BROWN SMOCK

R. ALLEN

EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908327-66-9

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908330-62-1

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: Brown smock : the tale of a tune

Author: Allen, C. R. (Charles Richards)

Published: Frederick Warne & Co., London, 1926

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THE TALE OF A TUNE

BY
C. R. ALLEN
AUTHOR OF
"*The Ship Beautiful*"

FREDERICK WARNE & CO., LTD.
LONDON & NEW YORK

" For music (which is earnest of a heaven
Seeing we know emotions strange by it, not else to be revealed),
Is like a voice, a low voice, calling fancy as a friend
To the green woods in the gay summer time."

Robert Browning.

Printed in Great Britain

To
DAVID AND MARTIN
OF LITTLE MEADOW

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride,
Wearing white for Easter-tide.

A. E. Housman

THREE clipped yews cast figured shade.
Old Pan takes siesta. See him finger
Pipe potential, undismayed
By the flippant birds, whose leavings linger
On the patriarchal beard.
Pan bides, weather-worn and seared.
There is no pity on his smiling face
For naughty birds. They shall not flout him long.
Folk prattle, "He's the spirit of the place,
The *genius loci*." Lady, they are wrong.

Tell me, Lady, was it Pan
Lurking where the drive your stone lodge reaches?
Who was it that skipped and ran
Laughing through the sycamores and beeches
When you brought the children home
In the Daimler? Lady, come.
Was it Pan who flicked a russet smock
Such as did delight Kate Greenaway,
Lifted green hat shyly from his shock
Of nut-brown hair, all on a summer's day?

Was it Pan who crouched to watch
Gay-cinctured croquet balls the smooth sward sweeping,
Straining little ears to catch
The children's argument, or deftly creeping
By the ivied wall to see
Sacrament of nursery tea.
Who is it that, wise and wistful, looks
(Tell me, gentle Lady, for you can)
From a thousand children's picture books?
This at least I know. It is not Pan.

CONTENTS

BROWN SMOCK

CHAPTER I

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

THE fog lay like a patchy blanket over London. In places it was worn comparatively thin. Victoria and Knightsbridge, for instance, were merely a rather inspiriting amber, but in the districts of Earl's Court and Hammersmith the thing was unspeakable. In Terry's suburb it had shaded off from something approaching chocolate to a species of khaki. A dweller in happier parts might have considered it bad enough to justify the postponement of the concert in the Church Hall, but the Rector of St. Luke's was a man whom the weather did not easily appal, and he had imparted something of his spirit to his people. His parishioners were for the most part pallid Cockneys whose nervous hilarity could not be pent up within the tenement walls of their district. St. Luke's must have its night out whatever the weather. So at the

end of evensong a meagre little flock migrated from the comparative comfort of the brightly lit brick-lined church to the thicker cheer of the Church Hall, to be joined on their way by the ranks of those less fortunate or less devout, as the case might be. St. Luke's wrapped itself up as well as its scanty means would allow and stumped along the slippery flagstones, coughing and joking and striking matches, while two of the Rector's most reliable choristers acted as link-boys and guided faltering steps towards the stream of yellow light that issued from the open door of the Church Hall. Terry went along with Mrs. Durden, hugging himself under his little black coat. It was rather a struggle for him to get into this once resplendent garment, for it was short in the sleeves and would have showed a little green in a less lenient light. Still its deficiencies were palliated by a large grey woollen muffler, and Terry nursed his fingers in white woollen gloves, those long clever fingers that he would have to insure some day. All the great musicians insured their hands. So Terry forged his way along by Mrs. Durden's side, the metal heel plates of his small boots rasping on the complaining flags, his breath steaming in sympathy with the universal steaminess and stickiness of that night.

"Did you give your nails another scrub, Terry?" Mrs. Durden clutched at her mantle as she put the question.

Mrs. Durden's mantle might have cried out "Ichabod!" in unison with Terry's coat. It was quite unsuitable for such a night. Still, a concert was a concert, and, in the absence of a motor car, one had to run risks. Terry resented the question. Had Mrs. Durden inquired after the state of his neck he would have taken it as a matter of course; but Terry was vain about his hands.

"Of course, I did," he replied. "Burr-r-r-r."

A damp blast got them as they came to a corner.

"What a night!" said Mrs. Durden. "Think of all them poor things as 'as no 'omes."

"Think of my dad," said Terry.

"Oh, sailors don't care," said Mrs. Durden. "The sea is 'is 'ome, ain't it? Rocked in the cradle of the deep. Besides, 'es somewhere near Rio, I expex. What about they spicey breezes you were singing about so lovely last Sunday. 'E'll be fanning 'imself with a palm as like as not."

Here they were shepherded by one of the link-boys towards the beacon light.

" 'Ome and beauty," said Mrs. Durden, as they

passed out of the murk into an atmosphere where cheerfulness seemed to be putting up something of a fight.

"Performers in the two front seats. On you go, little Hood."

Terry was addressed by a shock-headed young man with clerical dog-collar and pince-nez.

"What about her," said Terry, indicating his bear-leader, "can she come too?"

"Me a performer?" said Mrs. Durden. "I don't think."

"I'm sure you could recite us something, Mrs. Durden. We'll ask you another time. Please sit by Terry and keep his dander up."

The Rector's assistant waved them along. Mrs. Durden kept on murmuring, "Me recite, I don't think," as she elbowed a way for herself and the boy. Terry followed with the butting action proper to a London urchin. Presently he found himself seated a few chairs away from the only fur coat in the hall. Next the fur coat sat the Rector's daughter in a military-looking wrap, with a belt. This was in the days before women had the vote. The Rector's daughter was in the van of that army who intended that they should not suffer long under this injustice. Terry scrutinised the stranger in the quick appraising

manner with which he took in all phenomena. The lady in the fur coat sat with her chin partially buried in her ample collar. She wore a little brown fur cap, and under the cap was a mass of black hair, very carefully dressed in the manner in vogue at the opening of our century. Terry noted that she was very pale, and that her eyes were closed, but she smiled and talked with the Rector's daughter, and her speech was quick and animated. There was no finesse about Terry's scrutiny. He did not merely turn his small, cropped head for a peep. He turned his whole frame and regarded her with eyes and jowl intent, like a terrier. He noted her suede gloves of green, her black silk skirt, and her small shoes, with the toe-caps of patent leather. He noted how she tapped incessantly upon the dingy floor with one of those small feet. Terry thought her face looked as if it might have been shaped out of some delicate medium by a sculptor. She was not beautiful, but there was that impression of fragility and refinement that made Terry think of a porcelain statuette he had often paused to admire in the window of a second-hand dealer on his way to school.

"Mind 'oo yer shovin'."

Terry pulled himself together. His sleuth-like attitude had been causing some discomfort

to Mrs. Durden. She had rather an ample style, which was becoming cramped.

"Who is she?" asked the little boy.

"How do I know?" said Mrs. Durden. "I'm not *'Oo's 'Oo* nor the *Post Office Directory*, nor *Burke's Peerage* neither. Looks as if she might 'ave a coronet on 'er notepaper. Come down 'ere to see 'ow the submerged tenth 'olds up its 'ead. Don't you stare. It ain't manners."

Here the Rector brushed past them. Terry saw him tap the lady in the fur coat lightly on the knee. She looked up and laughed, but her eyes were still closed. Terry heard Mrs. Durden click her tongue against her teeth and felt her bosom heave.

"Poor dear," she said, "I didn't see at first. Well, it don't much matter if you do stare Terry."

Terry's eyes puckered oddly at the corners. He had not understood either. He thought she was just tired, and had closed her eyes to keep out the garish lights. The Rector stood up and called for silence.

"Before we begin our concert this evening," he said, "which is to be a very happy little family affair, I hope, and something that will help us to forget the fog, I want you to extend a welcome to

one who is a stranger in our midst, although I hope that feeling of strangeness will soon wear off. I think I am quite wrong to use the word stranger for only yesterday I took it into my head to inquire of our good librarian who was the author most sought for, and I found that our children are reading Hilda Croft's books assiduously. Well, Hilda Croft is sitting by me as I speak, and I want all those who have enjoyed reading her books to make her feel she is not a stranger by clapping your hands."

There followed a burst of applause and much craning of necks, but the lady in the fur coat sat tight. Terry saw her laugh and speak to the Rector, who held up his hand for silence.

"Miss Croft is very angry with me. She says I am keeping back the concert, and that is what she has come to hear. Well, I hope you will all do your best and so give back to Miss Croft some of the pleasure she has given you. There is a very good reason, which I need not enlarge upon, why our guest this evening likes to hear all the music she can."

Terry rubbed his hands slowly together. He did not know why the back of his throat should feel so dry. He was one of the children

who asked for Hilda Croft's books again and again.

"But 'ow can she write books?" said Mrs. Durden. "She's blind."

"Never 'eard of a typewriter?" said her neighbour, the comedian of St. Luke's, whose song about the cream cakes at the wedding breakfast was always a star turn at the Rector's concert. Everyone sat on the cream cakes and the various manners of accomplishing this *débâcle* were illustrated in pantomime.

The word "blind" had fallen from Mrs. Durden like something dead and heavy.

"Well, she must manage it somehow," she said. "It's wonderful to think 'ow she does it."

Here the Rector's madrigal party filed on to the stage, four hard-bitten looking boys in ill-fitting dark suits, and four men of varying build and hue, a bald bass in a reefer jacket, and a hirsute tenor in a morning coat, and two indeterminate persons in grey tweeds. Terry watched Miss Croft's still profile as they struck up Barnby's "Sweet and Low." He could see that she was gratified, for the party sang very truly and sweetly, and she did not have to look at the tenor. There followed spirited renderings of "The Poacher" and "Bonnie Dundee" to

conteract the sentimentality of one or two barrel-organ favourites, a sop thrown by the Rector to the weaker brethren among his flock. The comedian came out with a new song about a pessimistic poodle, which went down well, but there were cries of "What about them cream cakes," and he retold the tale of that ubiquitous confectionery by way of an encore. When he had declined a second recall with a girlish simper that set everyone tittering, the Rector's assistant consulted his paper.

"Master Terry Hood will now play Chopin's Second Nocturne," he announced.

"Got your handkerchief?" asked Mrs. Durden as she peeled the tight little coat from Terry's small, warm body.

"Yes," whispered Terry. He had it rolled up into a little ball in his right hand. He mounted the steps to the platform. Mrs. Durden frowned as she saw him rub the palms of his hands down the sides of his dark serge knickerbockers. She regarded his collar with satisfaction. The grey muffler had kept the grime of the fog away. She did not know anything about Chopin, or she might have drawn an analogy. Is not the composer reported to have said to his mother after one of the very earliest appearances in public, "Oh, mother, everybody was looking

at my collar." For a moment Terry stood before the aged Broadwood upright, his head lowered a little, and on his face that terrier-like expression with which he had regarded Miss Croft.

"He looks as if the piano were a football scrum, and he were a half-back," the Rector whispered to his guest, "but you wait. I do hope I am right about him."

Terry seated himself and began to play. The ill-lit hall and the snuffling audience were forgotten. He was playing for the lady in the fur cloak who needed music more than other people, the lady who had written *Dobbin of Beechtrees*, and *Johnny Kettledrum*. When he came to an end there was cordial applause. St. Luke's was proud of its prodigy. Terry sought his place by Mrs. Durden's side and waited for a sign from the Rector to go back and play the little Brahms waltz. On his second return journey he was detained by the same directing hand.

"Come and sit by us, little Hood. Miss Croft wants to talk to you."

In another moment or two Terry found himself seated by the fur coat.

"That was worth coming a long way to hear," said Miss Croft. Her voice was vibrant and

sweet. She spoke rapidly as if she were wont to have much business on hand.

"Will you stay and talk to me when the concert is over?"

"Thank you, Miss," said Terry.

Then the Rector mounted the platform with his fiddle, and the prodigy of St. Luke's found himself nestling down beside the fur coat. Never before had praise sounded so sweet to him. As he sat there among the people of St. Luke's, many of whom called him by his name, petted or chaffed him in their quick-witted, good-natured way, he felt that the weight of a great trust lay upon him. It would be known in later years that Terry Hood came from St. Luke's parish. In all that company there were probably only two persons whose names would live beyond their generation, Hilda Croft and Terry Hood. Vistas opened out in Terry's mind, vistas suggested no doubt by the cinema and the illustrated papers. Every scene was set so that the gaze was led on to a concert grand piano before which sat Terry Hood. Some day he would tell an interviewer how he once played to Hilda Croft in a poky little church hall on a ramshackle piano. He would tell how the fog stole in and blurred the lights. So the little boy sat and dramatised himself, while his

meagre body glowed with happiness, and the touch of Hilda Croft's fur coat upon his hand was like a caress.

When the madrigal party had sung "Good night, Ladies," and led the audience on to sing, "God Save the King," the visitor turned to him.

"And now for our little talk," she said. "You love music, don't you?"

"Yes, Miss."

"What a question to ask," laughed Miss Hilda Croft. "You'll have to work and work at it. May I take a little liberty? I want to see what kind of a person you are."

She placed her two hands on the top of Terry's head and ran her fingers lightly over his face till they came to the well-glazed collar. Then she placed a hand on each shoulder. Terry instinctively tightened his biceps as the hand came running down outside the two sleeves of his jacket. Lastly she took his two hands in hers.

"I needn't tell you to look after those fingers," she said. "I wonder if you could come and play to me before I go back to Sedgeway. Do you think it could be managed, Rector? I'm sure Noel would send the car for him. Are you free on Saturday, Terry? Why do they

call you Terry, by the way? Is it short for Terence?"

"Here's Mrs. Durden," said the Rector. "She's a mine of information on the subject of little Hood."

He tactfully accomplished an introduction. Mrs. Durden approached delicately. From her manner one would have thought that Hilda Croft's disability had rendered her sacrosanct.

"Terry was the name of a great friend of 'is father's, Miss," Mrs. Durden began after her embarrassment had been charmed away. "Bill Hood, Bill Terry, and Bill Durden, my 'usband, Miss, were shipmates. Bill Hood's the only one left now, and I'm looking after 'is little boy seeing 'as 'e ain't got no mother, so that's that. Music lessons, Miss? Well, 'e's 'ad to stop them for the time bein', but when 'is Dad comes back I expect 'e'll be carryin' on again. Saturday mornin', Miss? Yes, I think we could manage Saturday mornin'. Say thank you to the lady, Terry."

Terry said "thank you," and the party broke up.

Mrs. Durden, as she groped her way homeward through the fog with her small charge by her side, said, "You'll be goin' off with all the best people to Belgravia in their Rolls-Royces.

Poor Mrs. Durden will 'ave to take a back seat now."

"I'll see you lack for nothing," said Terry.

Great men always saw to it that their mothers lacked for nothing, according to the story books. Mrs. Durden had been more than a mother to him.

CHAPTER II

HUMPTY DUMPTY

MRS. DURDEN sang as she prepared supper. She sang one of those Gaiety songs that Connie Edis used to sing:

> "I'm so fond of the Upper Ten,
> Both the ladies and gentlemen.
> I'm just longing to breath the air
> Breathed by the people in Grosvenor Square."

Her mind was evidently still pre-occupied with Terry's descent upon the West End. The car had duly arrived, not a Rolls-Royce it is true, but something a little further down the scale. Mrs. Durden had seen the chauffeur put the rug over Terry's knees.

