would have to be effected to make the country happy. Granville nodded earnestly when these schemes were discussed. But really he was bored! He helped Walsh at the local political meetings and sometimes went to Chichester with him to pick up propaganda-pamphlets from the labour party headquarters. Kit was in her element in that sort of work. She didn't believe the revolution would be bloodless and said she didn't care much if it wasn't. She also told him when they were alone once that Walsh was a 'compromiser', one of those who would be used as a 'stepping-stone' to the dictatorship-of-the-proletariat and dispensed with

afterwards.

She and Walsh rounded on Granville together for not being more 'class-conscious'. He had taken her up to Abbott's Road once and it was this visit that caused her to introduce him to Walsh, as a new 'working-class contact'.

Once when they were walking together across the fields to Philby's house he suddenly said to Walsh with a yawn, "Gosh, I'm so tired! Let's sit down for a bit!" He'd been on guard part of the night and promptly lay down with his eyes closed. Walsh was annoyed.

"What do you want to sit down for?" he asked. "There are things to do!"

"What do you mean?" Granville laughed. "We're going to have tea at Jean's, aren't we?"

Walsh was at a loss for words and after studying the bowl of his pipe said, "It's your attitude ---!"

"What's wrong with my attitude?"

"Well, you can't just drift! You've got to help the others you left behind in your class --- you can't just drift off from them like that!"

"How can I help them?"

"By political action!"

He was perplexed. He didn't believe in political action but he had no argument against it! All he could do was shrug! And again Walsh started talking about the future, his eyes fixed. It was a wonderful dream for him, the time when all Englishmen would be brothers and there would no longer be classes. Sometimes when he talked Granville did catch a glimpse of this future and for a day or two afterwards he concentrated on political work. But it never lasted long.

He tried hard to become class-conscious. He read 'State and Revolution'. But he soon forgot it. He took long walks alone and read other books such as Pepys's Diary and the letters of the duchess of Devonshire, which he hid whenever Walsh came to his room. Kit was amused by the letters and drew no political conclusions, thankfully. He felt a growing resistance in himself to the other two, though he was in love with one of them: he wasn't going to be swindled out of his new life. He would enjoy the countryside!

Kit enchanted him with her lively, dark, glittering manner, so quick and soft at the same time. Her eyes always seemed to blaze goldenly, from the moment she opened them in the morning. She strode along when they were out together, bent forward a little and her chin pushed out with determination. He loved the way the skin went across her nose, like a little freckly bridge to her cheeks, so childish and delightful! Her skin was dark and she went brown easily in the sun, her eyes more searching than before. Her lips tasted of fruit, and indeed her whole face had something scrumptious and fruity about it. They ragged each other like children. But she became a young woman quickly, from a girl. Her body changed. Her waist grew slimmer and her hips and breasts larger. Her face lost its chubbiness and began to wear a more determined and aware look.

He was astonished to find himself a gay person. That seemed to take place in a moment, a few days after he arrived at the village. He romped across the field with Jean Philby's little girl and pulled faces at her. 'Why aren't I shy and ashamed?' he asked himself. But he wasn't. It was like standing back and giving way to something inside him which had always been there. It was the easiest thing in the world! He only had

to forget himself, and then a self poured out which he'd never known before! Also it had something to do with the air, cool and clear, sometimes smelling of the sea; it belonged to the wide fields and the steep, wooded hill outside Jean Philby's window. Sometimes, for a moment or two, the past would suddenly fall on him again like a black shadow and he would stand paralysed with fright and embarrassment, wondering at his own audacity, trying to stop a blush climbing up his neck from under his collar, talking very fast to hide it, but unable to move or turn away. These moments were unnoticed, luckily. He always managed to laugh, calculating that his flush would be put down to merriment. There was freedom, most of all, in the way Jean Philby looked at him; nothing in her gaze limited him. He watched his own nature unfold, with surprise. It was like starting life all over again. He began to notice that other people looked at him with attention when he spoke. All his ideas that had seemed outlandish and extravagant at school were now, apparently, sane, and sometimes other people even shared them!

If, when he was alone, the old Abbott's Road nervousness threatened him, or a hint of the 'giddy fit', he left his room at once and went for a smart walk through the valley south of the village, and gradually the air would fill him again, and strength would come back. His surroundings were alive now, and that saved him; in Abbott's Road they'd been dead --- hard, bare, sharp! The 'giddy fits' ceased almost entirely. He never felt lonely now, though he spent more time alone than ever before.

Sometimes when he was reading quietly in bed at night a ghostly whisper would come into his mind, 'You can't do it! You can't concentrate on that book, you're not good enough!' And for a moment he would shudder and be dislodged. That voice would go on for years, he thought. If only

he could have a cool life, taking an easy relish in things like the Major and his wife! Why did he have to be ravished and torn all the time? It would take him years to learn that attitude of leaning back from the world in cool thought, instead of straining forward all the time, driven on my the mond!

Living so freely was like living without death; there were no regrets and shames to hold you back and make you dream of a better life! You weren't turned inward, to reflect on life as a span of time. "Why do people need ideals?" he asked Jean once. "We've got the ideal here! Life is ideal!" And she looked up at him with a quick, questioning look, then nodded with a smile, in silence.

Even with Walsh he felt free, essentially: he thought of him in a context of his bachelor-cottage with the tiny fireplace, the oleander bush touching the window outside, the air smoky from his pipe, and the books on his shelves that were so colourful.

The silence, and the leisure in the dead of the night when he leaned on his rifle gazing into the darkness or watching the clouds move across the sky in the moonlight, gave him a new support. His education had given him no inkling of it! Had it been missed out deliberately?

It had put a design of names on the world; he realised that he'd been taught at school as if no other design existed in life except this design of names! Only men's names for things! The universe was 'space', 'gravitation'. Animals were 'nerves' and 'glands'. It implied that life was really a system of ideas, at its root, at the font of creation. And now he was beginning to find something behind that design, something that breathed.

His education had no words to describe this. It began to seem to him that the power of speech had been taken away from him, rather than given him! An iron vice had been fixed on to his head, and he could no longer turn freely this way and that. But he would be free!

The trouble was that he'd absorbed his education. He actually did perceive life as if men's names for it were the only reality! The sky was 'empty space' for him. He'd got this impression in physics --- a vast, empty universe governed by laws and full of bodies in perpetual motion like an infinitely subtle machine! This machine had never been known to come into existence; it was just there. Yet it wasn't a mystery, either --- the scientists were supposed to know all about it.

The earth was supposed to be whizzing round the sun at a terrific rate, but he couldn't really see how this was possible. Everything round him was quite still, or at least moving soberly, so in what sense was the earth whizzing round? It was only whizzing round in a sense. Yet it was 'true'. It could be 'proved'. But how was it he couldn't conceive it? Well, that 'whizzing' was only a way of putting it. It didn't mean real earthly whizzing such as he could see with his own eyes. It meant the earth whizzed in relation to the sun provided you could stand at a certain point in space millions of miles away, which he couldn't. And all his education was like this --- a way of putting things. But never the thing itself --- never what you saw and felt and smelt. So in his childish way Granville had begun to doubt his own perceptions and to feel that he was being deceived in the most elementary things of life.

So now, when he looked up at the sky, its vastness didn't move him to wonder but to a kind of intellectual bafflement and fear much like his state during on of the 'giddy fits' in Abbott's Road. It was also

like looking into death, where he would fall for ever one day, toppling down into space and then further space. How painful it was to be alive -- what an absurd accident it seemed --- in a world that was uniformly represented as dead! And he realised it was a dead universe he'd been taught to believe in.