"I didn't ought to let him go," she said to herself. "'Ow do I know she ain't a vampire or somethink 'orrible."

Then she thought of the Rector and was reassured. The Rector had smiled upon the pact, and she would trust the Rector with Terry's immortal soul. She was a little fluttered,

however, by a telegram which arrived about noon.

> "Terry staying to lunch and going to hear Rachmaninov. Will return him safe and sound after tea. Hilda Croft."

At the first sight of the long name Mrs. Durden had visions of Terry figuring in a Russian nihilist plot.

"Oh dear, oh dear," she said, "'oo's this 'ere Fenian she's going to take him to see."

Fortunately for her state of mind there came a knock at the door, and the Rector announced himself from without. Mrs. Durden flew to the door with the telegram in her hand.

"If anything happens to that boy," she said as she thrust the paper into the Rector's hand, "I'll never 'old up my 'ead again. 'Oo's this 'ere Rachmaninov?"

"He's the man who wrote the Prelude, Mrs. Durden. Pom-pom-pom-pom-pom-po-pom-pom-pom."

"Oh," said Mrs. Durden, "I ought to know 'im. I get that tune about forty times a week from the Higginbotham's gramophone."

"Miss Croft is taking your Terry to a concert. How jolly of her. You know, Mrs. Durden, it is about Terry that I've come to see you."

"He hasn't been getting into mischief? I can't watch him all the time. You think twice, sir, before you take somebody else's child into your keeping. If anything was to happen to that boy I simply couldn't face Bill Hood when he comes back."

"Bill Hood ought to go down on his knees to you, Mrs. Durden. No, I've nothing unpleasant to say about Terry. On the contrary. May I sit down?"

"To be sure. What am I thinking of?"

"I don't know if you have realised," said the Rector as he subsided into a creaking wicker chair, "that Terry is rather an extraordinary child. I mean his music. He has a very great gift indeed."

"Whatever goes out of this room," said Mrs. Durden, as she laid a red hand upon a little cottage piano ensconced in a nook beside the fireplace, "this 'ere will be the last. It belonged to Terry's mother, and she gave it to me, but it's Terry's as long as I've got him and after I'm gone." But here she broke off into a little laugh. "It won't be much use to him. He'll be wanting one of these 'ere grands."

"I didn't know that he'd stopped his lessons," the Rector went on. "It is a little awkward, his father being away. What does he hope to make of Terry?"

"I know one thing 'e won't make 'im, Gospel sure," said Mrs. Durden. "'E won't make 'im a sailor. 'Gentleman Bill' my Bill always used to call Terry's dad. 'E'll see to it 'is little boy stays on the beach. He'll make a gentleman of him, though the little wife's folk won't 'ave nothink to do with 'im."

"I know about Terry's mother," said the Rector. "If she had lived it might have been easier. It's a great responsibility to start a child upon a career such as I picture for Terry, even if one has the means to grant him his heart's desire."

"Oh, don't you fret about Master Terry," said Mrs. Durden. "'E'll get there. 'E's made up 'is mind to be a great musician, and 'e'll be one by fair means or foul—I don't mean that hexactly, sir."

"Of course not. I know what you mean. Terry is going to put his back into it. Well, a few days ago I took a step which I hope I shall not regret. I invited Miss Croft to come and hear Terry play."

"Was that why she came?"

"Yes. Terry is just the sort of person whom Miss Hilda Croft would delight to help and, incidentally, I think I may say, that Terry may be by way of helping Miss Hilda Croft. She is

a lady to whom vivid interests are as meat and drink. She must be interesting herself in somebody. Her life is a whole network of practical sympathies. It is something she has built up for herself, a very fragile construction, and yet something very alive."

The Rector perceived that he was talking over Mrs. Durden's head, and came down to something basic.

"Miss Croft has money which she likes to spend on helping people like Terry. I don't know if we can do anything till the return of his father, but I thought I should like to talk this over with you. It would mean that Terry would go to a better school, have better chances in every way. Miss Croft would tell you she wants to help Terry along, not for his own sake, but in the cause of an art which has given her much comfort."

"I don't know what to say," said Mrs. Durden. "It's been nice for me having the boy 'ere. I don't see what we can do till his dad comes back."

"What I really think I want," said the Rector in a sudden burst of candour, "is your blessing on what I have done. There are many pitfalls in a musical career. I don't want to buoy the child up with unjustifiable hopes. I'm enough of a musician myself to recognise something very

like genius in him, but I'm also a parish priest, and I have to think of Terry *in toto*, so to speak."

"Exactly," said Mrs. Durden, though she wondered in the back of her mind what this *toto* was that Terry might be in.

"At any rate," said the Rector as he rose, "he'll remember this afternoon for many a long day,"

"It's the first time 'e's sat down in the seats of the mighty," said Mrs. Durden, as she opened the door for her guest, "and if I know my Terry it won't be the last. Thank you, sir, for all your kindness."

So the Rector had taken his leave and Mrs. Durden had prepared to eat a lonely dinner. In the afternoon she had gone through Terry's wardrobe. She had an idea that she might be called upon to surrender him, and, at the same time, give an account of her stewardship. She felt rebellious as she darned a stocking. She had come to look upon the darning of Terry's stockings as her prescriptive right. The afternoon had worn on, and so it came about that Terry broke in upon a strain of the Connie Edis song:

> " I should ride 'orses with nice long tails,
> If my papa was the Prince of Wales."

"Well," said Mrs. Durden, "you ain't eloped with a duchess? I say, you 'ave been wasting your time. Was there a butler?"

Terry nodded. "Just like in the pictures," he said. His eyes were very bright.

"'Ere," said Mrs. Durden, "open this pickle jar for me, there's a good boy."

She watched him for a moment as he bent over his task. His chin rested on a red tie that depended down the front of his little Cardigan knitted jacket. It was a powerful little head, rising well up at the back and thatched with fine, reddish hair. The small, tidy lips were pursed as the capable fingers worked. Here was somebody who would have what there was to be had out of life's pickle jar. Mrs. Durden's eyes smiled.

"There you are," said Terry.

"Well, now let's 'ave a bit of supper, and tell us all about it."

Terry described with microscopic detail the journey to Cadogan Place, the reception in a room with blue plates stuck up on the walls, and one brass lion to hold the tongs and another to hold the poker. He described the gentleman with one arm and a very yellow face, whom Miss Croft addressed as Noel, and to whom the chauffeur referred as the "Colonel" when the door was opened.

" 'Ere's the young gentleman the colonel said I was to bring. Sign, please."

That's what the chauffeur had said. He described Miss Croft's gown of black silk and the red beads she continually played with. He described how Noel had not only cut up his own chicken, with one hand, but had cut up Miss Croft's as well.

"There you are, Da. Half-past twelve."

"Half-past twelve" had referred to the position of the salt. He described how the butler had put a plate in front of him, and how Noel had said, "What about number three? Wouldn't it be jollier to cut his up, too, Simpson? Then we'll all start fair." One would like to set down many of the other things that Terry described but the task of selection is too difficult. We shall only record how Terry played for an hour on a Steinway Grand, how Noel and Miss Croft listened, how the decision to go to the concert was made, and Simpson despatched with the telegram; how they drove to the Park, to the Marble Arch, and so on to the Bechstein Hall; how Noel kept teasing Miss Croft all the time, and always referred to Terry as Number Three. We may not describe the concert because that, no doubt, has already been done, nor can we hope to reproduce Terry's description of tea at

Rumplemeyer's. Terry kept up the recital till long after his bedtime.

"So we've come to the end of a perfick day," said Mrs. Durden. "Are you going to give your old auntie a kiss?"

"I'll give you as many as you like," said Terry. "They don't cost nothink. Some day, though, I'll give you something that costs a lot. I daresay if you were my real auntie you wouldn't be half as good to me."

Mrs. Durden kept this saying in her heart. It was not often that Terry was demonstrative.

He went about his affairs next day with an added spring to his step. There would be something for him to tell his dad when he came home. He knew in himself that he had outgrown long ago the choirmaster of St. Luke's to whom he had been going for lessons until the remittances had ceased to come from his father. Miss Croft had spoken to him wonderful words of encouragement. She would speak to his father herself when he came back and see if it could not be arranged for him to have lessons from one of the really good teachers. Terry's faith in Miss Croft was implicit. She was his fairy godmother. From that night when he had first met her, his career had begun in earnest. He went through the routine of his orthodox Sunday with a mind

far removed from the doings of Elijah, whose career they happened to be following at Sunday School. Terry had his own career to think about.

"It's only about nineteen days now, isn't it?" he said to Mrs. Durden on their way back from evensong.

"What's nineteen days?"

"Till dad comes back."

"What? Do you want to be off. You're tired of old Mrs. D., that's it. Well, 'youth will be served,' as the sayin' is. I won't keep you, Terry, against your wish."

"I'm not tired of you," said Terry, forcing his hand inside the large palm and digging his knuckles against the cotton glove.

"Insinuating," said Mrs. Durden. "That's what you are. You know how to get round Mrs. D."

"Don't you see I want to get on, I want to get on," said Terry.

"What's your hurry, Mr. Walkingfast? Do you want to be sittin' on top of the world before you're in long trousers? Maybe, Terry boy, you're on top of the world now. Maybe you're like 'Umpty Dumpty. Don't you rush the fairies."

" 'Umpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
'Umpty Dumpty 'ad a great fall."

"Why do you say that?"

"Bless me! I don't know. It just came into my 'ead."

She put an arm round Terry and squeezed him to her side. "Don't you mind what I say. It will be for the best. But you go easy, Terry. Don't rush the fairies."

Terry went to bed that night feeling that he was prepared to charge down all and sundry who stood in his way. Next morning came the news of the wreck of Bill Hood's ship with the loss of all hands. Terry did not go to school. Convention seemed to demand that he should stay away. There was nothing for him to do at home. Later all sorts of decisions would have to be made, but that day was Bill Hood's. Terry followed Mrs. Durden about like a shadow. He was like one who has fallen from a great height. He had been living at high pressure of late, not in the way of outward activity, but within himself. Miss Croft's encouragement, and the afflatus of that wonderful Saturday, had wrought upon him. It only remained for his father to come back. Then the promised land would be entered; Miss Croft would make him see what the gods had in store for his son and what the gods expected of him. Now his father would never come

back. It did not seem to matter if he never touched a piano again. At last Mrs. Durden's nervous reserves gave way.

"Can't you think of something for yourself, Terry?" she said.

"I'll go for a walk," said Terry.

It was a still grey day as he stepped out on to the pavement. The great grey block of dwellings loomed up behind him. Over the way a storey was being added to a biscuit factory. There came the ring of masons' trowels and the melancholy chirrup of a derrick. Everything seemed grey and bound by that searching London November cold that is so much more devitalising than more showy extremes of frost and snow. Terry felt a longing for an open space where the cold might buffet him, not steal about him from draughty stone doorways. It would be easier to think of his father where there was grass to be seen, where there were children in brightly coloured coats. He would walk to the Round Pond. That would help him to think aright of the tall, big limbed man with the tanned face and hooked nose and that grim smile that was never grim to Terry. Bill Hood had often trundled a carefully rigged model sloop on a wheelbarrow to the Round Pond. Terry still had his ship. He remembered with

a pang how his enthusiasm for it had evaporated. If only he could go sailing it now with his father. Coming to a corner he paused abruptly. His attention was riveted upon a man who was walking away from him to the right. There was something in the set of his shoulders that reminded him with a painful intensity of his father. He stopped a few yards from the pavement and stared after him. A horn blew.

"Look out, you little fool!"

Terry started back and slipped. He struggled for foothold, the car swerved, he fell, and something crashed upon the back of his head. Then he knew no more.

CHAPTER III

THE WAY BACK

TERRY could not tell when it was that he began to fight his way back to the world of things as he had known them. The way was very difficult, and there were times when he only wished for an end of pain and everything. Somewhere at the back of his mind, however, there was that determination to thread the labyrinth and find his way out into the open. There was something that he had to do, something awaiting him at the top of the incline up which he always seemed to be struggling. Sometimes he would be conscious of figures bending over him. Once he recognised Mrs. Durden, but the pain swallowed him up once more and he was fighting by himself again, fighting to be free for the thing he had to do. At last there came a morning when he awoke from a long sleep and knew that he had come out into the open. He was aware of other cots beside him. He could dimly see a double row

of them. A tall man in a white coat was walking from him down the polished way between the cots. Terry lost sight of him, the whole ward became blurred. Then the mist cleared, and he was aware of a woman bending over a neighbouring cot. She wore a print dress and a white cap.

"I'm in hospital," thought Terry. "That's a nurse."

Then he saw Miss Croft coming towards him by the way that the man in the white coat had gone. She was leaning on the arm of a young woman with very bright eyes and a somewhat beaky nose, dressed very neatly in brown. She caught Terry's gaze and began to whisper volubly to Miss Croft, who smiled. In a few more moments she was by Terry's side. He held out a thin little arm to her.

"Terry," she whispered, as she took his hand in hers.

"I've got back," said Terry. "I'm out of it."

"Yes. You've got back. You've had a real sleep. It's nice to wake up and feel you've got back, isn't it?"

"My hands are all right, Miss," said Terry. "Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. That's what Mrs. Durden said."

"But they've put you together again," said

Miss Croft. "Oh, think of it, it might have been one of these."

She caressed the long fingers, intact, but wasted.

"Where's Mrs. Durden?" Terry asked. "Where's dad?"

Then he remembered. Miss Croft bent down and kissed him.

"What will they do with me, Miss?" said Terry. He felt that the life for which he had fought was altogether too difficult. He had no strength left to meet it.

"They're going to make you well. Now sleep. I will come again."

With that assurance Terry fell asleep. When the sister came to wash him she was jocular.

"Well, young man. You're a regular Rip Van Winkle. Why didn't you think of sleeping like that before? You wouldn't do it to please me."

"I'm better," said Terry. "When will she come again?"

"She won't come at all if you're not a good boy."

Terry was as good as he could be and was rewarded by finding Miss Croft sitting by his cot when he awoke from a refreshing sleep. She was sitting, reading a book with her hands as Terry had seen a blind child read when he went

shopping with Mrs. Durden. Where was Mrs. Durden? Was she dead, too, like his father? He was an orphan. What were they going to do with him? He put out his hand and touched Miss Croft's arm.

"Hullo, Terry. You're awake. They tell me you're looking ever so much better. The doctor says I may talk with you."

"Tell me things, Miss. Oh, I do want to know."

"You mustn't ask too many questions."

"Will I have to go to an orphanage, Miss?"

"Not unless you wish, Terry. Do you think you would like to come and stay with me at Sedgeway Manor for a time? You would stay with me until you are quite well and by then we will have made plans."

"Stay with you? Me?"

Terry was not a lachrymose child, but he was very weak and this overwhelming invitation brought the tears into his eyes."

"Why not," laughed Miss Croft, "you won't be the first. Afterwards there is Mrs. Durden. Terry, would you like to be her son?"

"How do you mean?"

"Mrs. Durden is anxious to adopt you. There would be no talk of an orphanage then. You would have what is called a status. Do you think

you understand? Later on you will have to go to school, but Mrs. Durden's home will be your's."

"I don't seem to have nothing to worry about, Miss. Why are you all so kind? I thought I would be poor and all that."

"We will manage to make a musician of you between us, Terry. Now, that's enough. You will be tired. I shall come again. It's nice to find your way back again, isn't it? Now you must sleep."

Terry followed her with his eyes as she was guided between the rows of cots. He wondered if Miss Croft had been in the labyrinth, too, and had found her way back.

CHAPTER IV

SEDGEWAY MANOR

A GREAT copper beech stood at the gate of Sedgeway Manor. In days of sunshine its spreading branches cast the little blue stone lodge into shade. It was so on that morning in late April, when Mrs. Tule, the gardener's wife, answered the call of the motor-horn, and flung those gates open to let the mistress of Sedgeway Manor pass with her guest. Terry, who had been registering a myriad sights all the way down on that wonderful run, now felt that he was passing into a region which should be registered by something other than his eyes. Sedgeway Manor seemed to stretch out leafy arms, and to draw him in. Mrs. Tule seemed to stretch out arms too, like the trees, and just for a moment, it appeared to Terry that a child in some brown habit skipped by her side. Terry turned to make sure. There was only Mrs. Tule, standing alone, and smiling after them, the branches of the copper beech casting freakish shadows about

her. Nevertheless, there was that odd sense of welcoming presence, other than hers, by the great iron gates. It remained in the back of Terry's mind as the car swirled into a leafy aisle of beeches and sycamores.

"Now we're coming to it, Terry." Miss Croft almost shouted in her contentment. "Home!"

Terry looked ahead as the chimneys showed above the trees. In another moment he had a full view of Sedgeway Manor. It was a pretty, old, half-timbered house, with its lower storey covered in Virginia creeper. It was by no means so pretentious a dwelling as the lodge and the great gates would have seemed to suggest, but to Terry's eyes, so long accustomed to the bricks and glazed tiles of his suburb, it seemed the House Beautiful on that sunny morning. A little black-and-tan terrier barked at them furiously from the steps of the oaken front door, heedless of the admonitions of a stout lady in a silk gown and cap who stood on the top step.

"Well, here we are, Mrs. Worrall. Be quiet, Peter. What a fuss to make over his missus. It must be you he's barking at, Terry. Well, he'll soon get used to you. Give me a hand, there's a good boy."

Terry helped Miss Croft to alight on to the yellow gravel.

"Voila!" said the mistress of Sedgeway Manor.

Mrs. Worrall came down the steps to greet them.

"I'm always relieved when I hear that Gabriel horn," she said. "London's no place for you, Miss Croft."

"Nonsense! Clothilde has been having the time of her life, haven't you, Clothilde?"

As Miss Croft's maid descended from her place beside the chauffeur, it certainly seemed that she had been enjoying the ride down from London.

"All the same," said Miss Croft, "I'm just longing for a jog behind Modestine. Well, here's the *raison d'être* or the *casus belli*, or whatever you like to call him. Terry, this is Mrs. Worrall, my housekeeper. Terry knows nothing about my menage at all, I haven't told him anything. It's so much nicer to find out."

"So this is the orphan boy," said Mrs. Worrall, casting upon Terry a glance so forlorn that he was threatened with an onslaught of nervous giggles.

"Is he like anybody you can remember, say twenty years ago?" said Miss Croft. "Like

somebody we can both remember. I don't know why, but I'm awfully keen on getting a correct image of Terry."

"I must think it over," said Mrs. Worrall. "Come along."

She led the way into a panelled hall and up some shallow stairs of dark wood that gave to the tread. Then they turned into a little gallery upon which there opened three doors.

"You're putting him in the Greenaway Room, aren't you?" said Miss Croft. "I think it gets the most sun."

"That is so. Personally, I had thought of the Hassall Room, seeing that he is a boy, but the Greenaway Room is certainly the sunnier. Come along. What am I to call him?"

"Terry. He has no title," said Miss Croft. "Where's Clothilde? Those flowers ought to be put in water."

"Fancy your bringing flowers down here," said Mrs. Worrall. "Coals to Newcastle."

"Oh, Noel has no imagination."

Terry heard the voice of his benefactress die away as he was shown into the Greenaway Room.

"Here you are, Terry. I hope that you're a tidy boy, and that you don't walk in your sleep. I had one here who did that—a little Russian

girl. Frightened me out of my wits, she did, walking up and down the stairs, and talking her outlandish speech."

Terry's eyes went round the dainty little room. It really was a chamber where one would dread to think of such things as muddy boots. The sun streamed through a leaded casement whose curtains were just stirred by the breeze. Terry could see they bore a pattern of sunflowers. Upon the white distempered walls there hung some pictures in green fluted frames. There was a little boy with a hoop and green jacket, and high-waisted pantaloons with huge buttons. There were little girls in mob caps, flounced frocks and white stockings with crossed shoe-strings showing black against them. Surmounting a bracket bookshelf there was a boy in a brown smock. At the first glance Terry's mind instinctively returned to the copper beech where the child had seemed to caper for a moment. There had been no child, he knew, yet there had been that strange sense of a welcoming presence. The boy in the picture wore a large green felt hat, and a smock of brown. A whistle was stuck into the cord about his hat. Again Terry was aware of that odd sense of being made welcome. The boy looked down at him with a smile. It was not a satisfied smile. It was inquiring, wistful.

Never before had Terry been so oddly affected by a picture. He was sure that the boy in the brown smock had been waiting for him—for him, Terry Hood. What would the boy have of him? It was odd that the expression on the little bronzed face should fill him with such a sweet disturbance. Something was afoot at Sedgeway Manor, some adventure of the spirit awaited him, an adventure to be shared with the boy in the brown smock. Terry continued to stand and gaze, forgetful of place and time, forgetful of his manners. He was aroused from his bemusement by Mrs. Worrall's hand upon his shoulder.

"Well, young man," she said, "when are we going to set about things?"

"Who is he?" asked Terry.

Mrs. Worrall looked down at him with an expression that was not altogether agreeable. Then her glance went to the picture. Terry, with his quick and practised perception, knew that the boy in the brown smock, for some reason, was not a *persona grata* with the housekeeper. Her expression made him wonder the more. Mrs. Worrall put an end to a rather uncomfortable pause. "You want your lunch, that's what you want," said Mrs. Worrall. "Now, I hope you're going to be a good boy for you've come

here for a cure, and you mustn't begin by asking a lot of questions. Now here comes your little valise. I'll show you the bathroom."

Terry went down to lunch with the aroma of a soap upon him that made him think of a hayfield. The ordered quiet of Sedgeway Manor induced in him a state bordering upon enchantment. He had always been used to being with the herd. His cupboard of a room at Mrs. Durden's was the only privacy he had ever known. Sedgeway Manor was not a large house, but there was the knowledge that outside lay acres of park and garden where he was free to wander. Then there were a thousand and one objects to delight his eye and excite his interest. It was a new experience for him to sit before a bowl of soup placed on a little mat of plaited straw, and to watch the array of bright silver and glass upon the polished Sheraton table. The bowl was of white ware, and bore a picture of Little Miss Muffet and the spider. There was a sense of space everywhere, for the furnishing of the house had been planned to meet Miss Croft's need. Terry watched her enter the room and take her place with an easy precision. She seemed to have schooled all her movements in order that she might make her guests feel at home in Sedgeway Manor. As if

his unwonted surroundings were not enough to bewitch Terry, there was this additional wonder of Miss Croft's deftness. Mrs. Worrall had been prepared to be shocked at Terry's table manners, but Mrs. Durden had seen to it that the good name of Hood should not suffer in this respect. The meal passed off very successfully, for Miss Croft tactfully left her guest largely to himself and engaged Mrs. Worrall's attention upon household matters. When Terry had successfully ejected his last prune stone, Miss Croft rose.

"And now," she said, "before you go and lie down, which is doctor's orders, I am going to show you something I think you will like to see, Terry. Come along."

She led the way out of the room and across the hall to a door whose handle was hidden behind a tapestry. Terry stopped.

"Why, it's the boy with the brown smock again," he said. He was examining the design of the tapestry. It was a picture in quiet colours of the child. Terry noted that he held the wooden whistle in his hand.

"Oh yes," said Miss Croft, "he stands guard over all the tunes that are made inside."

She turned the handle as she spoke and signed Terry to enter. The room seemed

almost bare except for a piano which was placed a little way from a carved oaken mantelpiece. It was a small grand in a covering of holland and red braid. There were a few chairs and a music stand in another part of the room. The walls were of dark panelled oak and wore no pictures.

"That pinny thing will come off presently," said Terry's hostess, "but not to-day. To-day you are to rest. Later, Modestine will take us over the estate, and this evening we will sit and make plans. Remember, Terry, you have come here to get well. I thought the sight of that might help you. It's nice to know it's there."

Terry carried out his orders. Before he removed his shoes in the Greenaway Room, however, he paused for another long look at the picture of the boy in the brown smock. Of all the wonderful things in this wonderful house, nothing had so caught at his imagination as this recurrent phenomenon of Brown Smock. Why had Mrs. Worrall put him off when he had inquired of the child? Well, he mustn't start to worry or he should not get those forty winks prescribed for him. He wondered vaguely if Modestine was the boy's name. Perhaps he would appear later that afternoon and conduct

them round the estate. So wondering, he fell asleep to be awakened two hours after by the sound of wheels on the gravel below him and the crunching of little hoofs. Modestine, as the reader has no doubt foreseen, turned out to be a donkey. Clothilde was wont to drive her mistress abroad in a donkey carriage, and when Miss Croft had a guest the party was often increased to three or four, if one includes Modestine.

"You must learn to drive yourself, Terry," said Miss Croft, "and then I can give Clothilde more holidays."

"*Mais non, non, non!*" said Clothilde. "*Cet enfant? Je ne pense pas.*"

"Clothilde won't trust you with me, Terry. Never mind. We'll see, we'll see."

So they trotted off, in pleasant enough contrast to their spin down from London that morning. It was Terry's first real experience of the country.

"Now, Terry," said Miss Croft, "you must tell me what you see. It amuses me to think how many Sedgeways there are. I've heard dozens of descriptions and they're all different."

Terry could not hope to tell half that he saw. As a bald statement of fact it may be written that Modestine took them down the drive, through the lodge gates, and so on through

Little Sedgeway and past the cherry orchards; then over the stone bridge and past St. Mary's Church, and so back by Miss Croft's pastures and kitchen garden where they dismounted and walked the rest of the way home, leaving Clothilde to unharness Modestine and so saving her a return journey. Terry told little of what he saw for the simple reason that he had not the tongue of a poet. He could not say how the blossom looked against the blue sky and he could think of nothing with which to compare the tender green of the long grass upon the nether side. There was nothing he could say of the daffodils nodding in the cottage gardens nor of the carpet of primroses by the side of the stream they crossed. He could just say there were daffodils and primroses, and though the fact came as freshly and forcefully to him as it had come to Herrick or Wordsworth, he could not tell Miss Croft what it was that caught at his throat as he looked about him. Sedgeway is a typical Fen country village, and very pretty it looked that day pricked out at frequent intervals with masses of fruit blossom. Modestine turned from one green way to another, and all things were flecked and splashed with the sunlight. To Terry it seemed like a sort of provocation. Something must be made of it.

It must not be allowed to perish. That was what he felt though he would not have been able to tell you so. It was all in a piece with that thing that had kept him from giving in when he had fought for his life. Something must be done. How could he be expected to tell all this to Miss Croft? He was reduced to complete silence. When they had mounted the three white steps that led from the bowling green, Miss Croft paused on the grassy platform above with her hand upon Terry's shoulder.

"When I was your age, Terry," said the mistress of Sedgeway Manor, "I used to pretend that this was the deck of a ship and I was a sea captain."

Terry was looking at a bronze figure that stood backed by a great yew at the left extremity of the bowling green, a horned and bearded figure that held to its lips one of those instruments Terry had seen the Punch and Judy man play.

"Is that Neptune?" he asked, prompted, no doubt, by the analogy of Miss Croft's ship.

"No," said Miss Croft, "that's Pan. Don't look at him. Look out yonder."

Terry followed the direction of her hand. It was, indeed, a scene to rejoice the heart of the little Cockney. Immediately at his feet the smooth shorn grass, and beyond a broad hedge

of clipped box which seemed to invite one to take a flying leap and so plunge into the sea of blossom below.

"Well," said Miss Croft, "are you sick wi' pleasure like the Scotchman at the cattle show?"

"It's lovely," said Terry.

"Yes, I suppose it is," said Miss Croft. "It's nice to know it's there—like the piano in the music room."

Suddenly, she leaned so heavily upon the boy that he almost collapsed with her.

"I'm sorry, Terry," she said, with a choking little laugh. "That was very silly of me. Perhaps Mrs. Worrall is right. London does rather take it out of one."

Terry was horrified at the change in her face. Hitherto, she had always appeared to him like some wonderful piece of mechanism watched over by a special providence. There was some secret spring of strength that sustained her. Now that seemed suddenly to have gone. Fortunately for them both Mrs. Worrall appeared at the front door. She marched across the gravel like a ship in full sail and took summary possession of Miss Croft. Something surged up in Terry's breast as he saw his benefactress submit. It was all wrong that she should be humiliated like that. As Mrs. Worrall led her

indoors she looked like some allegorical figure of resignation, just such a figure as Mrs. Durden might have come upon in oleograph and sniffed and snuffled over in her best manner. Terry noted for the first time the streaks of grey in her jet black hair. She was a study in ivory and black. Somehow it made Terry think of the keyboard of a piano, a dumb thing compounded of pain until there came someone to touch it into life. He felt miserable and frightened as if he had been doing something wrong. Mrs. Worrall, however, soon reassured him. She returned after a minute or two to find him aimlessly rubbing the soles of his boots on the scraper.

"Miss Croft is a little tired," she said. "I think this evening you had better have tea with me, and then perhaps you can read a book for a little, or perhaps Clothilde will play with you or tell you a story. Miss Croft says you are to go to bed early and sleep like a top."

Terry's first day at Sedgeway Manor was rounded off with a set of dominoes in which he managed to beat Clothilde, who seemed bent upon ramming home the allegation that her partner was "a *mauvais sujet*, vot you call an 'ard case." Terry rather liked this subtle form of flattery. The day had been so strongly charged for him that there was relief to be found

in a little back chat. Terry was, after all, a child of the people. Alone in his little room, however, he pondered over the day's kaleidoscope. Never had he known such a day. He saw again the fruit trees holding up their branches against the clean-washed sky with their load of blossom. He felt again that sense of renewal on all sides. There had been renewed in him that day something of the elation he had known before the blow had fallen on him. He could not express this knowledge to himself. He was only conscious of a restless happiness oddly shadowed by something that was dark and fearful. Before he got into bed he stole to the bookcase for another peep at the boy in the brown smock. He wondered when he was to meet him. There was a steadfastness about that picture that he somehow found comforting. He was engaged upon his scrutiny when Mrs. Worrall came in.

"Not in bed yet? Is there anything you want, anything you're looking for?"

"I was just wondering about him," said Terry, pointing to the picture.

Mrs. Worrall's lugubrious face lengthened. "Now, why have you fastened on him? I'd have thought you would have been interested in the little girls. Come, young man, you hop

into bed. If you're not asleep when I come back I'll tell Miss Croft."

Terry obeyed, and in another minute he had closed his eyes upon his first day at Sedgeway Manor.

CHAPTER V

UP INTO THE CHERRY TREE

MISS CROFT greeted Terry at breakfast next morning as spick and span as ever.