He remembered this feeling even as a child, of being given nothing by this kind of knowledge. It was during a simple experiment which had showed how metals expanded. The teacher took a black ring and passed a little ball of iron through it; then he heated this ball over a Bunsen burner and showed that it would not pass through the ring no longer. Now Granville had understood it perfectly. But there'd been an odd silence in his mind which he remembered vividly even now. What was the teacher going to say next? But he said nothing! That, apparently, was the lesson! Granville was waiting for the lesson to be given meaning. But it had no meaning! It was like being told, 'A man hit a boy over the head', just that: well, he understood it, but --- what next? The trouble really was that nobody explained what these facts were for. That was the missing link. In fact, nobody said they were for anything! And this was what made the facts dead. They didn't lead anywhere. And more and more at school he'd felt an antipathy to this kind of learning. He'd even argued against it and said it wasn't the truth. But he felt defeated in the argument. Clearly it was the truth, or at least you couldn't say it was wrong'.

Now, in the country, he asked himself seriously what had been wrong. He felt he could solve it now, in the quiet of his new life. And this new life made the question more urgent than before --- because

he had a secret feeling that he was enjoying something under false pretences now. The 'truth' he'd learned at school had never included anything like this! Not this silence or immensity! Was his new life just 'private' then? This is what his education taught him to think! But he had an obstinate conviction that there was a truth in his new life that surpassed anything in his education, and that all this time he'd been misled.

Almost every day he took a walk alone, usually to get to the Philby's house. It meant climbing a hill, across meadows. He always expected to come to the top of the hill at the first stile, but another field stretched ahead, with grazing cattle. There was a copse of young trees near by, slender and wispy, with a cool stream, and then, beyond it, a deep wood of older trees, tall conifers and oaks, where he and Kit had stood that first morning, in the growing dawn.

Sometimes he would stand there listening, especially on a sunny day. Every sound --- a dog in the distance, the cry of a child --- melted into the silence. He tried to grasp what it was that held him there. His mouth tried to frame the question he wanted to ask. But he couldn't get even as far as the question! Whenever he passed a lovely spot it was the same. His tongue twitched, wanting to find the words of a question. What was the message being given to him? What were the trees saying, that he could listen to them always, without knowing what was said?

One hot morning he stopped at a disused quarry on the road to Chichester, captured by the stillness of everything. And he seemed near an answer. There was long grass at the edge of the road, and the quarry was like a cliff, overgrown with stiff, dusty bushes now. There wasn't a soul near by. The road was quite wide, but because it was war-time it was

hardly used. So it had a mysterious look. He walked down the middle. It was like walking along a desert-road, parched and dusty, only with bushes and trees close on either side. Everything baked, and his eyes were dazzled. There wasn't a sound except the shrill singing of the birds. They swooped and flew over the road as if a car had never passed there. The road bent frequently, and this gave it an untouched air as if every corner could lead to the most marvellous place in the world where one could stay for ever.

His hands were in his pockets and he was aware of a peace actually in his body that he'd never known before. It seemed that the sunlight was going right through him and he was part of the grass and trees, indistinguishable from them. He felt hazy, too, as if walking along and being in the open was part of a great sleep. There was no fixed difference between his own feelings and what was going on outside. He had the impression that if he threw himself on the grass and stretched out, its touch wouldn't be from the outside but only a further aspect of sleep. It again struck him as most strange that no one had ever told him about this kind of thing. And he had a sense of returning to something. It was a feeling of reaching home again, and of recognising it as home by the ease and satisfaction of his body, not by any sign that he remembered. His last visit to this home could have been before his life began, so strong was his yearning! The silence round him seemed to be beyond his life, while including it. His surroundings had taken him over entirely, their drowsy prisoner, and yet he was perfectly free, more so than he had ever been before in his life. What was this strange design in things, already there? It seemed close to having a voice. It breathed!

The more he tried to think about it the more baffled he was. It

stole over him like a marvellous, natural drug, forcing his mind out of action the more he tried to revive it. The moment he thought, 'What is this spell I'm under?' he became conscious of himself standing there alone, separate from the drowsy heat, and the spell was gone. And then, when the mind gave way again, it returned to life.

And he realised that this spell was precisely what his education had left out. It had been the tone of all the school-learning --- in biology the rabbit, but the rabbit dead, in history people but people dead, without their private lives, in physics the sky, but the sky dead, without its awful presence over us!

Suppose he tried to see things in that way, missing out the spell of life? And he did try, one morning, standing at the bridge. He tried to see the fields and trees as a kind of mineral and vegetable collection, the bridge as a mathematical problem of spans and stresses, the sky as empty space. And he realised that to do this he had to withdraw himself. He had to go cold. He had to take the life out of himself. Just what they'd asked him to do at school --- to qualify for middle-class life! And it occurred to him --- as the slightest whisper, hardly caught --- that this was what the middle-class view of life was essentially: life with the spell taken out! Was this all he'd learned --- not knowledge at all, not real knowledge, but the middle-class attitude to life? Was this all modern education was, in fact? Not learning at all!

Instead of walking up and down the bridge naturally as he did on other mornings, he had stopped and was thinking --- but this thinking wasn't real thinking, with the whole of him, it was a kind of brain-thinking, cold, peering at life from a distance, in a pale way, not in it any more. He

was pinning things down --- like pinning butterflies down by their wings! --- that was what he was doing with the things all round him! Those things breathed with a life much like his own --- but he was missing that out at the moment --- he was treating them as dead. And so, he was partly dead as well.

And he suddenly realised by a person should want to do that, why he should want to kill life. In order to make it work in a certain way! If you wanted a person to work in a certain way you could do it by going cold to them, by seeing them as just muscles to be manipulated: that is, if you had the power over them. And we had power over all this breathing countryside! It wasn't much of a power. But that was the only power we had, a brain power. We could watch and calculate, rather like watching a person to find out his habits and then put them to a clinical use; we could make the earth work as we wanted it to, we could force it to work for us. It did work for us, but to get it to do so we had to be half-dead ourselves! Q.E.D.'. You kill life to make it work, it will work, but its spell over you has to cease first!

Of course, it was the truth, you couldn't oppose it though you might dislike it! It was the truth about life considered dead.

And now he began to see that the world he knew through himself alone wasn't necessarily false, nor private like a dream.

Also he was amazed to find an England he'd never known before. It was the England that had gone before Abbott's Road --- before these gleaming railway tracks had begun. And to a surprising extent it lay there still, untouched. And he felt strangely close to it in his own person --- in his flesh and blood --- so that for the first time in his

life he knew what it meant to be English! Before, it had meant nothing. He'd just been a ghost --- a brain-ghost hovering in the streets, belonging nowhere.

Was that what he'd suffered all those years --- life with the spell taken out? Was Abbott's Road just a world with the spell taken out? Was it the work of people for whom life held no spell --- was it just one of their experiments, only with live people? Had they used live people to function for them as they'd made the fields and earth and air? Was that why it looked like a grey, silent camp where the guards were invisible --- not the real world at all, not a real place where things breathed? A place without trees, without any visible grace at all --- where the people were locked inside themselves and walked stiffly, keeping the flame of life going only in their homes, in tiny, warm, brilliant rooms!

Had that been the terrible hunger he'd suffered from --- hunger for the spell? A positive suffering would have been better --- Bethnel Green would have been better with its dark, smoky streets --- like corridors under the earth so terrible that they had a kind of new mystery --- and the children barefooted --- the women sitting at the doors and the wild scenes on Saturday night --- that was why he'd hung back from Walsh's clean little plans --- he wasn't sure it was better to live clean, without the spell of life all round you, than to live dirty with all the colour and wildness and passion still intact!