"Good morning, Terry," she said. "I hope you obeyed my instructions and slept like a top."

"Yes, Miss, thank you. I slept lovely."

"Good. There's Miss Muffet waiting for you. It's porridge. We must make it curds and whey later on. Do you know the grace out of the Child's Garden of Verses?"

"No, Miss."

"You've never read Loo's Rhymes? That's what his mother used to call Tusitala. I think you'll find the Child's Garden of Verses in that little bookshelf in your room. Now, I wonder how much more there is to find out about Sedgeway Manor. You've met Mrs. Worrall and Clothilde and Modestine. There are one or two other people for you to meet."

"Please, Miss, will I meet the boy in the brown smock?"

Mrs. Worrall gave a little grunt of disapproval, but the lady of the house only smiled.

"Really, Terry, I can't say. I can't answer for him. He pleases himself as to whom he meets. I promise you, however, that you will meet the Secretary bird. That will be enough for one day."

"I seen a Secretary bird at the Zoo," said Terry, lapsing suddenly into the manner of his Cockney confrères.

Miss Croft smiled at the sharp little note of acquisitiveness. "You mean you saw a Secretary bird," corrected Mrs. Worrall.

"I saw," murmured Terry, and bit his lip.

"Well, my Secretary bird isn't like that. She's a little raw, but she's a dear. I'm always shedding my secretaries. The last one went and got married, and therefore she could not come. Mrs. Worrall says this one is like a Romney. She's only fifteen, but I don't suppose I shall keep her long. I'm like the lion in the tableau, Terry. I am permanent, but the lamb has to be renewed occasionally."

"Don't talk to the boy in parables," said Mrs. Worrall. "It's bad for his digestion."

"Does Mrs. Worrall bully you, too?" asked Miss Croft.

"No, Miss."

"Her name is Lois, but if Mrs. Worrall is to be trusted it ought to be Emma. Did you ever go to the National Gallery, Terry?"

"Yes, Miss, I've been three times, once with the Rector, and once with the Choir, and once with the Scouts."

"Tell me if you see the likeness to Lady Hamilton, then. Do you remember the picture of Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante?"

Terry did remember. He had asked the Scoutmaster what a Bacchante was, and had been told not to puzzle his head over queer names.

"Well, Lois and I are going to read proofs this morning. Would you like to take the 'Child's Garden' out with you for the morning. Don't go too far away. Now, can I trust you, Terry?"

"Yes, Miss."

"And mind you don't play tricks with the mowing machine," said Mrs. Worrall.

"My dear Mrs. Worrall, that's just the very way to make him fall foul of the mowing machine. Don't you know Grimm's story of the mother who told her children not to poke beans up their noses. I think it's Grimm. Of course they went and did it. No, we must trust Terry. If you're tempted to do anything wicked run

straight home. Stay and be introduced to Lois, and then get out into the sunlight and stay there. Don't—no, no. There I go. I'm just as bad as Mrs. Worrall."

Terry met Lois on his way back from polishing his boots. She was standing at the open door with her hand on the bell. The sunlight glinted on the pin that kept a black scarf in its place upon the bodice of her pink linen frock. She wore a white wide collar and a brown mushroom hat. If she had any inkling of her likeness to Lady Hamilton she had not troubled to dress her hair for the part. It was cut almost as short as Terry's. She looked very cool and possessed as she stood in the doorway with one ungloved hand on the bell.

"Hullo," she said. "Where do you come from?"

"London," said Terry.

"Oh, do you know Dulwich?"

"No."

"I've got an aunt at Dulwich. I suppose I can come in as you seem to belong here."

Terry was indulging in one of his appraising stares. No detail of the Secretary bird's *tout ensemble* escaped him. He noticed everything from the little gold safety pin to the broad laces of her brown brogues. He noted her full white

throat. Miss Croft's nickname did not sound well at the first hearing, but on second thoughts Terry agreed with the appellation. There was something about her throat that suggested a nightingale.

"That bell's bust, I think," said Terry. "Won't you come in? Miss Croft's waiting for you."

"Thank you," said the Secretary bird.

She smiled upon Terry. Here was another wonder in this house of wonders. Terry's heart thumped against his ribs. She had come to him out of the sunlight like an embodiment of the spring day. He fumbled at the door of Miss Croft's study at the foot of the stairs. Lois had followed him inside.

"Please, Miss, here's the young lady."

"Oh, come in Lois. So you've met already. That's Terry Hood who's just announced you. He isn't really the butler. He's going to be a great pianist some day. Later on he shall play to you, Lois, and then perhaps you will sing to him."

"Sure," said Lois. She flashed upon Terry a glance full of interest. It was her turn to do a little appraising. Terry wilted under the scrutiny. Lois stood for a moment or two with her red lips parted, lips that just escaped

over-fullness. Here was somebody wide awake to life's possibilities.

"Well, now, Terry, you run off with your 'Child's Garden.' Lois and I have a heap to get through.

Terry obeyed. Decorously mounting the creaking stairs he sought the Greenaway Room and the little bookcase. The Boy in the Brown Smock looked down at him as from a great distance. Terry had forgotten all about him.

"He's only a picture, something Miss Croft has made up. I wonder when she will sing?"

He found the book and stole down the stairs with it under his arm. From within Miss Croft's room he caught the murmur of her secretary's voice. Her voice was soft, and her speech was just tinged with that accent and intonation which Terry had noticed as he passed by the Sedgeway cottagers. He had thought it ugly in the case of the men and youths, but not so with the unbroken voices. He walked out into the garden with the brightly bound book in his hand. A great yellow butterfly flitted past him. There was the murmur of bees. From the little grassy platform above the bowling green he could catch the glint of sunlight on

the glass houses by the kitchen garden. Farther on there was a sea of blossom. Farther on again there were the thatched roofs of cottages, and beyond that the fens obscured in a blue haze. Terry stood, while the whole pleasaunce seemed to wait his good will. Would he watch the bees go in and out of their straw hives ranged on a bench beside the kale pots of mellow terra cotta, or should he squat down by the circular bed and compose a minuet for the daffodils to dance to? There were so many things that he might do. He opened the book at random.

"The world is so full of a number of things," he read, and idly turned the pages, luxuriating in a sense of largesse.

> " Up into the cheery tree
> Who should climb but little me.
> I held the branch with both my hands,
> And looked abroad on foreign lands."

He considered. Did tree climbing come under that undesirable category at which Mrs. Worrall had hinted? Not a little tree like a cherry. It would be jolly to feel the blossom against his face. He tucked the book under his arm again and made his way down the sunlit slope. All the way there went with him the thought of that pink frock and that deep white collar.

There was pink mingled with the white of some of the blossom. Her hair was brown, like the deep brown of the sweet wood. Terry found himself under the blossom. The sky was almost cloudless, but there was that snowy network of lacing boughs to make the blue seem more intense. He took off his cap and flung it upwards. It landed on a topmost bough. Laughing, he set his foot in the lowest fork of the tree and began to climb. The blossom was all about him. He reached up arms towards the sky. He was one with the beckoning branches, one with the whole aspiring world with its face turned towards the sky. His feet felt lightly for footing. It would not be easy to reach that topmost branch. He reached up higher, his foot slipped, he clutched at the branch. He saw a yellow seam open, then he crashed downwards with the branch of billowy blossom in his hand. Before the darkness closed in on him he saw the Boy with the Brown Smock bending over him. His eyes did not laugh at Terry, as had the eyes of Lois. There was solicitude and longing and a dumb affection. Terry saw him with extraordinary clarity. He even noted the whistle stuck in the cord of his green felt hat. His eyes were brown and limpid, and set wide apart, in his head, his face tanned and ruddy.

His mouth was larger than Terry's, and seemed to droop with concern for him. Terry saw that he clasped his hands as if in prayer, and that they were brown and stained. Then he saw no more.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRIT OF SEDGEWAY MANOR

"WHY did it happen?" Terry demanded. "I was so happy and it was so lovely. I never thought that anything would break, Miss."

"One doesn't," said Miss Croft. "You were holding a great spray of blossom in your hand when Tule found you."

"I know," said Terry. "Did I holler out? I suppose I must have. What are you going to do, Miss?"

"Do?"

"You won't trust me no more."

"Oh yes, I will, Terry. All the same I wish you had thought of a clothes prop or something before you went after that silly old cap. You've given me a fright. Thank Heaven, it's all right. . . ."

"I'm quite strong again, Miss."

"Not so strong as you think, Terry. You must have patience. I must have patience, too. You see, a little tumble like that wouldn't have

made you faint if you had been half as strong as the old Terry."

"Why did it happen?" Terry repeated. "Miss, do you think Brown Smock made it happen?"

The question came out so suddenly that Miss Croft involuntarily tightened her hold upon Terry's hand. He was sitting up in his cot in the Greenaway Room, and Miss Croft was by his side. She had been reading him scraps from a Braille anthology. He had watched her fingers feeling their way across the page with his old intentness. Then, in the midst of a verse of Newbolt's, he had jerked out the question, forgetful of his manners,

"Why did it happen?"

Miss Croft had put the anthology aside to answer him. "Brown Smock?" she said. "When did you see Brown Smock?"

"He bent over me, Miss. I seen him as plain as I see you."

"Terry, it wasn't Brown Smock who did it. Some people would say it was the force of gravitation, and some people would say it was just a durned thing that happened. I can't explain why the bump comes when everything is at its loveliest. Brown Smock doesn't make people tumble out of heaven, but he's there sometimes when they do tumble."

"Who is he, Miss?"

"I don't know, Terry. He's a very good person to meet when you've come a cropper. That's all I know. He comes to me sometimes when I have finished a book, and I know I have failed."

"Failed?" said Terry. "You fail, Miss. I don't think."

Miss Croft abandoned herself to merriment. Her laughter was so infectious that Terry found himself giggling shamefacedly.

"Well, I *do* think," she said. "Brown Smock has led me a pretty dance. Nevertheless, I'm glad of that day when I first saw him."

"You saw him, Miss?"

"Yes. It's a long time ago, now, and I really could see then. I could see well enough to paint that little sketch." She pointed in the direction of the bookcase.

"Tell me, Miss," said Terry.

"It happened quite a long time ago, as one counts time. I had been very ill, like you Terry. I was a long way from home when I was taken ill and I was always a home bird. Well, I got better and they brought me back by stages from Luxor. My father and mother reached Sedgeway at last with me. It was in the autumn, but it seemed like a second summer. I spent

hours out of doors while the harvesting was on. I was not allowed to walk very far, but I felt my strength coming back, and with it there came a great longing to make something out of my happiness. After such a homecoming it seemed that I was meant to make people know how good life can be. My father used to give a party to the people of the village at the time of Harvest Home. They used to have races and games in that field you pass just before you come to the lodge. The children I used to teach and train to act in little plays had grown older while I had been away, but I had got to know all about the other little ones who were coming on. Well, that day people were all so sweet to me that I felt I should make a fool of myself, so I made some excuse and slipped away. I went through Maybank copse and so on up Hurzel Hill, where there had been a particularly fine crop of barley that year, to Dickory's stile, and there I found Brown Smock. He was seated on the stile looking down on the revels below. He sat there, so still. He did not seem aware of my approach. He fingered his whistle in his hand as if he were trying to make up his mind to start a tune.

"'Why aren't you playing with the other boys?' I asked.

"He looked up at me, and then I knew that he was not one of the children. He was the spirit of that day. Does it all seem very strange to you, Terry?"

"No, Miss, I don't think so."

"You've seen him for yourself. I never speak of him to anyone who has not seen him. I believe that this house belongs to him. I am only his steward. I work here for him. I try to give out to the world what he gave me, and so will you, I think, Terry. We shall fail, of course."

"I won't fail," said Terry.

"Perhaps not," said Miss Croft.

But here Mrs. Worrall appeared with Terry's egg and milk. "Oh, Miss Croft," she said, "why will you do it?"

"Do what, my dear lady?" Her laughter was a shadow of her former merriment.

"Take it out of yourself like that. You can't burn the candle at both ends, you know. Drink this up and I'll get another for the boy."

"Oh, bunkum," said Miss Croft.

CHAPTER VII

CANDLE LIGHT

TERRY recovered from his fall in a very little while. He did not cease to puzzle over the fact that such a little shock should have brought the darkness closing about him. It may have been that he had suffered from no mere physical shock, but that there was something in the ripping away of that fragrant bough and the merciless blue of the unregarding sky that had administered a blow to his spirit. There had come the realisation that pain and destruction waited very closely upon the loveliness and peace of that April morning. Lois had appeared to him out of the sunlight, and her beauty had seemed to him like a crown and seal on that beautiful day. He had not thought that life could hold out so much to him. He had been filled to the brim with the richness and promise of the day, and Lois had seemed to personify the day in herself. Then there had come sudden anger and humiliation as he toppled out of the

tree with the broken branch in his hand. Something far less palpable than bodily pain had swamped in on his joy, as a great wave might have swamped a skiff. It was something that Brown Smock knew of and that was why his gaze had been full of concern and pity. Miss Croft had a funny way of putting things. She had spoken of people tumbling out of heaven. It seemed to be a thing that one might do any day of the year. Terry supposed he had tumbled out of heaven with the bough in his hand, and there was Brown Smock waiting to console him. Brown Smock who was one with the brown earth, steadfast and still, shrinking from nothing, alive to the pain that underlay all the loveliness with which the earth was decked, but informed with a quiet happiness that was deeper than all pain. Terry had been carried indoors after his fall by Tule, the gardener. Tule had been redolent of the quick bed upon which he had been working when he heard Terry's cry. His strong hairy arms were splattered with soil. His dark coarse cotton shirt had been damp with sweat, but Tule had called him "Laddie," and Terry had felt secure in his arms. So they had come back to the house. Lois had just closed the study door behind her on her way upon some errand for Miss Croft.

"What is it?" she had asked.

"The little fellow has fallen out of a tree. He's had a shake up."

"Oh, botheration," said Lois, "what did he want to go and do that for. Now we'll have Miss Croft going off pop. He's not hurt, is he?"

"No, I'm all right," said Terry. Put me down, please." The little secretary's words had fallen on him like a series of blows."

"I'll call Clothilde," said Lois. "She's got some sense."

But at this point Miss Croft had complicated the situation by opening the study door and inquiring what the to do was all about. As a result Terry had been put to bed, where, as we have already seen, he had heard from Miss Croft enough of Brown Smock to explain his appearance to him under the cherry tree.

So Terry meditated upon the familiar spirit of Sedgeway Manor. It was strange that he should take the apparition so much as a matter of course, but ever since that foggy night when he had first met Miss Croft, he seemed to have jumped out of a little rut into a state of being, so full of shocks and surprises that a ghost in the garden did not seem to come amiss, especially such a still and steadfast ghost as Brown Smock.

"I'm not afraid of him," said Terry to himself. "I believe it's Lois I'm afraid of."

Yet when Clothilde had brought him a little black stone jar filled with the first sweetbriar roses she had come upon, Terry had thought continuously of the pink frock and black scarf; and when he went downstairs for the first time and came upon a silver pencil case lying by the study door, he was conscious of a little thrill when Mrs. Worrall declared it to be the property of Lois.

"It's not like her to drop her things about," said the housekeeper. "She's a well-regulated young party, is Miss Lois. Knows how many beans make five."