In them --- in May and Sid and all the people packed into that tiny hut-like house in Bethnel Green --- England had still been intact! People had only tried to take the spell out of them, but they hadn't succeeded. But in Abbott's Road they had succeeded. There, the last untidiness had gone: there was just the stark working world, with the skeleton of factory-

schedule over everything! But in May and all those people there had still been the flush of a peculiar kind of human triumph --- in May's cheeks you could see it, in the children, in the thick, sing-song voices! And a touch of the old limitless aristocracy was still there --- the rash, blazing quality which was now almost quenched!

He became aware of England's aristocracy. And he realised that the marvel of England, breathing like a wounded animal now, almost gone, in terrible, fitful starts --- had been laid by those people. They had had the spell of life! You could feel it in the duchess of Devonshire's letters. A terrible, blinding, self-destructive spell! A wonderful folly!

And he seemed to be looking for this again. But where was it? How could it have a face? How could it be a thing at all? What was it? His lips tried to frame an answer. Was it in the little village churchyard? Was it in the walk he took nearly every day? Was it in certain moments? Was it in Kit? He only seemed to touch it unawares sometimes, and lose it again!

All this was madness to Kit. She said she didn't know what it had to do with the future! She thought he knew something she didn't --- from his childhood, perhaps. But in the end she gave up trying to find out what it was. She began to think it wasn't there.

He began to wonder if that spell wasn't 'God'. He began to look at the village church with a new interest. Had it been the function of his education to exclude God?

He realised how much nearer he'd been to that spell as a child. He'd even had some religious understanding then! He remembered the church in Abbott's Road, tall and gloomy and rather bare, but with an odd warm

fascination perhaps because of its tallness and spaciousness. That memory was locked behind so many shadows now! He remembered the confirmation-classes --- he'd caught a glimpse of Christ, even, there! But then the image had faded. And then the word 'Christ' had become meaningless. Only now did it awaken again, slightly, as a dim memory he mustn't talk about. 'Christ' seemed to mean something different at the Philbys' house. It wasn't a serious word there. It felt silly using it, even in the silence of his own thoughts. He kept quiet. Two images persisted in his mind: the Christ he'd glimpsed as a child, saying, 'Come, little children, unto me!', like someone who would never betray you as long as you lived; and the Christ at Philby's house --- weak, respectable, preaching, watery, an empty, historical name.

The sense of a private mission --- to think these things out --- grew on him in Sussex. It helped him through the war, and then through long weeks of training at the T.I.M. training school. It made him feel beyond whatever he was doing. So it took the stress off things. Walsh said to him once, 'What makes you think you've got to take the whole of society in tow and bring it into port?' It was the only time Walsh used a shipping image and he remembered it afterwards. In later years the same thing annoyed Pinkie as well. Who was he to give himself the airs of a thinker? It did seem absurd --- he had no qualifications! Yet, also, wasn't that an excellent beginning, to have no qualifications? What had the qualified thinkers done for him?

Sussex was also his first real taste of the 'higher world' he'd always dreamed about. He began to judge a person to be of this 'higher world' by the things he said, by his tone or expression, sometimes just

by the words he used. But he couldn't make this judgement articulate. He couldn't say what the principles behind it were. He was just aware of a foreign consciousness. It might be in a certain use of the word 'democracy' to mean something moral, rather like the word 'decency' --- as if life, even political organisation, was a moral affair, but moral in a small way, without passion or real concern, just conventional and colourless. But he couldn't see why this struck him as of the 'higher world'.

It might be in the use of the word 'sensitivity' to mean artistic temperament --- the moment a person said this word he seemed marked as 'higher world', without real powers of thought and experience, only conventionality, but conventionality masquerading under new words. That word was much in vogue at the time. It was fashionable to be 'sensitive', as it was to be 'progressive'.

You felt it in phrases, too --- 'Everybody can't be a genius', which seemed to slight the ordinary genius there is in every creature. Or, 'Keep an open mind', 'Listen to both sides of the question'. They were all signs of the 'higher world' mediocrity. Also a great respect for being 'modern' --- a fear of not being 'modern': that was another sign. They all wanted to march in a group of some sort, including Kit. Everything wayward, lonely, hesitant in Granville frightened her. Really she wanted somebody with a tidy exterior. And he knew this underneath. That was her world, really and truly. Really she looked for the same things as the Major's wife did --- a 'solid' young man with a 'future', who 'worked' regular hours and had a 'purpose' and didn't 'spill over' all the time; only for Kit he must be 'progressive' --- he had to use different words.

The Major's wife maintained that people should 'keep both feet planted firmly on the ground' --- this was another much-used phrase, but only among the 'reactionaries', not among people like Philby and Walsh. The word 'ground' here meant something like the facts Granville had learned at school --- life with the spell missing. As soon as you showed signs of the spell you were 'flying high'! You couldn't be relied on.

Both groups had the same scepticism, the same hardness that always rejected the imagination. Walsh and Philby had this strongly and consciously, much more so than the Major, in fact. Kit was afraid. Only Jean Philby had a lingering, regretful sense that she was going the wrong way --- she seemed to be looking back all the time, as she drew further and further into that hard world, always with her little smile, so full of gentleness and a kind of dumb hurt.

Walsh was always saying, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" Behind every thought there had to be a plan of action, to make it valid. And 'action' meant, not a change in your own life, but a social act like making a donation to the local progressive club. Everybody had to see it or hear it to make it a real 'action'. The marvellous, infinite actions of the hidden self didn't count. They didn't exist!

The others seemed too afraid to consult their own feelings, even Kit. Feelings were 'private' and 'subjective'. When they did give vent to their feelings --- not Kit, but certainly Walsh and Philby --- it was like a tyre suddenly being let off, the effect was of something private and chaotic, without real objective authority. The feeling didn't well up in them naturally, in a straight flow, but was interfered with and came out in a cutting and dangerous way that chilled the heart, or in the form of an outburst, which they themselves felt to be shameful. Granville had

grown up among shouting, feeling safe and intimate, with nothing twisted or interfered with inside him, and so he felt the difference strongly.

Everybody in the 'higher world' was in some way a cripple. He didn't feel this of Jean or her husband --- or of any particular parson. It was just an impression, dimly present, as if providence were laying it aside for him, 'To be accounted for later'. It was a dim impression that he must live the rest of his life among cripples because of his education, and ultimately become one himself!

'Higher world' people had all sorts of odd little nervous diseases that came from the disordered heart. One person had bad breath; another was locked in silence, like a permanent deficiency; another had trouble in the lavatory, and was always asking for laxatives; another --- where the disorder was closer to the surface, so to speak --- always had his head in a textbook of psychology, looking for clues; another was horrified at any reference to sex; another had an ugly obsession with it. And none of these things seemed remarkable in that world! They were taken as a matter of everyday life! No wonder drugs were needed --- to stun and paralyse the twisted nerves!

And, like Walsh, people always seemed to recoil when he began really talking from himself. Rather as if he were a stink, and they had to draw back! While his mind was working, while he was in strict mental control of his words, there was no recoil; but the moment he fell into natural speech, talking unguardedly, the recoil came. About this experience he was quite conscious and articulate. One day he said to Kit that some people made him feel 'a distasteful sort of person', and she replied with a laugh that she'd been made to feel that since a little girl!

It planted a seed in him during the Sussex-days which was the

opposite of the seed of freedom planted by Jean, though from the same world: this was an unnatural state of distress with people not his close friends; and it grew on him more and more as he penetrated into the 'higher world'.

There was something wistfully curious and divining in the Major's wife. He would catch her dreaming sometimes, gazing before her, a searching expression in her eyes, while her hands lay placidly in her lap. But there was always the recoil. Always a distasteful subject that had to be avoided! What was this secret inner stain?

Kit loved Abbott's Road but turned against it in the end. She told Jean she'd expected more 'class-consciousness' among working people. When they were talking about the district one day she cried, "Oh, it's wonderful all right, but why are they all so bloody passive?" She said it was 'a little heaven' --- but that was the trouble, you could live there for ever without 'doing' anything.

There was a look in her face he'd never seen before. It was a sort of 'we've-got-to-get-things-done' look, closed and grim like the look that sometimes came into Walsh's face. It was grudging and impatient. It didn't really go with her face. It was so different from her first look in Sussex when she'd been open and boyish, always laughing at him.

CHAPTER 11.

He was conscripted into the army and there was almost no real goodbye between them. Pathetically, to appease her and bring her back he wrote her a letter from his barracks which he copied out carefully from several rough drafts, like an official document, in which he told her how he too looked forward to the socialist commonwealth and that she must never take him to mean anything contrary to that in his little jokes and games. He read it over and over to himself, marvelling at the neatness and soundness of his expressions. At the end he said he would do anything in his power while he was in the army to bring the wonderful day nearer when they would all be united! The inference being that if mankind was going to unite they might as well do the same, to make a job of it. He never got a reply. He didn't see her again.

He lived in a deadly soldier's world for several months, hollow and degraded. He went with one or two skirts available near the camp and in the end caught clap, a virulent type which the military doctor said was 'Spanish'. It meant hospital for a few weeks and then a return to hospital because there was an inexplicable, painful relapse. He took it as a moral punishment. Every time he felt desire and every time he dozed off at night a stabbing pain went through him like a reminder and woke him up with a start. He didn't sleep with another woman for a year, until they got to the organised brothels of Egypt and the Lebanon, which had first-aid stations near by where permanganate-of-potash douches were available: he

showed the other officers how to do it, with the professional touch. It meant inserting a narrow tube and then relaxing one's muscles until the red liquid flowed down into the bladder. The doctor in England explained it to him as 'having a pee backwards, if you see what I mean'.

But he was healthy and well-fed and too busy to think about the past. During his training he grew stronger and filled out remarkably. His muscles and nerves protected him: they hid everything. He was amazed one day in France after his battalion's first operation near Caen when a signaller remarked how calm he always seemed.

There was also the travelling. At Alexandria, where he was sent first, he gazed at everything with his mouth open as the ship drew in to harbour. He was fascinated by the dazzling sunlight, the sparkling blue water and the clear sky, like discovering a new world. The white houses were blinding in the sun. He watched Arabs unloading dates on to the harbour and was furious, with a mute rebellious rage, when he saw the English sergeant in charge of them shouting in a contemptuous way, "Come on, you bastards!", standing over them with his arms folded, beefy and sunburned. And the fellaheen nodded and scampered about obediently.

He realised in this new stark and brilliant world with the blinding sun how unprepared he was for life --- in his body, even his desires. Even with Kit there'd been no real body. They'd loved each other with an awe-struck, imaginative wonder. And their bodies had only followed this state of mind. They'd never created a tie it was impossible to break, of the body. When he was away from her he yearned to look in her eyes or kiss her; he yearned for the romping and affection, but seldom for the act itself. That had seemed a trifle, almost, compared with their great imaginative love.

One day on manoeuvres north of Damascus, near a dried-up, deserted wadi, he saw an old signpost pointing north up a dusty track with 'Basrah' written on it. It seemed unbelievable! Could he actually be near Basrah? He didn't know why the name had such a thrilling and fabulous sound for him. He stared at the post again and again. And in his mind there formed a thought half-way between a resolution and a prophecy, that he would one day visit the place; and he had a sense of excitement as though he'd actually started that wonderful journey.

During the fighting in the Ardennes he was caught in the open at dusk and had his leg nearly torn off by schrapnel. He was heading a platoon-attack and the others had to fall back because of machine-gun fire, leaving him there. He lay out all night in the middle of a field, numbed with cold, sometimes crying like a child, but in a strange way without grief as if only his face was doing it. The enemy machine-gun was on a fixed arc and every few minutes bullets would come spraying over him, though luckily he was lying in a deep plough-rut and had some protection. A bullet grazed a stud on one of his boots and went whining away. It was like lying there for a week. He was soaked to the skin and was too cold and numbed to move. After a time he began pleading with the bullets in a soft voice, like a child, whenever they came close --- "No, please --- please don't --- please!" But they had an extraordinary relentlessness and seemed to shoot over his head on the back of an enormous wind. The numbness grew from his leg and he was aware of caked blood on his fingers. The attack was completed next morning and the machine-gun knocked out. He was brought in on a stretcher and the doctor found there was no gangrene, by a miracle, probably because of the cold. The shock gradually wore off. The wound left two raw mauvish patches on his leg

which troubled him in a mild way when it was damp.

He dreamed about the wonderful England he would find when it was all over, and the friends he would see again, but when the war did end he found they'd dispersed and that in any case the old friendships were dead. Kit and her parents had left the village. Walsh had gone. Of course, there were no cadets. The Philbys were going to move; he had a much better job in the north of England. Granville had nothing to say to Jean. There was only an air of sadness. She had suffered, too. She'd lived two years without her husband. Granville blushed incessantly and faltered in his speech. He made a strange sight, hefty and fat in the neck, flushed with the outdoor life but with something unhealthy and disquieting even in this flush, from unsatisfied energies. At the slightest soft or friendly glance he would flinch away and go wooden, with pursed lips. Even his feeling for the countryside had gone, it seemed. He left the village almost at once. Loneliness that dwarfed even that of his school-days fell on him. London was drab and people were short-tempered and exhausted. Nobody wanted to listen to other people's troubles and everything was devoted to getting private life going again after years of grey public activity. He wandered about the half-bombed streets for hours to make himself tired. He woke yelling one night and his mother rushed into his room saying, "For Christ's sake, son, you scared me out of my wits!"

It felt as if a war-regime had settled into English life for good. There were identity-cards and food-cards. Everything was registered. When he went into the country he had the feeling that it was a huge dead area only for the recreation of townspeople. The intimate side of life had been pushed out. There was an air of surfeit and nausea everywhere.

It was difficult to get back to the peace-time rhythm, because the casual element necessary to it was lacking. For five years all little enjoyments had been relegated to a kind of relaxation-department in the war effort. He'd escaped all that by being abroad. But the grey aftermath was there, in the people who'd stayed. They were nearly finished. Everyone was bewildered. The war had made them used to the hard pleasures, and peace meant subtlety again. The newspapers and radio now seemed to govern all life; journalism had replaced society. People went on smoking and drinking in the eleventh-hour style of war-time.

But still Abbott's Road hadn't changed. There was only less food, everyone was tired and the shops were rather empty. On the other hand, there was more money than before; there was a job for everybody; the trade unions had a whiphand now; their fighting days were over.

His mother and father were a little grey, from the bombing. They'd slept down in the shelter nearly every night for three years. But still they in themselves hadn't changed. Only the 'higher world' had collapsed.

He had no ideas for his own future. He thought of going abroad again but a familiar listless reluctance to decide anything took hold of him. He went down to Chichester instead, as the only town he knew apart from London, and took a room there, planning to stay for as long as his annuity from the army lasted. He was there a year, alone in his room nearly all the time, reading everything he could lay his hands on with a remarkable hunger. Slowly he met people again. The 'higher world' really was knocked sideways. People got drunk and there was a hard promiscuity in sex. The middle-class was dead. Just a flicker was kept alive, enough for the country not to sink in the sea.