"Will I give it to her?" said Terry. The pencil was part of her. He liked to feel the touch of it in his hand. It was as if he held the key to a room where enchantment lurked; enchantment and something of dread. He had winced under her disapproval when Tule had carried him into the hall.

Terry presented the pencil at the next appearance of Lois. She did not come on Saturdays, the day of his coming downstairs, so he acted as guardian to the pencil through two days. He saw her from a distance when he accompanied his hostess to evensong at St. Mary's Church.

The whole nave separated them, for Miss Croft's pew was in the north transept and Lois sat at the southern extreme of an otherwise empty pew. She was dressed in white, her broad white lace hat partially hid her from Terry's gaze. The only lights in the church were shed by candles which an aged sexton lit with a taper during the singing of the Nunc Dimittis. The light of day was failing as the Rector mounted the pulpit. Terry saw Lois take a notebook from the little shelf in front of her, then she took a plain H.B. pencil from the bag at her side, examined it critically, and stood up with the rest for the Invocation. Terry had scarcely taken his eyes from her, except when they were buried in his knuckles as he knelt through the prayers. In the waning twilight the figure in white had seemed to him to take on many changes, and yet she was always Lois. Sometimes she seemed to him to droop pathetically, but it was only Lois bending over the tiny print of her prayer book. Sometimes she seemed to be caught up in a wave of an aspiring hymn, but it was only Lois watching the altar candles coming into their own as the day died. Then came the sermon, and she seemed bent in thought, like a meditative seraph, but it was only Lois taking down the Rector's sermon in shorthand with the neat

book held lightly on her knee. All the time Terry watched her. He watched her while the Rector retold the story of Jacob and Rachel, and all the while the story seemed to centre about that white bent figure, so poised and sure of her youth and her power to give and receive delight. Seven years had seemed so short a time to Jacob. Terry thought of all that the next seven years were going to bring him. It would surely bring him some answer to the nameless longing and wonder he felt as he looked at Lois through the candle light.

Next morning he presented her with the pencil. "You dropped this," he said. "I seen you had another one on Sunday night."

"You what?" asked Lois.

Terry flushed. The tears came into his eyes. "I saw," he said.

"Thank you," said Lois, as she took the pencil. "By the way, when am I going to hear you play? Mrs. Worrall tells me you're a bit of a genius. I hope Miss Croft will have an inspiration this morning. I want to hear you play, and I want you to hear me sing. I'm going to live at St. John's Wood when I get to London. Do you know St. John's Wood?"

"Not much," said Terry.

"I think that part of London's fascinating.

Think of all the brains and talent there. Well, I'm going there some day."

"Are you?" said Terry.

"Yes. It won't be so very long now. Miss Croft says I'm not to be in a hurry."

"She said that to me, too," said Terry.

"Are you going to be famous, too?" said Lois, with a little laugh. "Well, you can come and live at St. John's Wood, too. There's Miss Croft calling me. Ta, ta."

Terry spent that morning in superintending a bonfire for Mr. Tule, and raking the gravel. Mrs. Worrall admonished the gardener not to let him out of his sight.

"We don't want him brought in on a hurdle this time," she said.

Terry spent the day in the sunshine, and in the evening there was more candle light. Miss Croft had her inspiration. The brown holland cover was removed from the piano after supper. A seven-fold brass candle-stick was placed upon the bracket by the fireplace bearing its seven-fold light. Two tall spiral altar lights were placed on either side of the music rest. Miss Croft occupied one of the chairs, Clothilde squatted on a cushion, and Mrs. Worrall sat bolt upright on a wicker couch. They constituted the audience, while Terry and Lois rendered the pro-

gramme. Moths flew in at the open window and flickered about the little points of flame. Occasionally an owl could be heard hooting in the sycamore trees between a song and a song. Lois wore a simple frock of white crepe. Her eyes were very bright in the candle light. She sang a number of Schubert's songs, and Terry got through the accompaniments with increasing confidence. Lois was of an age when a girl is often inclined to strain after an effect in singing, but she knew exactly what she wanted to do with her voice. It was this sense of ease that made each song seem like a satisfying draught. There is a charm in that phrase "chamber music" to which most of us are responsive. Lois filled Miss Croft's music room with a measure that soothed and satisfied those who listened. There was just that suspicion of the intonation of her native county which seemed to make her singing unpretentious. She was a child of the place singing to please herself, and yet anyone listening to her would have felt the latent power in her. Terry played those preludes of Chopin that he had worked on and the Moonlight Sonata. His teacher had kept him upon a well-beaten track, and at that time Terry's repertoire was somewhat scanty. But as he played it was difficult for Miss Croft to believe

that she was not listening to a musician of knowledge and deep experience. Terry looked up after he had brought his first prelude to a close. Lois had not sat down after her first two songs. She had gone and stood by the fireplace while Terry played. Terry caught her gaze as he looked up. It may have been the candle light that made her smile seem so radiant. It was Clothilde who overwhelmed Terry with Gallic praise, while Mrs. Worrall beat her large hands together like a sea lion and showed more of her teeth than Terry had ever seen before. Miss Croft and Lois were silent, and as Terry met the girl's glance she turned away. Terry had caught her unawares. She had unconsciously given him the tribute of her eyes. How they had sparkled with her delight at the music. Terry wondered that he could ever have felt afraid of her.

When the little concert had come to an end Clothilde and he saw Lois safely to the Rectory Farm House where she lived with her grandfather. They had to go through Little Sedgeway to reach the somewhat dilapidated gabled house that stood hidden from the road by a plantation of spruces. A dog bayed at them from the shelter of a tall byre as they stepped on to a little footbridge and passed through a wood gate flanked by a sunk hedge.

"More music," said Lois. "Doesn't it seem a pity to go indoors—such a waste. Oh, look at that falling star. There should have been a moon to-night, shouldn't there, Terry?"

"There's a little one," said Terry.

"Yes, but not big enough for us to run away by. I liked to-night. I'm sorry it's over. I hope I'll hear you again, Terry."

The front door opened and a tall, grey-headed man appeared, shading a candle with his hand. He was bent and palsied, but his eyes were bright and keen under bushy black brows.

"Am I late, Grandad?"

"Oh, I mustn't complain, I mustn't complain. You've got Mamzelle with you, then, and the boy. Well, young George Washington, have you been cutting down any more cherry trees?"

"Don't be a goose, Grandad. He didn't cut down a cherry tree, he fell out of one. Good night, Clothilde. Good night, Terry."

"Good night, Mamzell. Good night, young feller."

"Good night."

On their way home Clothilde discoursed upon music and the soul. It was not a very well connected discourse, and included a good many references to a young man who had once played

the second violin at the Odeon. She also touched on the stars, Chopin, patriotism and the morgue. Terry hardly listened to her. He was luxuriating in the wash of the night air on his face, listening to the unwonted voices of the country after dark. Little Sedgeway was abed early, but the owls kept later hours. From the hedges came mysterious little squeaks and scuffles, while further afield a pump worked on like the beating of a heart, noticeable only in the stillness. Terry's heart seemed to be beating out a tune of its own, a tune in praise of life, life to be questioned with high hope, life wherein is mystery and wonder, and the love of friends and the challenge of beauty. There was something to be made of it all, something by which others would know that he had found it so good.

"Lois, Lois," He whispered the name over to himself as he sat on the chair by his white cot. Her name was music in itself. She was music, attuned to all that was seemly and free to move, running water and the wind and the great choir of the birds. So Terry sat awhile with one stocking in his hand and the other on the floor, but after he had roused himself and finished undressing, he stood in his nightshirt before the picture of Brown Smock. What did Brown

Smock want of him? Nothing less than the quintessence of that day.

"Of course, we will both fail him," Miss Croft had said.

Terry would not fail him. Lois would help him not to fail.

CHAPTER VIII

DICKORY STILE

TERRY set out for a tramp on his last afternoon, for several months at least as a sojourner at Sedgeway Manor. On the morrow he was to begin upon that contest, the goal of which was always represented to his mind by a concert grand upon a chastely decorated platform. It had been arranged that he should become a pupil at a small boarding school in Hampstead. He was to be placed with Gervain Moir. There was a kind of freemasonry among Gervain Moir's pupils. Whenever and wherever they met, it was almost certain that they would fall to discussing the Maestro. There were a hundred stories extant of Gervain Moir. His pupils laughed at his absent-mindedness, dreaded his attacks of spleen, and generally loved and worked for him. Many of Gervain Moir's pupils had gone far, some few had broken down. With due allowance for the chances and changes of this mortal life, it may be said that few great teachers could point to better

results. He had spent a week-end at Sedgeway Manor, and Terry had sat down to play before him feeling like a shorn lamb.

"I will take him," Gervain Moir had said to Miss Croft at the conclusion of the trial. "When shall we begin?"

Terry had watched the stooping Irvingesque figure pacing the bowling green with Miss Croft on his arm. They bandied long foreign names between them. There was a man called Maeterlinck for whom the Maestro seemed to have a high disdain, and for whom Miss Croft put up a spirited defence. Terry did not know what it was all about, but he was pleased to see his benefactress so flushed and animated. Gervain Moir had apparently forgotten completely that there was such a person as Terry Hood. Terry might have been a companion statue to the bronze Pan at the other end of the bowling green as he sat with his hands tucked under him on the rough garden seat, and followed the gentle disputants with his eyes. Gervain used him as a point to march on as he used Pan when he had turned his back upon Terry. But Gervain Moir had not really forgotten the scared intent little boy with the ugly patch on the back of his head where the wound had been.

On the morrow Gervain Moir had left with a

word of encouragement to his prospective pupil.

Terry mounted the hill up which Miss Croft had climbed on that afternoon in autumn when she had first met Brown Smock. It was early summer now and in place of the barley stubble there was a crop of tender green. The cherry blossom had been scattered and the daffodils no longer shone among the grass plots. A bush of red May was already in flower close by Dickory stile. Terry meant to pause in its shade and to look down on Sedgeway Manor. He wanted to carry away to London with him a picture that would stand him in stead when the fight had begun in earnest. He also cherished a wild hope that he might meet Lois. It was not unnatural to suppose that she, too, might be hearing the call of the hill-top upon that day. Hurzel Slope was a place where one might approach those realities which youth is ever ready to honour, vast comfortable certainties behind the seeming show of things. One could not but be an optimist upon that little Mount of Transfiguration. For that hour, however, Lois had either not heard the call, or else had been let and hindered by some little ephemeral business in Sedgeway. Sedgeway! How Terry loved the very name. He squatted upon the stile

with hunched knees and chin in hand, and looked down upon the hamlet. Sedgeway had been frocked in fruit-blossom when he first saw the place. Sedgeway was then like a girl who had put on a garment to greet him. Now the garment was of green. St. Mary's tower raised its head above the trees and the cottage smoke. There were patches of colour where the gardens showed. They flamed, here and there, beside the neutral brown of the thatched roofs. Sedgeway was still keeping young for him. No. That was not the way to look at it. It was he, Terry, who was young, he and Lois. Sedgeway had put on that garment for them, and such as they. Yet, under all that serene loveliness, lurked darkness and pain. Terry had found that out when he had fallen from the tree. He had found something analogous to that in Lois. Her coldness had hurt him when Tule had carried him into the hall. Yet how beautiful she was! So Terry Hood sat on Dickory Stile, as complete a little pagan as old Pan, from his immovable throne by the bowling-green, could have wished to send forth to taste and to slay, and ultimately to be annihilated. Terry, of course, did not know that he was being a pagan. He did not understand about Pan. Miss Croft had steered his mind away from consideration

of the figure. Miss Croft had talked about Brown Smock instead, Brown Smock, who did not sit and smile and smile, but waited wistfully upon happiness, and compassionately upon pain. A great golden bumble bee began a droning circuit about Dickory Stile. The sound of St. Mary's chime stole up from the valley. Terry suddenly relaxed from the tense attitude of a child in search of a philosophy. The fragile frame of the boy that of late had been put to such strain owing to the quick and eager spirit with which it walked in company, suddenly asserted itself. Terry had climbed the hill with mingled elation and sadness. Unconsciously he had tired himself. The bee droned on. Terry's eyes closed. He sat on Dickory Stile, as motionless, almost, as Pan himself. Only there was the gentle rise and fall of his breathing. In that sense, at any rate, Terry was a spirit.

. . . . .

Terry could not have told you how the droning of the bumble bee turned into a childish crooning as Brown Smock came walking up Hurzel Slope, as he had hoped that Lois Hanray would have come walking, nor could he have told you just when the child defined himself. Sedgeway lay below him as of yore, but there was Brown

Smock, knee-deep in the pasturage before him. Yet somehow it was not the same Sedgeway.

Terry remained motionless. The apparition drew nearer. It was simply the boy in the picture increased to life size with the background of green and blue as Hilda Croft had painted it.

"Brown Smock, Brown Smock," laughed Terry. "This is better than last time, isn't it?"

The hazel eyes were troubled, but the red lips smiled.

"I was sorry, Brother," said Brown Smock. "Now I am glad, for you are happy."

"Am I?" said Terry. "I suppose I am. Yet there's something I want."

"What do you want, then, Brother?" asked Brown Smock.

He rolled the R of "Brother" ever so slightly. It made Terry think of Lois.

"What do I want?" said Terry. "I want Miss Croft to know that I haven't failed you. I think that's what I want."

Brown Smock turned away. Terry saw him gaze across the intervening valley to the crest of the low hill where stood what was left of Sedgeway Abbey. He could make out something dark that seemed to detach itself from the dark recess of the ruined chancel.

"That's a hawk," said Terry.

"Aye," said Brown Smock.

"Tule showed me a hawk," said Terry. "Brown Smock, Miss Croft said you are all the children. What did she mean? Brown Smock, are you all the children? Are you all the flowers, and the sky, and the rivers, too? Isn't that what Pan is? Clothilde told me about Pan. Brown Smock, are you the real Pan?"

"No," said Brown Smock. The boys of Sedgeway said "Noa."

Brown Smock's speech resembled theirs, and yet it was distinctive. His rusticity seemed gentler, more attuned to the day and its voices. He pointed with a brown forefinger, following the flight of the hawk.

"I bain't everything," he said. "Look yonder."

The hawk had suddenly swooped. Brown Smock hid his face in his hands.

"If you was Pan," said Terry, "you would be that, too. If you was Pan, Brown Smock, you'd be me. I have killed things. I once killed a paraquet with a stone. It was so pretty I was sorry afterwards. Pan is never sorry, so Clothilde says. Brown Smock, who are you?"

The little weather-beaten face looked up at Terry. His smile was very winning.

"I'm just Brown Smock, brother, that's what I be, Brown Smock. My tune don't come like Pan's tune."

"What's your tune, Brown Smock?" asked Terry.

"It's not come yet," he replied. He almost said "coom."

"Play me a tune on your whistle, Brown Smock," said Terry, "I'm going away to-morrow."

For answer Brown Smock put the whistle into Terry's hand.

"You play," he said.

Terry's fingers trembled as he held the smooth red whistle. It looked as if it might have been made of rose wood.

"No, no, Brown Smock," he said. "Not yet. I think I'm scared."

"You bain't afraid, brother," said Brown Smock.

"Why were you there when I fell out of the tree just before it was dark?"

"You were hurt. I'll always be there when you are hurt."

"But you aren't Pan. You hid your face just now when you saw what the hawk was doing. You don't like to see me being hurt, do you?"