When he met Dick Pollocke at the T.I.M. training school he had a

peculiar sense of forbearance combined with relief. Would Dick be his first real friend since the war? He had a brief ecstatic impression that the Sussex days would start again, in a new way. It was something in Dick's light-blue, transparent eyes, and in the way he looked at him when they met in the canteen of an evening, as if they'd known each other years before.

But he was scared of a new relation. It was a fear of being exposed. He felt on the edge of a frightful confession all the time --- and short of this he couldn't speak. Everything in his past was involved in this confession --- the war, his life in Abbott's Road, the 'giddy fits' when he'd knocked on the floor frantically, his separation from Kit and the fact that he'd hit her round the face; it was covered in shame, in a dark, cloudy region. Why Pollocke should want to see him he couldn't imagine! He was awkward, with this dangerous flush all the time. He was also afraid of damaging Pollocke's first impression of him, presuming it had been a good one. And this intrigued Pollocke: it gave him the idea that Granville was rather exclusive --- too busy perhaps to need new fields. This, in turn, was something Granville was pleased to encourage. They began to meet each other, but always in a hide-and-seek way. Sometimes they sent notes to each other's rooms. It reminded him of the famous public schools he'd read about where the seniors had fags and studies of their own. Dick Pollocke had been to Winchester, so the atmosphere was nothing new to him. He wrote to Granville in a careful hand, putting in a witticism if he could, like a school-boy. 'Dear Granny', he would write, 'I haven't seen your stare for several days and wonder what new slush has passed under your bridges.' They would sit drinking beer together in the canteen and try to talk. But there was no common ground. They left with a sense of

having been locked-up together. Pollocke tried to be clever, Granville was simply awkward and tongue-tied. They blinked in consternation when they met, with a sense of the formlessness of their relation. The friendship petered out quickly, leaving a polite respect.

There were parties and dances, at one of which he met Pinkie. And Hanni came down for a week-end --- about the time she and Dick were getting to know each other. It was an unpleasant period. Nobody was quite sane. He looked back on his lonely year at Chichester, among his books, with pleasure. He no longer wanted to read much, and drank whenever he could. Partly there was the wonder of getting back to something like his old life and being with people again --- having tea in cafes and talking endlessly, that sort of thing; but he was always alone in feeling.

Pinkie dazzled him at once, the first evening they met. She was tall, with a light, healthy face, her skin smooth and brown from the sun. She was vague, her eyes wandering about in their forlorn, loose way, and he was awkward; they hardly shook hands. But they kept returning to each other in the course of the evening. She'd just come back from a holiday in the south of France with her parents, and her cheeks and nose were peeling slightly. And her hair was bleached, a flaxen colour in the front. She seemed to make a mistake about him at first: she treated him like a man-about-town; he was surprised but found the assumption useful --- it helped him cover his real self up! After two or three drinks she was reckless and swashbuckling, and talked at the top of her voice; the young trainees looked cautious and tame next to her. He adored her and stoked himself up with the hideous punch Pollocke had provided -- made with red wine, soda water and surgical spirits from the chemist. They danced together wildly, and he noticed that some of the other people stepped

aside from them in a gingerly fashion, disapproving. There was a great hauteur about her, sophisticated and self-assured. She chuckled at him, and in the middle of laughing she suddenly kissed him on the neck as if it was the easiest thing in the world! Panic seized him, but the drink helped him pass it off. She couldn't have meant it! Did she? And later he saw her do precisely the same thing to someone else! But he put this out of his mind. Thus in the first hour of their knowing each other there was a hint of the later confusions. After that they were friends. She stayed another week, at a nearby hotel, and they began meeting every day. They each wondered secretly --- as they found out from each other long afterwards --- whether they shouldn't remain just friends. But they were lonely, neither of them felt they had the power of choice. They thought they recognised the signal of love --- they'd been waiting for it so impatiently, and they plunged ahead! They were infatuated with each other. But underneath there was only the simplicity of fieldship. And also there was something distressing, as they got to know each other better. He went round with his mouth open loosely and his eyes wandering, in a peculiar imitation of Pinkie's face, as he got more and more infatuated with her. 'What a complete fool I must look!' he thought to himself as he walked along the street sometimes. It didn't seem sane! But he could do nothing about it. It was like being under a sweet drug. It wasn't the pure, direct ecstasy he'd known in Sussex; but he supposed it was falling in love! Pinkie's gaze shifted all the time: and there was something of a comfort in that for him. It meant he was never under a direct, piercing stare that might uncover him. But he never really trusted her from the first moment he knew her. Nor did he feel properly himself with her. But there was the trust of friendship. He couldn't

have said with confidence that she wasn't sleeping with somebody else at any time --- or even that she loved him! But he knew as a friend that she wasn't. She was blameless, yet - totally guilty!

She gave him a sense of nightmarish and subtle desires he couldn't hope to penetrate, because of her way of looking about her. Their first two weeks together were their happiest. They went everywhere arm-in-arm. That, too, had the golden quality of friendship. They were close together like children. She always recalled these two weeks afterwards, as if she'd only really loved him then.

There was nothing unhealthy in her strangeness --- that was remarkable. The strangeness was all to do with her mind. And that was separate. In her body she was clean and fastidious; it could be seen in her skin --- a smooth, unblemished texture glowing underneath with health. And this health had great resistant strength. She didn't smoke or drink, but if she did --- even if she took pep-tablets --- it seemed to make no difference: she only slept a little longer afterwards, and the warm glow, and her appetite, came back. The healthiest practice always seemed the most natural to her. She would suddenly push a full glass of liquor away from her at a party, then dance until she'd sweated it out.

He felt towards her strangeness a grotesque kind of worship --- something ecstatic and pained and full of awe. They were in the same boat, really; they couldn't face each other's gaze, and at the same time they needed what was healthy and simple in each other, behind the strange looks and gestures.

h.p.

panic-stricken movement, hurrying to pull on her things. He heard her high-heeled shoes knock together. What was she doing? He was stiff with horror, and he tried to stop his limbs trembling in case she realised he'd been awake all the time. She slipped her shoes on. How strange! She didn't usually dress for breakfast, but put on an old dressing-gown. ~~Then~~ She went towards the door. She couldn't be going out, not at this hour! Without breakfast? It had never happened before! She wanted to do some early shopping, perhaps; she would go upstairs and get the bag! She closed the bedroom-door very carefully, pausing outside so that he could hear her breathing for a moment, as ~~he~~^{if} between pursed lips; she held the door for a moment so that it wouldn't click, as he ~~did~~^{himself} so often; it was quite unusual for her to do such a thing; hitherto she'd never seemed aware of the door clicking! The moment it was closed he leaned up, his whole body trembling and his heart making a great pounding, regular motion in his chest; and he listened with all his strength, keeping his mouth open, so ^{as not to} ~~that he wouldn't~~ ^{even} hear his own breathing. She went to the lavatory and he heard the chain being pulled ^{after a time} ~~after a while~~ ^{from there.} The rush of water made it impossible for him to hear where she went. Was it upstairs? He could hear nothing. Some time passed. Then he heard the door downstairs close. She'd gone out! ^{Out!} He almost collapsed back ^o onto the bed. He heard the sharp sound of her high-heeled shoes on the pavement below, going, he thought, towards the Commercial Road.

h.p.

~~He told himself that~~ She was going out shopping! But she'd never done it before breakfast, ever; she wasn't interested in shopping! And this didn't account ^f for her horror; but then his eyes hadn't been open and he couldn't be sure of ^{the} ~~the~~ horror!

n.p.

She didn't come back all morning. He waited in bed for another hour, quite still, but there wasn't a sound in the house. He sat over breakfast for a long time, until nearly noon, trembling all the time. ^{But then} He felt indifferent all of a sudden, as if his nerves had worn themselves out, and began sweeping the music-room, and tidying ^{his} the records. He made lunch and went for a walk. She still hadn't returned when he got back, and his trembling, which was like

e.c.

Started again.

being cold all the way through, He made himself some tea and when his lips touched the cup he heard the door open downstairs; ~~and~~ it was followed by the sound of her heels on the stairs, slower than before. She ^{had done} had some shopping. She was wearing her beret, which gave her a girlish look; her lips were small and moist, her eyes light and transparent, without a definite look in them. Nothing was said about her having gone. She talked naturally. He was astonished at her composure! She said what a good boy he was to have cleaned up the music-room, and gave him a kiss on ^{the} ~~his~~ cheek. Also she'd bought in some cakes, and he made another pot of tea; there was warm sunshine outside, and all the windows were open; it was like being in the country, having tea on the lawn; tea-time passed so naturally, and his nerves were calm. The evening drew on and no one ~~phoned~~. She began to look preoccupied, though only with the shadow of a thought; she sat by the hearth looking across at the window vaguely, her blue eyes lost and flickering.

At about ten Dick ~~phoned~~ phoned him up and asked him in a quiet voice if he could join them---he was with the hair-girl and 'Joyce', whom for the moment Granville confused with the muscular-looking girl---for a drink at the Marquis, downstairs, where one could also eat if one wanted to. There was a pause and Dick almost whispered, "Is Pinkie there?" Granville replied, "Yes," to which Dick said, "Well, what about it, then?" There was intimate conspiracy in his voice which at once made Granville feel sorry for Pinkie, who was only sitting in the next room, ^{within} in ear shot; but he ^{told Dick "Yes!"} ~~said~~ ~~he~~ ~~to~~ ~~come~~, and put the ~~phone~~ phone down without waiting for a reply. He walked next door casually and said he was going out for a drink with Dick and would probably be back by midnight; she surprised him by looking up in a glum way, with her lonely pout, and asking him what he expected her to do in the meantime! ~~He~~ He was just about to lose his temper and shout, "What the hell was I doing when you were out?", but he was too tired and limp in nerve, and simply shrugged. At the same time he was frightened that she'd retaliate by going out again, and he said quickly, "Surely you can spend a bit of time alone, can't you? I don't

often see Dick alone.¹⁾⁾ She seemed satisfied and he was about to go when she said with her lips pursed, staring at the floor, "What's he got against me, then? Doesn't he like my company or something?" He replied, "I don't think he knew you were here!" She pushed out her legs and leaned further back in her chair: "All right, then, you old sod, go and have your stag-party!" Tell him from ^{me} ~~he~~ he's an unfriendly bastard!" She was now in good humour and he said as he went, "I'll tell him!"

It wasn't yet dark, but downcast and still very warm; there was an exciting closeness^{in the air}; but he felt immune to it, still trembling a little in the aftermath of the day. People were just coming home and the buses were full. A bus drew to a stop and some tired-looking people got out. Then it moved ^{off} away again, and a woman walked away with steps so regular, on high-heeled shoes, that they might have been fixed by instruments; her head was bowed slightly as she walked, and she glanced about quickly, her eyes never staying on an object for more than a moment, as if newly intimidated^{da} each time. And other people had a similarly humbled manner; they fixed their eyes on the pavement, or hurried along; but above all they seemed to be trying to strip their faces of expression, as if to ^{offer} present blank conduct-sheets to the world and avoid all verdicts; he did it himself; the habit had died a little in the last two years; but he remembered walking along this very street and trying to compose his face naturally as if for a photograph.

Dick and the others were sitting downstairs^{in the Marquis;}; the place was quite crowded. There was only a piano playing now, under a spotlight, and a few people were dancing, respectable-looking couples, while the others sat at the tables. Joyce, the girl with the extraordinary pallor, had just finished at the bar and had come down to eat before going home; the hair-girl sat with her chin cupped in her hands saying little. She hardly greeted him. He asked himself whether she had ^{really} been ^{the} an image in his mind all this time, infatuating him, but he couldn't tell. He could only think about Pinkie; it was a touch of irony that Dick should have chosen just this day to invite him. Pinkie's

BOOK II.

Chapter 8.

Philip ~~Mr~~ Cranville
 L ~~Cranville~~ was born in Abbott's Road in West Ham, not far from
 e.c. where he lived now; ~~but in a slightly poorer district.~~ His parents
 had moved there from Bethnel Green just before the 1914 war, when
 there were still traces of the old village, though even then there
 were few. When they moved in there was an orchard ^{opposite their} ~~on the other side~~
~~of the street~~ ^{home} but by the time ^{he} ~~Cranville~~ was born streets covered more
 or less the whole district, formed into oblong blocks, one door after
 another with a few feet of garden in front for evergreen bushes, then
 the iron railings and the pavement, stretching for miles, with nearly
 n.p. all the trees felled. [Abbott's Road houses were a better class than
 those of Bethnel Green, where the front door opened straight out on
 to the pavement and the streets were much longer and bleaker;
 also the houses ^{of Bethnel Green} were smaller, with a tiny asphalt yard in the back
 instead of a garden. Abbott's Road had quite nice back-gardens.
 Some of the old village trees were still intact there, by an over-
 sight ^{perhaps by} or the contractor's mercy, standing in the middle of the narrow
 strips of garden, huge elms casting their shade on the roofs and ^s away-
 ing slightly in the wind sometimes with a grand, solemn movement ^{always}
 that ^{always} ~~always~~ seemed to ~~pull them down~~ There was ~~always~~ talk
 of pulling them down but it never came to anything. He noticed as a
 child that sometimes people talked about them with grudging dislike,

give warning
of storms

as if they were human, ^a ~~and represented a moral affront~~ one didn't talk about loudly ^o ~~because they were a little disgusting.~~ "Those damned trees," they would ^{say,} ~~murmur.~~ "Those blasted trees, when are they going to pull them down?" But in the summer they would lean out of the back-windows gazing at them, smoking, the men in their shirt-sleeves.

The village had been called Abbott's Blenchley. It had ^{struggled} along the banks of a delightful little river called the Abbott which was dark and rank now, hardly more than a stream and completely hidden by shops and houses, with the waste from the Blenchley Road factories pouring into it. But here and there a grassy bank remained, strangely quiet, like someone peeping out from the past. ^{An} ~~The~~ orphanage also remained, ^{and} with the original Green behind Abbott's Road, made ~~a~~ square now with iron railings round it, and the Common at the top of the hill near Tatling Broadway. ~~When he was ten he read about the common-land that had existed two or three hundred years before where anybody had the right to~~ ~~could~~ pasture their cattle, and he would walk over the Common in the evening, when he was allowed to go there alone, ^{trying to} ~~imagining~~ ^c men in smocks with staves in their hands, rather like Robin Hood, from a print he'd see ⁿ at school which had nothing ^{as all} to do with common-land. And he'd heard about the wild boar in the old days; he would imagine ^{them} rushing ~~from bush to bush~~ out from the bushes. He always had this ~~haunted sense of the past.~~ The Common was rough, with untidy bushes and little ridges and hillocks, and ^{as a child} he used to go to the ^{centre} ~~middle~~ so that he could look all round him and see no buildings at all, only trees and coarse grass.