"No, no," Brown Smock moaned. "Give me back my whistle, brother."

"Cry baby," said Terry. "Here you are."

Often he was to recall the sound of Brown Smock's "No, no." He knew afterwards that Brown Smock had not really cried. There was a robustness in those husky tones. At the moment Terry was angry with himself. He was angry and frightened and remorseful all in a breath. Brown Smock took the whistle and stuck it into the cord about his hat. Then he stood up and shook his smock clear of such field flotsam as any boy would gather on a summer day.

"You're not going, Brown Smock?" said Terry. "I didn't mean that. I was narked. I am a beast, Brown Smock."

"You bain't a beast," said Brown Smock with a grin. "Yon's a beast." He pointed uphill. Terry turned and saw that a large white-faced cow was regarding them solemnly through a gap in a hawthorn hedge some twenty yards away.

"Race with me, brother, do ee now."

Terry saw his eyes suddenly change. They were full of fun and provocation.

"Oh, Brown Smock," said Terry, "you're littler than me. I do love you, Brown Smock. I wish you was my real brother. You shall have a tune to play, Brown Smock, I'll not fail you. Come on, I'll give you five yards start."

There was a sudden disturbance in the grass and the May bush by Dickory Stile. An unaccountable breeze had sprung up from the direction of Sedgeway. Overhead a flight of rooks sounded like ribald laughter. Terry awoke and found himself alone.

He was overcome with a sudden panic. Leaping from the stile, he ran down the slope.

"Brown Smock, Brown Smock," he called. "Come back. Come back. I've a tune in my ears for you, Brown Smock." Terry scrambled through a gate. He reached the other side, and searched the farther field. Close to the hedge, a few yards from the gate, lay a dead hare. One long soft ear was dark with clotted blood. Its feet pointed stiffly to the unregarding sky.

The sudden gust of wind had died away. Terry felt the silence of the field would stifle him.

"It was only a dream," he said to himself, "But I've never dreamed like that before, in the daytime." His eyes returned to the dead hare. That was none of Brown Smock's doing. That was something that Pan must answer for, Pan, who sat and smiled and waited for death and pain to overtake all things. Who was Brown Smock? Was he that part of Terry that rejoiced in creating things, the part that always seemed to be struggling against something else

in him, something dark that took pleasure in destruction. Trembling, Terry turned, and sought the gate by which he had entered. Once on the other side, he made for Dickory Stile as fast as his legs would carry him. There he rested for a little. Then he made his way down to Sedgeway Manor. That evening he told Miss Croft of his encounter. She was reassuring.

"You'll meet him again, Terry. Perhaps he will come to you at Dickory Stile in the harvest-time. You will be coming down for your holiday, I hope."

"Who is he, Miss?" asked Terry.

"Ask me something easier," laughed Hilda Croft.

"Will I, Miss?" said Terry. "I thought he was dead. I didn't know what to think. I thought perhaps that the hare——"

"Oh, no, no, Terry. Brown Smock isn't Pan."

"You said he was all the children, Miss," said Terry.

"I don't think I should have said that," Miss Croft answered, as she took Terry's hand. "He's just Brown Smock, and you must find him a tune. I'll help you if I can, Terry, but I'm trying to find him a tune, too. Well, 'here comes a candle to light you to bed and here comes a

chopper to chop off your head.' In other words, here comes Mrs. Worrall."

"Well, the holiday's over," said Mrs. Worrall. "The cure's complete. You've been less trouble than most of them, Terry. Now you must say goodbye to Miss Croft, for you're making an early start to-morrow."

"Kissing is optional," said Miss Croft. "Some boys hate mugging."

Then Terry did a thing that must have been prompted by some forbear on his mother's side. He dropped on his knee, and taking Miss Croft's hand in his he put it to his lips.

"Well, I never," said Mrs. Worrall.

Miss Croft's laughter rang out like a bell. "Rise, Knight of the Brown Smock," she said. "That was a very pretty way of getting over the mugging difficulty. Come again, Terry boy. Come at harvest-time."

"I'll write, Miss," said Terry. "I'll write every week."

"Of course, you will write. Then you must go and report yourself to Colonel Croft sometimes, and he will report to me. Good night, you funny little man."

"Now, now, Miss Croft, I beg of you," said Mrs. Worrall. "Clothilde! Where is that girl?"

"*Oui*, Madame." Clothilde appeared like Juliet on the balcony.

"Clothilde," said Miss Croft, "do you realise that Terry goes off to-morrow?"

"To-morrow? *Ma fois*, I know well. It is to-morrow. *Ah, ciel!* That 'orrible to-morrow. They always go away on ze morrow."

Then Clothilde, having failed to evade a farewell scene, made the fact manifest in her usual thorough manner. Terry's British soul recoiled at the onslaught. It was trying to be called a *brave* and a *petit*, an *ange*, and a *mauvais sujêt*, all in one breath. Terry went to bed with the tears still under control. Brown Smock looked down at him from his place above the little book-shelf.

CHAPTER IX

LOIS

TERRY rang at the bell of Colonel Croft's house in Cadogan Gardens. It may have been the little grey suit that made him appear to have added cubits to his stature during the past six weeks. At any rate, he was scarcely recognisable as the Terry Hood who had butted his way to the performers' seats in the wake of Mrs. Durden on All Souls' night. There was no sign of the wound on the back of his head. It was a very well brushed and combed terrier who waited for the door to open. There was the old mannerism of the lowered head that always made Terry appear as if he were about to leap upon his prey. Simpson came to the door.

"Ah, yes, the Colonel is expecting you, Master Terry."

Terry blushed at the incongruity of being addressed as Master Terry by so magnificent a person as Simpson. It was one of the minor

miracles attendant upon that miraculous encounter with Miss Hilda Croft on All Souls' night. Colonel Croft came out into the hall at the sound of Terry's voice.

"Ah, here's Number Three. My word, my boy, how you've grown. Come along and tell me all about it. I shall have to write a memorandum for Sedgeway."

Terry sat down and told his tale. He was enjoying a week-end exeat, sleeping two nights in his little old room at Mrs. Durden's. He did not talk easily. Colonel Croft, however, helped him with a number of skilful leading questions. Terry was moderately enthusiastic about his school life. He smiled oftenest when the Colonel spoke of Gervain Moir. He was working hard, he had to. Colonel Croft thought that the boy looked as if he had been to school in every sense of the word. He did not try to get too far past Terry's reserve, but afterwards he wrote to his sister, "Your young man wants a good holiday. I fancy Terry has been going through the mill. He is such an intense little beggar. Let him have a chance to kick up his heels at Sedgeway." He said nothing of his impressions to Terry, but tipped him liberally and sent him on his way. Terry had to meet Mrs. Durden at Church

Street by half-past twelve. His foster-mother had planned an afternoon of distraction at the White City. He found himself in advance of his scheduled time. He would go and see if there were many little boats on the Round Pond This was a pilgrimage he often paid as a tribute to his father.

The park and gardens were crowded. There was that sense of expectancy which one feels on a fine Saturday morning. Everyone seemed to have a plan for the afternoon. Terry picked his way through the phalanx of perambulators, and avoided toes and parasols with the assurance of a Londoner born. It seemed strange that he should be part of that immaculate procession which he had regarded in the old days as from the outside. The broad walk flowered with frocks and sunshades and perambulator awnings like a garden come to life. Terry found himself walking behind a very demonstrative three year old. She hugged a large red ball and shouted like a town crier. Not content with the notice she attracted she began to gesticulate. There was a howl as the red ball bobbed over the edge of the perambulator and bounced in the direction of a seat. Terry pounced after it. He recovered it by precipitating himself at the feet of a girl in white.

"Why, it's Terry Hood!"

Terry straightened himself. Lois sat under the shade of a red parasol. Terry remembered how she had stood by the seven-branched candle-stick. She seemed to reveal herself to him a pleased child for a moment. Then she turned to her companion, and Terry saw her as a beautiful and exacting and entirely efficient young lady whom he both feared and worshipped.

"Bunty, this is the boy who broke Miss Croft's cherry tree, and found my pencil. Terry this is Miss Wentworth. I say, Terry, what a smart suit."

Terry lifted his cap to a young lady in a shady hat of burnt straw and a frock of green poplin. She stared past Terry with an expression of concern upon her round face. She was a blue-eyed blonde. Lois had been accused of using her as a foil.

"Aren't you going to restore that property?" said Miss Bunty Wentworth. "I think that baby's going to have a fit."

Terry heard Lois laugh as he turned to make good his delay. She was standing with her arm linked in Bunty's when he turned again.

"I'm going to keep you now I've got you,

Terry," she said. "I want you to hear all about me. Bunty, we'll put him in the midst of us and go walking."

"You don't seem to realise, Lois," said Miss Bunty, "that your friend may have an engagement."

"I'm not engaged," said Terry, "not for an hour."

He waited upon the behest of Lois with the strained attention of a taxi driver on the look-out for a fare. He looked much more like the old Terry than the disciplined young man who had rung Colonel Croft's bell.

"Ripping," said Lois. "Terry, you're like a breath of Sedgeway air. Come along."

"Where are we going?" said Bunty. "We have to be at Barker's by twelve remember, not half-past."

"So have I," said Terry, "or quite near Barker's."

So Terry trod decorous pathways with a lady upon either hand, while Lois talked of herself and kept up a sort of system of double entry. Allusions had to be explained to Terry of which Bunty palpably needed no explanation, and vice versa. Lois darted in her speech between the life she had left behind and the life she was

living now, between Sedgeway and London. Terry envied her those four years which gave her what appeared to him to be such unbounded freedom.

"They call me the baby of the Hostel," said Lois. "It's full of young women, Terry, and each one of them is going to be famous. I am sure I don't know how it's going to be managed."

"There's going to be a glut of genius," said Bunty, "but you'll be somewhere on top of the scrum, Lois. I shall take laudanum."

Terry feared that he might be incurring all sorts of pains and penalties as a result of this promenade. Up to the time of his accident he had known the freedom of a child of the streets. But now he had had his first taste of barrack life. Terry's schoolfellows would have looked upon such an encounter as a colourable adventure, spiced with enough of danger to make it piquant, but Terry felt nothing added to his self-esteem as he walked between the white frock and the green. He only knew that to be beside Lois was to be back in Sedgeway. He was up in the cherry tree again; the blossom was against his face, above him the blue sky and the sunlight all about him. He felt again all the urgent beauty of that April morning. He

felt that he did not care if the day had thrown him down and blackened itself from his eyes. Lois was like that. He did not care if she did hurt him. It was enough that she had been pleased to see him and had called on him to stay with her.

Lois talked on like a stream in spate, and now it was Terry and now it was Bunty on whom her raillery fell. Bunty responded with grunts and gloomy prophecies, but Terry only grinned and was happy. Did Clothilde still call him an "'ard case," and what had he done at school to justify the description? Why had he not grown his hair long, and was he going to wear a velvet suit and a Valenciennes collar when he gave his first concert? For her own part she was working like a nigger—French, Italian and German, and, of course, voice production. She had heard Melba and Clara Butt, and had very definite views about the state of opera in England, at which Bunty appeared to be grimly amused. She didn't suppose she would ever sing in public. There was such a frightful lot to learn. There was something almost catastrophic in her humility. Bunty called her a humbug. Terry was impressed. He was not humble himself, despite Gervain Moir, who, in one of those famous splenetic displays, had told him that

prayer and fasting alone could save him from becoming an affront to the shade of Bach. It was very touching to hear Lois declare she would never sing in public. Terry thought of her as a beautiful neophyte dedicating herself to a life-long sacrifice, a steadfast climbing up towards the unattainable ideal. Miss Croft would like to hear of some return for her generosity.

"I think the worst kind of cant is artistic cant," said Bunty Wentworth. "You'll have your name on the buses before you know where you are. I shall see it in the tubes. Lois Hanray. Lois Hanray. Lois Hanray. Bodger's Soap. Pidger's Pickles. That's what you are out for, Miss."

"Terry doesn't think so. Do you, Terry?"

"He'd be too polite to say so, even if he did."

"Or too frightened. He's terrified of me. Why was Terry fied?"

"Because the woodpecker woodpecker," said Miss Bunty Wentworth.

"I'm not terrified," said Terry. "I know you'll be great. You can't help it. You must have what you want."

"What do I want?" said Lois, as they turned into the High Street.

"Flattery," said Bunty. "Hot treacle down your back."

"No, I don't," said Lois. "I want friends to love me. Terry loves me."

"He is of age," said Bunty, "let him speak for himself."

"He's not. He's an infant prodigy. Oh, look at those. Now I know what I want. I just want those. La France roses. Oh, I'm sure they come from Sedgeway."

They paused in front of the florist's window. Three perfect blooms lay on a little bed of moss in a round basket of plaited rushes.

"I daresay you do," said Bunty. "Come along, we're late." She took Lois by the arm, but Terry had dashed into the shop.

"Good Lord," said Bunty. "Now you've done it."

"Done what?" said Lois.

She was answered by the reappearance of Terry with the roses in his hand. Colonel Croft's tip had jingled into the florist's till. He lowered his head as if he were going to charge her. Lois looked frightened. She also looked pretty beyond her wont.

"Terry, you naughty boy."

"Take them. Please, please."

He thrust the little basket into her hand

and, sheepishly pulling off his cap, he turned and fled.

"Idyllic," said Bunty Wentworth, "and he looked such a tough little rag, too."

"He's only a child," said Lois. "What shall I do with these, Bunty? I feel as if I had been shoplifting."

"I'd keep them if I were you," said Bunty. "They're nice and fresh. You'll get plenty more —not from that sprat—but from men who won't run away like that. That was worship. I wonder if it cleaned him out. Funny little kid. Nice kid."

"Yes, I think I'll keep them," said Lois. "It's good for a boy to do that sort of thing for once in a way."

"He won't always be a boy," said Bunty. "You may need a friend some day."

"I may," said Lois, "though I think I know who my best friend's going to be."

"Lois Hanray, I suppose. I am I. What? Come along, Magda. We'll be late."

Terry was late for his appointment with Mrs. Durden.

"Well, you're a nice one," said that irate lady. "Couldn't you tear yourself away from the Colonel?"

"It was the crowd," said Terry.

"I believe you've been up to something," said Mrs. Durden. "Now ain't you?"

"No, I haven't," said Terry.

"Well, that's final," said Mrs. Durden. "We won't say no more about it."

CHAPTER X

HARVEST TIME

SEDGEWAY Manor was looking a thought dishevelled. The yellow gravel had not been raked for days, and the blown leaves, yellow and brown and red, lay thick upon the bowling green. Tule was helping to get the harvest in, and Terry imagined himself to be occupied likewise, though he spent much of his time riding on top of a laden waggon as it jolted and bumped over the stubble, or rescuing great red poppies from decapitation. The poppies would serve to decorate the large room in the Church Hall where a party was to be given to the children by Miss Croft. This was the holiday Colonel Croft had desired. Figuratively, and literally at times, Terry kicked up his heels. There came the turn of Hurzel Field to be carried. It had yielded a good crop of oats this year. It was not an easy operation on account of the slope, but at last the field was clear for the gleaners.