^{h.p.} ~~The orphanage was a grey, ~~massive~~ ivy-covered mansion that stood in the middle of open parkland rather like a manor-house, ~~no strange sight in such a district.~~ ^{in the orphanage} Cattle still grazed ~~there~~ and it was possible to stand in Tatlin Road, which ran by the side~~

of it, and imagine oneself in the country. Even Tatlin Road had a country-look at times; ~~There~~ were only houses down one side, ~~opposite~~ ~~the orphanage grounds,~~ and these were detached, standing in their own gardens. ^{n.p.} ~~The orphanage-park stretched almost as far as~~ Tatlin Broadway, ^{was} a shabby, crowded shopping-centre where everything ~~used~~ ^{was} used ~~to be~~ squeezed into one narrow street --- trams, wheelbarrows, Woolworths and Marks and Spencers, cinemas and cake-shops and ^c crowds of people. He was always excited when they went there on Saturday afternoons to do the ^{big} shopping ^{for} of the week. The lights blazed on ^{both} either side ~~of the road,~~ one bright shop-front ^{after} followed another; and people pressed together on the pavement, talking and smiling, calling after their children in the wonderful glow. There were long, roofed-in markets leading from dark archways, like immense corridors, with blazing gas-jets, and there one could see everything, vegetables, toys, clothes, furniture, sweets and tall boxes of biscuits and shining glassware all in a massive array, while the market-men's voices rang out, exhorting the women to buy, "Now come on, sweetheart, you won't get a chance like this again!"

^{n.p.} They always came back (loaded with bags) from Tatlin Broadway; and everything would be put out on the table first, then checked with the shopping list and put into the larder. ~~And~~ ~~his~~ mother would mix a cake for Sunday, while the fire shone white-hot in the grate, before they all went down to the local Co-op ^{for a} dance or whist-drive; these ~~were~~ usually ^{took place} held ^a at the school at the end of the road, ^c called Abbott's Road Junior School, where he and his brothers went until they were eleven.

J There had once been an old Norman church in the orphanage grounds that used to serve Tatlin village. But it had been pulled down, like so much else that was old, (at the beginning of the century), when working people like Granville's parents were looking

Even the stables were still there: also the smithie, in a small barn shaded by a huge oak.

179. ~~180~~

J
for clean, quiet places to live, and miles of identical houses and streets were built in a frantic expansion that doubled the width of London. The original Tatlin manor-house had also been pulled down, and ~~this mansion, now the orphanage,~~ ^{the orphanage,} more or less an imitation of the old place, had been built ^{in its place.} ~~in the same spot.~~ At first it had looked hideous because of its red brick, like a scar on the hillside, but now it was mellowed with ivy.

At the end of Abbott's Road there was still the village inn from two hundred and fifty years before, with a cobbled yard in front of it. The river ran behind, at the foot of the garden, where there were tables and a bowling pitch in the summer. ^{Even the} ~~There were still~~ ^{the old stables, and the smithie, in a small barn at the side, once shaded by a huge oak. A stage coach had driven straight round to the back, where there was a smithie.} ~~Even this smithie still existed during Granville's childhood, in a long barn at the side of the pub which had once been shaded by a massive oak.~~ He always heard the hammering ~~as a child~~ from his classroom in the junior school, which was exactly opposite, ^{and} ~~used to~~ ^{would} go across and watch the horses being shod. He was always astonished that they didn't cry out, having long nails driven into their feet. They stood there placidly, old cart horses with fat bellies and lovely long manes, blinking and shaking the flies off, their bright coats twitching, with one leg tucked up, while the trams rocked and screeched outside. That was about ten years before the ¹⁹³⁹ ~~second~~ war. Afterwards one saw few horses about, unless they were the huge brown dray-horses that were still kept by some of the breweries, for old times' sake. The stables were torn down after an incendiary bomb caught one of the timbers during an air-raid. Also the junior school was ~~completely~~ removed by a land-mine in 1944. ^{Strangely} enough, ~~one~~ ^{one} classroom remained, standing alone now in an empty quadrangle; ^{and this was where he} ~~and~~ ^{really} became conscious of music for the

e.c.

~~first time as a power in his life.~~ ^{Adrian} All the windows in the street were blown out when that land-mine fell and the road was knee-deep in rubble for nearly a week afterwards. ~~But nobody was killed in the school.~~ ~~On the previous evening about a thousand children had been there, for it was sometimes used as an assembly point for evacuation parties.~~ The remaining classroom was also where ~~he'd~~ ^{he'd} listened to the smithie ~~most~~ ^{that} not knowing what it was he loved and even then, at the age of ten, yearned for ~~it~~ ^{his classroom} stood alone now like a brick box and ~~no one seemed to want to tear it down.~~ The windows of the inn had been blown out, too, and much of the roof destroyed. But the tiles were put back carefully and it all looked much the same as before, except that it was cleaner, like everything else in the district, without the old griminess, and the cobbles in front were removed to make an easier parking space for ~~the~~ cars. The walls in Abbott's Road before the war were more smoky and dingy, and this ~~gave~~ ^{had given} them a more mysterious look.

J

his family used to

Every house was divided into flats, one upstairs and one down, and ~~they~~ ^{his} lived ~~in the~~ ^{an} upper one. The back-room ~~looked across at~~ the gardens and ~~was~~ ^{were} level with the thickest branches of the great elms. ~~It was~~ ^{They were} hot and tiny, and ~~family-life went on~~ ^{all this time} ~~there~~ ^{had given} ~~these~~ ^{in them. Along} were rails over the ~~grate~~ ^{fireplace} where handkerchiefs and socks were hung to dry, and in front there was a brass fender where his father's slippers were left to warm before ~~they went to bed.~~ ^{to come in from work.} In the middle of the room there was a table big enough for eight people at a squeeze, with a thick brown cover over it, under a tasselled gas-light. And along one wall was a big dresser where all the crockery showed, and opposite this, set in the wall over the back stairs, was the larder, ~~into which he and one brother could always fit when they were children.~~ ^{where} ~~They would hide in there sometimes, eating the preserved~~ ^{his} ~~fruits~~ ^{hid when they were} that his father brought home from the docks on Fridays nights.

of dried ^

n. p.

~~In that room~~ ^{He took} He and his brothers did ~~all~~ their ^{in the back room, 181} ~~studying~~ ^{school-work} spreading their books over the table and telling each other "Shut up!" ~~every~~ now and then or "Put a sock in it!" Next door, by the larder, there was a scullery with a deep copper for boiling clothes, and a gas stove. His mother had the boiler removed, to the distress of the landlord, but soon after the war ~~began~~ ^{started} the rest of the street followed suit; she was often quicker in her ideas than other people. She said the boiler was a 'blasted old-fashioned thing' and ^cthe only creatures who liked it were the mice!?"

Tams ran along at the end of the street and he could hear their heavy clanging noise from where he slept. Opposite his window there was a line of roof that stretched uninterrupted the whole length of the street. Everything was regular and fixed ^{this} like ~~that~~. There were chimney-pots at regular intervals and beyond them the empty sky. But even so the street had a small, intimate ^{sometimes} look and on summer evenings when the sky was angry and low it would seem to be indoors, ~~rather~~ exciting, as if an enormous glass roof had been constructed over it, like the ^{ry} Crystal Palace. And when there was thick snow it looked like a tiny village-street. He hated people to come out and shovel the snow into the gutter, which they nearly always did, making nasty black ~~black~~ marks on the pavement; but then sometimes the snow came again and made what they did ridiculous. One day the Crystal Palace burst into flames and he went out into the street and saw the glow of its fire rising and falling in the sky, making the evening ^{red} light.

The street was nearly always quiet, like the countryside. Now and then, in the evening, especially in the winter, there came the sound of a piano from behind drawn curtains on the other side, hesitant and out of tune, ~~a little~~ melancholy, like someone crying, without an audience. He and his sister, younger than he was,

slept in the spare room overlooking the street, while their two brothers shared a bigger room overlooking the side-yard, where drains gurgled all day.¹

One of the family got to a university---that was a great event; it was his eldest brother, and all hopes were centred on him, as the cleverest of the four. Granville tried to repeat the success but failed. His other brother went into a stockbroker's office at the age of seventeen and later became quite a successful business-man.

In a way Granville had an easier time than either of his brothers. They felt protectively towards him and were always trying to groom him ~~and~~ and prepare him for the world. ~~And they had to fight their way into the world outside Abbott's Road, whereas all he had to do was to follow their example.~~ Both he and his sister ~~enjoyed~~ basked in grown-up adoration. By the time they were ten and twelve ~~the~~ his brothers were already bringing money into the house.¹ The first struggles were over and things felt safer.

Handwritten mark

^{Through his brothers} ~~Also~~ he met middle-class people when he was only a child, ^{so that} through his brothers. ~~Otherwise he would have had to wait until after his school years, as they'd done.~~ ^{He} came to know sooner ^{than} ~~they did~~ that outside Abbott's Road there was a world quite different from his own. He was better prepared for the shocks than they were.

After the university his eldest brother was almost crushed. He became a drunk ~~and~~ ^{came went} ~~went~~ down to Abbott's Road asking for money. He had filled Granville with his dreams of what life ^{would be} like outside Abbott's Road. It was ^{to be} so glorious! Then the dreams collapsed, or rather ^{they} were worn slowly down, and he almost went to pieces. But then as suddenly he mended and became quiet and sober. He started a family and took up a job ^{with a mining company} ~~at a university~~ in South ^{Africa,} ~~America~~, in mathematics. His learning always intimidated Granville. He had a natural grasp which ^{Granville} he couldn't imitate. ~~But on the other hand he~~

As for his sister, she
 ← His sister married and he ^{hardly} ~~never~~ saw her now. Sometimes he remembered her quiet face from his childhood and wished he'd married a girl ~~someone~~ from Abbott's Road.

→ The family ^{used to go over to} They often visited Bethnel Green when they were children to see his father's family. At first they used to go every Saturday night. Life was more in the open ^{at Bethnel Green; there were} ~~than at Abbott's Road,~~ with ragged children everywhere, in loud, scrambling groups. And the streets looked wider ^{more} and hollow, ~~seemingly~~ flattened out to the sky, with a raw, smoky air that grimed everything and yet made it like a new lurid countryside, iron-coloured and ^{dusty,} ~~smoky~~ very still and ^{solemn} ~~solemn~~ like a strange ghastly and fascinating monument. The rooms there were dark and small, and in the summer people sat ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ their doorways or on benches put out on the pavement, the women suckling their babies. At night about ten o'clock old women with laced-up boots ^{used to} ~~shuffled~~ down to the off-licence for their jug ^{of} stout. His grandmother used to pull the shawl round her shoulders and set off with her flower-painted jug gripped tight in her hand, her lips pursed mutely together and an obstinate look in her eyes. She was small and pale, with an extraordinary iron obstinacy.

After the pubs closed there were ^{usually} fights, ^{too} ~~sometimes~~. The police kept out of the district on the whole, ^{and} ~~so that~~ it was a law to itself. There was the smell of cooking from the faggots-and-peas-pudding shop round the corner, and outside the pub where his uncle went there was always a man with a horse-and-cart selling cockles and winkles; he used to call out, "COCK-les end WINK-les!" in a sing-song voice like someone yodelling. The trams rumbled past with their yellow lights, up on the big road, where the darkness of these streets, that rose and fell in deep hills as if they'd been

a steady, dark gleam and there were wisps of light brown hair over her brow. And she said, putting her hand lightly on her hip, "Not too badm is she?" Then she walked on and didn't turn round again.

Her favourite swear-word was 'bleed'n'. "Mind my bleed'n corns!" she would cry if one of the children came too near. This word had a vicious, forbidden sound to his ears. His mother forbade its use at Abbott's Road and only said it herself, shyly, when she was with May. She would try to loosen up in May's company. She would lean forward and talk with narrowed eyes, using all the swear-words she could think of. "I said to her, I said, now don't you come your sodding larks with me," she would murmur. She had a delicacy that was crushed when she used these words deliberately. She needed to be angry, but in May it was an understood manner of speech. It ran in the family, perhaps, for his father was the same. He was fond of the words 'shit-house', applied to people. "He's a real shit-house," he would say during one of his dockyard stories, and his mother would lower her eyes and murmur reprovingly, "All right, King George's dock..." At other times she would say, "That's enough, Bethnel Green!" ^{his father} He would look at her with his mouth open and his eyes bewildered, as if ~~unconscious~~ unconscious of what he'd said.

Sometimes May would talk about her husband. "I do love my Sid," she would say. "He's lovely! I don't know what I'd do without that bugger!" And, "Sid does me good!" They never seemed to quarrel. Sid was a lean, handsome man, not unlike Granville's father to look at, and on Saturday nights he set out to ~~drink~~ get as drunk as he could. They would all start drinking at the pub, with the children waiting outside eating potato-crisps and sipping ~~beer~~ ginger beer. Then at closing time everybody would pour out, stumbling and singing. There would be groups of people all along the road, rolling and bumping into each other. Sid would always bring some

Aunt May had a special game for the boys of the family, to chase them round the room and make a sudden dive for their trousers, to catch their 'little winkles'. Then she would hold up her hand, showing them her thumb sticking out between her fingers, and cry, "I got it! I got it!" And the boys always looked down at their trousers, half-believing. This game ~~always~~ excited him. One evening, without any consciousness of what he was doing, in the passage-way near the door, he suddenly stopped while she was chasing him and turned round to face her as if to say, 'You needn't chase ^e me, it's yours for the asking!' She stopped, too, and raised herself up slowly, gazing at him with a slowly dawning expression; then a look of ^{utter} disgust came into her eyes, the only one he ever saw, and she walked slowly away.

Eve was the only one of the family he'd seen since the war. She lived near Wimbledon now, in a suburb ~~rather~~ like ~~what was called~~ ^{Barnal,} the U.K. Compound in ~~Mosul,~~ ^{check} with a husband and four children. Her ^{check} were rosy now and she was quite plump. Much of the sadness had gone out of her eyes but they still had a baffled, ^{searching} ~~inquisitive~~ look. Aunt May had died some years before, suddenly. ^{Whenever Granville} ~~As~~ he talked to Eve he saw flashes of her mother's face in her and almost gasped. There was the old rich tone, and the jauntiness. It was in the way she lifted up her head sometimes, smiling, with bright eyes, when she made a joke or shouted at her children, seeming to encourage them just as her mother did. Her children were quiet and well cared-for, with her rosy look.

^{She} Eve ~~had~~ coolly made it ~~her~~ ^{the} ambition of her life to get May and the rest of the family out of Bethnel Green, and ~~she~~ ^{she'd} succeeded. ¹⁹³⁹ The ~~second~~ war gave her the chance, when the bombing got really bad. She levered them slowly out of the district they loved, ^{from} ~~and~~ the tiny, dark house they ^{belonged to.} loved. By that time ~~both~~ she and her father were