Terry joined with the children when they came to glean. He was slower than most of them for they bent to their task with a nimbleness born of use and wont. Terry, who had been inclined to look with a tolerant compassion upon the children he had seen in church or at the cottage gates, now found himself worsted on every side by quick brown hands. A few days before he had walked back from the Rector's cottage, where he had delivered a message, and had encountered two little hobbledehoys who were swapping "fag cards" and talking their queer jargon. Terry, who had been so quick to catch the knack of wearing clothes from his patrician schoolfellows, had studied them. They were wrong in every respect. Their hair was wrong, their trousers were wrong, their boots were wrong. They seemed to defy the spirit of Sedgeway Manor and to be groping after the spirit of Bermondsey. But in Hurzel Field among the stubble he found that his compassion for these two small boys evaporated. They were so slick in making up their "gleans," that they had filled a sack before Terry had put together a very modest sheaf. They laughed at his attempts to bind the "gleans" and offered him advice as to the best way of saving his fingers from the prickly stubble. Terry's concern for his fingers spoilt

his efficiency as a gleaner. Still, he managed to make himself hot and tired, an excellent preparation for a long sleep. For the time being, however, the healing process was somewhat gruelling to the little pent Londoner, who for the past few weeks had been putting a very considerable strain both on brain and nerve.

Terry sweated and panted, but stuck to his task. It seemed that the largest wasps and the thirstiest harvest bobs sought out the new chum. His stockings, his hair, and his white tennis shirt harboured all manner of prickly things, both alive and dead. All the while there ran in his head a line from the little green-bound school edition of "The Tempest." One of the few schoolbooks he did not loathe.

"Ye sun-burned sicklemen of August weary."

The children laughed and toiled at his side. They were transformed in the sunlight. They were one with the golden stubble, one with the pearly sky, one with the suffused sunlight and the sweet drone of that autumn day. Someone began to sing, not a song of Harvest Home, but a snatch from a three-year-old musical comedy, that sounded as ancient to Terry as a song from "Maritana" or "The Lost Chord." The effort

was greeted with ironic applause, but somehow there was an alchemy in the sunlight that transmuted the laughter into something fine and precious. Terry found himself laughing with the others, the last vestige of his newly-found intellectual arrogance entirely blown away, and in that moment of return to a former Terry, he became suddenly aware of the presence of Brown Smock. It would be difficult to explain how this was so. There was no apparition of a brown habit and green hat. Perhaps it was that the quintessence of his own laughter and that of the other children was distilled into one merry ripple of merriment that came from nowhere, and yet was everywhere. Terry bent over his gleans, and he was quite sure that Brown Smock was waiting for another word with him. The spirit had his opportunity that afternoon, for Mrs. Worrall insisted upon Terry's lying down after lunch.

Terry did not disturb his eiderdown in the Greenaway Room, but sought out a place for siesta recommended to him by no less a person than the mistress of Sedgeway Manor. The enchanted spot was the western extremity of an old tithe barn. Here Hilda Croft had been wont to come as a girl, and there she had unconsciously forged for herself that delicate instru-

ment which now stood her in such good stead. Hilda Croft always maintained that she had learned to write by the window of the tithe barn. There, like her own beloved Tussetala she had "played sedulous ape" to Fielding, Dickens, Grimm, and a further curiously assorted host of writers. There, too, she had often tried to coax to her side the little child in the brown habit, to whom Sedgeway Manor really belonged. She was his steward, and was answerable to him for the fair name of the place. Thus she would have it. The children whom she housed were really his guests. It remained with them whether Brown Smock would consider them worthy of his hospitality. Then she would laugh. "Fancy such a timid sprite as he judging any one so. What I mean is that Brown Smock will show himself to children who put heart into him."

There was method in Hilda Croft's apparently haphazard suggestion that Terry should take a rug and pillow to the tithe barn. She also put into his hands a little book bound in dark blue Morocco with a medallion on the cover. The medallion showed a boy's head. Inside was a collection of poems in exquisite manuscript, illustrated with pen-line drawings.

"My chap book," said Hilda Croft.

Mrs. Worrall pounced upon the precious thing.

"You're not going to let him take it into the barn," she gasped.

"Oh, I can trust Terry," said Miss Croft. "And any way, risk is of the essence of life. Remember Terry is an experiment."

Mrs. Worrall glowered.

"You ought to——" she began.

But Hilda Croft stamped her little foot.

"It is my wish," she said shortly. So Terry went off with the precious volume swathed in a travelling rug, and presently was luxuriating by the western window of the barn.

To his delight he came upon a picture of Dickory Stile. There was no mistaking the spot. There was the May bush, and behind it Hurzel Slope with four tattered fir trees on the sky line. In the picture they looked particularly dishevelled, for it was a picture of storm. How cleverly Hilda Croft had set down the suggestion of disturbance. Under the picture were inscribed some verses. They were wild laughing words, full of a kind of defiant delight in the storm. Terry's term at school had given him an appreciation of good workmanship in verse. He followed the lines along with a dancing eye. They flowed over to the next

page. There he came upon something that seemed to rein him up, as if his mind had been a bolting steed. At the end of the last couplet Hilda Croft had written, "I retract. Teach me, Brown Smock." Terry knew what "Retract" meant. It was a term much in vogue at his school. The subscription was written in a shaking hand. Thus Terry had seen Miss Croft write with the help of her assistant, when her signature was required. Something had changed Hilda Croft. It was that thing which had made her turn Terry's mind away from the consideration of Pan. Terry put the book down, and closed his eyes.

"Who are you, Brown Smock?" he whispered. A mouse scuttled across the floor of the tithe barn. Outside by the stable Modestine lifted up her head, and made a noise which usually portended rain. There was just such a stirring as the picture in the little book had suggested. An unbolted stable door swayed and banged. But none of these things wakened Terry. They broke in upon his dreaming, and it maybe affected that dreaming. It was harvest time, and such a harvest as must surely have been suggested to him by some Biblical picture. Terry saw the children coming with their gleans. They laid them at the cloven feet of Pan, and old

Pan smiled and smiled, and the music of his pipe was shrill as the wind in the water-spouting. Lastly came Brown Smock with empty hands, Brown Smock, whose glean was a sheaf of dreams, pictures in the firelight, half caught tones and gestures, and music. Brown Smock had gone in search of a tune. He spoke Pan squarely. "Man doth not live by bread alone!" Pan smiled. The gleans that had been thrown at his feet burst into flame. The other children turned and looked upon Brown Smock. A terrible change was in their faces. They turned upon him, and ripped from him his brown habit. For a moment Brown Smock stood naked with bowed head. His attitude was suggestive of something that Terry knew very well. He was reminded of a figure in a stained glass window, which had shed its varied light upon Lois as she copied down the rector's sermon in St. Mary's Church. The children seized the naked child, and bore him towards the fire.

"No, no," shouted Terry. "I will find him a tune. I will find him a tune better than bread."

Then he woke with a thumping heart. The great drops were splashing upon the roof. Overhead the thunder muttered.

Terry raised himself upon his elbow, aware of

mingled elation and terror. What an extraordinarily vivid dream it had been. The colours had made him think of missal painting. He still thrilled with pity and compassion.

"I never thought of him like that," he murmured to himself. He found his way back to the Manor. Miss Croft was reading Braille by the low window of her drawing-room.

"It's me, Miss," said Terry.

She looked up with her quick smile.

"Why it's Terry Hood. Were you frightened, Terry, boy?"

"I was a bit," said Terry. "What are you reading?"

"The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi," said Miss Croft. "By the way, Terry, St. Francis wore a brown smock."

"No, Miss. He wore a cowl and a thing-amy."

"But it was brown, wasn't it?"

"Yes. It was brown right enough," said Terry. He was thinking of the brown habit torn from the back of the Spirit of Sedgeway Manor, of the red licking flames, and the children's altered faces.

"I liked the picture of Dickory Stile," he said as he handed back the chap book.

"And the poem underneath?" asked Hilda Croft.

Terry was silent.

An expression of pain crossed Hilda Croft's face.

"That's mean, Terry," she said. "You know I can't see you."

Terry lifted his arms and let them fall again. It was an odd gesture for a British child.

"Don't, don't," he said. "It's you who isn't fair, Miss. It's you——"

He began to stammer and splutter.

Hilda Croft folded him to her arms.

"Yes, I'm horrid, Terry," she said. "Never mind. We'll find a tune for Brown Smock between us. Now I must go and do some work. I know what you're itching to do."

"How do you know?"

"I can feel it in your fingers. Come along, I'll take you to the music room."

So Hilda Croft led the way to the tapestried door, and no more was said of that embarrassing moment. Presently both the typewriter and the piano were engaged in the service of Brown Smock, while, in the absence of the cook, Clothilde prepared a savoury French dish. It would be difficult to say to what presiding deity

she sent up her incense. It may have been Pan. Still, Clothilde was subject to odd misgivings, and unaccountable little enthusiasms that suggested a presence about her of someone not acquiescent, someone who did not smile and smile on pleasure and pain alike. Terry worked on. Somewhere at the back of his mind a question lurked. What was it he was trying to do? He was endeavouring to save something. That was what all musicians were trying to do. Old Pan smiled because he was everything, and therefore nothing could escape him. If one really thought that how could one endure the tedium of acquiring a technique? There was something that was always escaping from old Pan. Brown Smock was always escaping, leading the van in the revolt against things as they were. Terry had seen everyone turn on Brown Smock in his dream that afternoon. The impression still glowed. Everyone meant Pan, because Pan meant everything; Terry had learned that at school. "Pas Pasa Pan." Yet Brown Smock had stood up against Pan to save everyone from themselves. That is what music did, yet there were few things that people could be more touchy or disagreeable about. That is what pictures and poetry did. Then people found that they did not want to be

saved, and they turned and rended the thing that would save them, as the children had turned upon Brown Smock. Terry came to the end of the exercises upon which he had been engaged.

"I will play to Brown Smock," he said to himself, and forthwith he began to improvise. It hardly seemed that it was Terry Hood who played. He was aware of an extraordinary lightness and happiness of spirit. His mind was utterly free from those little nagging retrospects, the reactions of jealousies and resentments contingent upon our daily encounters with our own kind. Terry had often found that when he played he subconsciously carried in his mind the image of someone whom he knew. Often that someone had aroused his combative and self-protecting instincts. It had been a spur to his technique, but it came in the way of something that Terry ardently desired to put into his playing. Perhaps it was that this place was filled by Brown Smock that afternoon, and so Terry was free. He had his hour alone, and then Mrs. Worrall broke in with an impatient demand if he knew the time, and the good moment passed. It has not been easy to write of an experience which Terry himself could never have found words to describe. It is certain, however, that

the little "orphan boy," as Mrs. Worrall would have called him, came upon the secret of his future power and success on that thunder-ridden afternoon in harvest-time.

CHAPTER XI

THE EDGE OF FULFILMENT

TERRY closed the door behind him as he entered the ante-room, shutting away the applause so that it sounded like the noise of some distant sea. Gervain Moir was studying an enlarged photograph of Paderewski, or making a pretence of doing so. In his long black clerical-looking cloak he resembled a priest as he stroked his shaven chin. Near at hand a prosperous-looking little man in evening dress lit a cigarette from the stump of its predecessor. The trio provided an odd contrast—the slim intent boy in the dark suit and Eton collar, the elaborately tailored and toiletted impresario, and Gervain Moir, who might have been posing for a study of the Vicar of Wakefield.

"Go back and play the Brahms waltz," said Gervain Moir, turning upon Terry with a countenance as inscrutable as the bust of Liszt by his side.

Terry searched in vain for a moment for a sign he might read and returned to the platform.

"Well," said the impresario, "was I right?"

"You have had your way," said Gervain Moir. "We shall see whether you were right in another ten years or so. Perhaps I should say you shall see: I shall not be there."

Terry returned from playing his encore number, and the audience stooped and shoved in search of its hats, and filed into the vestibule. The ante-room began to fill with people. Clothilde came with Miss Croft. The lady of Sedgeway Manor looked very frail. Her hair had turned white with the passage of years. She took Terry's face in her hands and kissed him.

"It's only a beginning," she whispered, "but it's a good beginning. There's a tune for Brown Smock in you, Terry, I believe."

Mrs. Durden claimed him next. Then there was a newspaper man, Terry thought of his dream in St. Luke's Church Hall. He had not expected the newspaper man at quite such an early stage. This was only the edge of fulfilment.

Gervain Moir broke in upon the newspaper man. "Can't you see the child's worn out," he said brusquely. "Go home at once, Terry. Go home and sleep. Do you understand? Sleep."

Terry searched his Maestro's face. Gervain Moir smiled. "Yes, I am pleased with you, boy," he said.

"History in the making," said the newspaper man.

"Don't be a fool," said Gervain Moir.

Out in the vestibule Terry had an encounter which completely overwhelmed him. He had no idea that Lois had been in the audience. He had not dared to study the faces of the people before him. He had made for the piano with lowered head and his preliminary bow had been a very oblique affair. Lois was a woman now. At any rate she was upon the verge of womanhood. She wore a blue coat and skirt and a hat with cherries on it. Bunty was beside her in nigger brown. Terry hardly recognised her before she spoke. The four years had given him added height. They had turned Lois into something altogether remote from him. He was still a boy, and Lois could pet or dragoon him without incongruity, for she was a glorious emancipated creature, assured and poised. Terry supposed she must be of age, entitled to adopt him, maybe, if Mrs. Durden had not forestalled her.

"I travelled all night to hear you, Terry, and I missed Calvé. There! Never tell me I forget old friends."

"Especially when your friend happens to have got there at the age of——"

"How old are you, Terry? We were discussing that point."

"Fifteen."

"Well, I'm proud to be able to say you have played my accompaniments, Terry. It was ripping. We sat under you in the three-and-sixpenny seats. We were one of the crowd, and the crowd liked you."

"We were two in the crowd, and we didn't sit under you. We were upstairs."

"That was figurative. Well, here's my hand on it, Terry."

"But you——" Terry stammered.

"What about me?" said Lois.

"He wants to know why your name isn't on the 'buses yet," said Bunty.

"Oh, I'm getting there. Now I must have a word with Miss Croft. Good night, Terry, I'm so pleased."

Terry watched her as she picked her way surely and quickly among the throng.

It seemed strange to think that he was the cause of all that bustle and commotion in the vestibule. But the most wonderful thing of all was to think of Lois speeding on her way to London in order to hear him play. It wiped out

for ever the memory of that morning when Tule had carried him indoors, and she had appeared so callous.

He prepared to obey Gervain Moir's injunction to go home and sleep. His home for the time being was with Mrs. Durden. She had taken rooms for herself and her charge in St. John's Wood. Terry's suburb would not know him again until he was famous.

"Well, 'ere we are again," said Mrs. Durden. "You ain't got rid of old Mrs. D. yet. I think after to-night you've earned a bit of supper. 'Ere, don't tell anyone. It's pickles. Open 'em for me, there's a good boy."

Terry laughed. "Onions make you sleep, don't they, Mother? That's what I've got to do. Isn't it jolly here?"

"It's your 'ome, Terry," said Mrs. Durden. She had puckered her eyes at the corners, as Terry sometimes did, when he had called her "Mother." He had always shied at the word hitherto.

"To-morrow they'll be runnin' away with you I expec'," said Mrs. Durden. "Well, you're set up in socks and flannels any'ow."

"To-morrow," said Terry. "I wonder. I don't know what I did to-night. I don't know what the Man thinks. He said he was pleased."

"It's not what 'e thinks," said Mrs. Durden, "it's what the public thinks, or what the papers tell 'em to think. Well, never you mind. You've always got me, whatever 'appens."

In a day or two it was possible to know everything that the papers thought about Terry Hood. The papers on the whole were friendly. Terry was not hailed as the wonder of the decade, but the critics managed to avoid the use of the word prodigy, and gave him some praise and a little sound advice. Side by side with Terry's critique in one of the Sunday papers was a column devoted to Hilda Croft. The news of her sudden death had come just in time to allow the notice to be inserted.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNWRITTEN PAGE

MISS CROFT died in her sleep. No one had anticipated so sudden an end, and it was difficult to realise that that elaborate structure of personal interests had collapsed, as it were, when her heart had ceased to beat. To Terry, of course, it seemed that the keystone of his life had been removed and the whole archway of his ambition had fallen about him. He haunted Mrs. Durden just as he had done when the news had come of the loss of his father's ship. The days immediately following on the concert had been hectic and charged with uncertainty. Mrs. Durden, in her capacity as Terry's legal guardian, had held long interviews with agents and managers. She had received a visit from Gervain Moir. Gervain Moir had demanded of her if it was her intention to exploit the boy. If so, let her be perfectly frank. There were men who would be only too willing to aid and abet her. For himself, he was getting an old man and he

did not feel he had the energy to protest. If, however, Mrs. Durden was capable of taking a long view and was prepared to make sacrifices for Terry, he for his part would keep the boy with him as long as his strength lasted. Poor Mrs. Durden had asked Gervain Moir what he had seen in her face to suggest she was such a wicked woman. Her one thought was for Terry's ultimate good. She was reinforced by a letter, one of the last that Hilda Croft ever wrote. She was to trust implicitly in Gervain Moir, and not to worry about money. It was in Terry's interest that she should live in a better neighbourhood, and as Terry's interests were Miss Croft's, she begged her to accept financial help in Terry's name. The financial help came in the form of a bequest before Mrs. Durden had time to frame a reply. She suddenly found herself in possession of a competence which set her free of all anxiety with regard to Terry's future. She surrendered the command to Gervain Moir who accepted it.

"We are joint trustees, M'am," he said. "How great a trust! You have stayed at Sedgeway Manor?"

"No," said Mrs. Durden. "I think she liked to have Terry to herself. I never grudged her that."

"I have stayed there," said Gervain Moir. "I shall stay there no more, but the constraining influence of the place will be upon me till I die. I shall watch over Terry as long as I can. I love the boy. Now that this has happened I think that I shall cling to him in a sense."

The Maestro took his leave abruptly. That afternoon he gave a lesson. His pupil was the daughter of an American maker of gas engines. She wilted under his suave invective.

There is very little more to be said of Miss Croft. The room where she had worked was left in perfect order. She had just completed a book. Lois Hanray's successor, a little club-footed man, whom Miss Croft had rescued from the thraldom of her publisher's packing-house, found that she had put a clean sheet into the typewriter she used herself. Upon it were written the words "Brown Smock." That was all. Perhaps Miss Croft would not have felt she had failed if she had been able to fill that unwritten page.

Terry and Mrs. Durden went down to Sedgeway together on the day that Miss Croft was buried. The fruit trees were all in blossom. Terry sat by Lois in the church. The years had seemed to drop from her. She looked like a frightened child. Terry followed the ceremony

with that odd forward poise of the head, the old terrier-like action, but there was a dignity about him that had come with his years of tutelage. He did not look so very much younger than Lois despite the Eton collar. There were others in the church who were not natives of Sedgeway, strangers to Terry. By Mrs. Worrall's side sat a young woman in black. Her pallor was more intense by reason of a red scar on her cheek. She wept quietly. It was the Russian girl who had walked in her sleep. Others there were of whom Clothilde or Mrs. Worrall might have told you something, but the hand that had held the threads of their varying stories had let fall those strands. They had all come together for the first and the last time.

It may have been that Brown Smock was there too.

CHAPTER XIII

PILGRIMAGE

TERRY stood on the departure platform at Liverpool Street. The Harwich train waited for its dispatch with the philosophy of all waiting trains. It is not their affair that people choose to precipitate themselves into the unknown with often the most inadequate reasons for so doing. Terry was quite certain why he was going to Harwich. The Harwich boat would take him to Antwerp. From Antwerp he would proceed to Brussels, and so on to Cologne. In due course he would arrive at Frankfurt, and there he would remain under Herr Bluntner until that famous professor should sanction another concert.

Gervain Moir had relinquished his trust. He stood in the pale glare of an arc light in a long old-fashioned ulster, looking as if he belonged to some intellectual hierarchy; a stern old man who

instinctively drew himself up as a passenger, elbowed past him.

"'Enery Hirving," somebody said.

"Lime light gratis," said somebody else.

Mrs. Durden fumbled in mysterious recesses to reassure herself regarding sundry tickets and coupons. Terry stood with his hands in the pockets of his new Burberry, taking in all that went on in his old appraising way. Occasionally he stole a glance at Gervain Moir. He began to dread the moment when he should have to take his seat. He would never be able to frame those words of thanks that he longed to speak to the Maestro. The train would slip away and leave the old man there in that cold light like some old weather-worn tree under whose shelter Terry had grown towards the stature of a man.

Gervain Moir beckoned him with a snap of the fingers, a typical gesture.

"I think I have done the best for you," he said. "I should like to think I was able to do the will of a great lady. I hope I shall be proud of you, my son."

"Sir, I—I——" Terry began.

"Yes, yes," said Gervain Moir, "exactly."

He put his arm about Terry's shoulders and held him to his side; for a moment or two Terry

felt the shelter of the great ulster. Then the carriage doors began to snap. Terry sped to his place by Mrs. Durden's side. Gervain Moir raised his hat and stalked away towards the barrier. Terry saw him collide with a sailor who was intent upon some last instructions to his wife or sweetheart. His last impression was a cynical aloof figure making his way through the crowd heedless of the nautical abuse that followed him.

So the moorings were cast off, and Terry Hood embarked upon his life's adventure. There is little that one can say of his first visit to that El Dorado of musicians, as it was in the years before the war. Terry was the usual young Englishman, looking at the world. Mrs. Durden and he were the veriest trippers as they went by easy stages to Frankfürt.

"Oo would have thought that you and me would be findin' ourselves on a first class trip to the Continong. Life seems to take you by the scruff of the neck and land you anywhere. One week it's the White City and next week, maybe, it's the Golden 'Orn."

There was a sleepless night in Antwerp induced by the funereal upholstery of Terry's bedroom and the unearthly sweetness of the carillon; a night to be quickly forgotten in the

sunlight, wherein white-gleaming coifs and strange uniforms, the little carts with their shining cans and the great dogs in attendance, combined with a hundred other sights to bemuse Terry. He gave half his mind to Mrs. Durden, while the rest of him was preoccupied with the colours and sounds and smells that were so fascinating because they were foreign. Perhaps no place excited Terry so much as Antwerp, simply because it was the first place on which he had set foot with the thought, "This is not England." He was a foreigner. There was something different in the very sun that warmed him. There was certainly something different in the bread that he broke.

They bought postcards and bric-a-brac, went to the Plantin Museum and the Cathedral, which depressed Mrs. Durden, and to the Zoo, which consoled her. There followed Brussels and Cologne. At Brussels Mrs. Durden bought lace which she left at Cologne. At Cologne she bought scent and the bottle broke in Terry's valise ere ever they reached Frankfürt.

After their first day at Frankfürt Terry ceased to be a tripper. With Mrs. Durden he migrated from the hotel to a pension in the Ritterstrasse. There was a day of unpacking, and they remembered the existence of a place called England,

and were sentimental over Terry's singlets, bought at Harrods at the eleventh hour. There were letters from Clothilde and Gervain Moir. How Terry longed for one of those letters in violet typescript that had so often helped him through a bad day at school. He had written to Lois before leaving school. There was no word from her in reply.

Clothilde wrote of Sedgeway Manor. Colonel Croft had changed very little there. He spent his time between the two houses, but the only guests he brought to Sedgeway Manor were those who had been guests of his sister. For herself, Clothilde was keeping house for the old man at the Rectory Farm. Old Mr. Hanray had been lonely without Lois, but *que voulez vous?* That is the way of things. The young must not be sacrificed to the old. Gervain Moir's letter was a long treatise on hygiene. There were minute instructions as to how to circumvent the dangers of Teutonic cooking. There was also repeated advice to Terry as to the care of his hands, the need of exercise, and the best means of obtaining it at a minimum expenditure of time. Finally, there was a little homily in which, I hasten to assure the reader, he did not quote "If."

On the second day after their arrival Terry

went with Mrs. Durden for his first interview with Herr Bluntner.

"Have you got your handkerchief?" said Mrs. Durden as they reached the door.

Terry had it, rolled up in a little ball in his right hand.

CHAPTER XIV

EURYDICE

TERRY and Mrs. Durden planned their day over their coffee and rolls in the dining-room of the Black Goat. It was the last of a series of seven days eked out to their utmost. Terry was shortly to give another concert, this time at Frankfürt. Herr Bluntner had given him a week in which to lie fallow, so Mrs. Durden and he had compassed a little jaunt or rather a series of little jaunts with the Black Goat as their starting-point. It was the spring of the year, and Wiesbaden was awaking from its winter sleep. The trees about the Kochbrunnen showed green and fresh, and the exquisite delicacy of the young leaves seemed like a challenge to the hardened habitué of the pump room. It seemed, indeed, as if the age-old prisoner had once more escaped from those subterranean depths, whose sulphurous fumes penetrated to the crust of the earth as if in search of her. Mrs. Durden had taken the waters as in duty bound.

"What's the matter with good old Epsom salts, any'ow?" she said as she put down her tankard for the first time. Terry, who had been gingerly sipping at another tankard just to keep her company, agreed with her fervently.

He had continued to make up leeway in the matter of height since he had been studying with Herr Bluntner, and was now well up to Mrs. Durden's shoulder; a slim, restless figure in a Norfolk coat and grey flannel trousers. Unconsciously, Terry had shaped himself in the mould of his mother's folk. One would have put him down as an English public schoolboy on holiday. It would not have been so easy to place Mrs. Durden. They had spent one glorious day walking through the woods to the little village of Schlananbad where they had arrived like *avant-couriers*. The little place had hardly woken to the fact that the spring and summer trippers were almost due. However, Schlananbad had been sufficiently awake to provide them with a dinner of wild boar and a glass of hock, over which Mrs. Durden had become lyrical.

Afterwards they had sat in the sun and watched the storks upon a neighbouring roof. Mrs. Durden had philosophised about the fowls of the air. She supposed that it took all sorts to

make a world in the feathered race, just as in the human. Terry had thought of Brown Smock. Brown Smock who was not Pan, though one turned to him instinctively on such a day as that when life seemed so good that it almost hurt one. What was to be made of it? How could he catch, and hold, and preserve something of the wonder and happiness of it so that others might know that he had passed through the sunlight and had been blest by it? So they had spent a golden hour and made their way back through the wood. Slender birches lifted their branches in the shelter of great woodland giants. The whole forest seemed to wait upon them as they passed. At last there came the sound of the bell, its clamour softened and sweetened by the intervening trees, as the Wiesbaden train made its way down the wooded slope.

Terry had reached the Black Goat, feeling that the day had charged him with energy and warmth which he was to give out to his audience, even as the hewn wood and the plucked grape give out their accumulated power. Other days had been spent nearer the tether of the Black Goat. They had, of course, visited the Greek Chapel on the hill, and listened to concerts at the Kursaal. They had also heard Caruso at the Opera House. They had encountered many girls in white frocks

and veils, and boys bedecked with ribbons, and had bought a large chocolate hare which they had dispatched to Clothilde at great expense and trouble. To Mrs. Durden, with her zest for anything in the nature of a show, Wiesbaden in the spring was like a glorified White City. She had entered upon her "little 'oliday" in the old thorough-going manner, and Terry had been glad enough for her to forget that he was no longer the little boy to be yoicked on to 'buses and propelled into elevators in the cause of pleasure as it had been in the old days. It had often happened during their "little 'oliday" that Terry had done the shoving on Mrs. Durden's behalf, but the old illusion had been kept up. Terry had still been the little boy who wanted to see the fireworks, and would the lady or gentleman give him a chance?

Terry and Mrs. Durden had but one more day in which to be care-free, and they wasted a goodly portion of it in discussing what was the best thing to do. Terry pleaded for one more visit to the Kurhaus. Someone was singing a new song by Hermann Fricke—"Eurydice." Fricke was one of the coming composers. Terry, who had tried his nib on the edge of a music manuscript paper, envied Herr Fricke his facility. Some day, some distant day, when a concert did

not obsess him to the exclusion of everything else, Terry meant to write that tune for Brown Smock. It would take him years. Miss Croft said that he would fail. He had vowed that he would succeed with the help of Lois. That was long ago. Lois had disappeared from his ken. He had read of her successful appearance at the Æolian Hall, but she had not written to him. He had watched the papers for further word of her, but no word had come. So Terry followed out a train of thought as he studied that day's programme in the *Tageblatt*. As was so often the case, his thoughts led him to Lois and there left him.

"Eurydice," said Terry. "I remember getting caned for pronouncing her wrong. Old Banks said she wasn't a tooth paste but a Greek myth."

"Talk sense," said Mrs. Durden. "Do you really want to go to that Kur place again? I wish they wouldn't 'ave it so stuffy. It's like an 'ot 'ouse."

"Think how nice it is when you come out," said Terry. "I do want to go most awfully."

"Well, you shall go. I shall be as well there as anywhere."

"I'll do anything you like this morning to make up," said Terry.

So Terry spent the morning in being fitted for a raincoat and in taking an extended tramway ride with his foster-mother.

In the afternoon Terry and Mrs. Durden made their way down to the Kurhaus. The Taunus Strasse was thronged with a gay and cosmopolitan medley of folk. Prussian Guardsmen in long grey overcoats stalked past them in twos and threes, their white gloves going to their peaked caps in a series of salutes. Terry, who had not read his Nietsche, looked upon them without foreboding. On that tender spring day it seemed to the boy that their arrogance meant nothing more than the joy of living which he himself was feeling to the full. He paused to admire the magnificent policeman at the junction of the Taunus and the Wilhelm Strasse. The sun glinted on his helmet and sword. He was a sight for the eyes of the nurse girls as they crossed to the Kur Gaarten in their check frocks and quaint headdresses.

"Give me 'Ide Park every time," said Mrs. Durden.

"Oh, to be in England now that April's there," said Terry.

"I'd go back to-morrow," said Mrs. Durden.

"It won't be long now," said Terry. "When

I go back I'll have something to take with me. I love the old Vaterland, Mother."

"Oh, you love everywhere. You ain't got no discrimination. Personally, there's only one thing I don't like about Germany and that's the Germans."

They found their seats in the over-heated concert hall. Gaiety and valetudinarianism seemed to sit side by side on every hand. Terry resigned himself to the prospect of listening to the concert to the accompaniment of bellows-like breathing on his left where there sat an aged and portly Teuton in a fur coat and black skull cap. There was a burst of applause as the pianist came on to the platform. He was a mild-looking little Swiss with a reputation as an exponent of Bach. Mrs. Durden was restless, Bach always tired her. She studied her programme. The singer who was to render Fricke's "Eurydice" was called Dorothy Rose. The name had conveyed nothing to Terry.

"Why not Dorothy Perkins?" he had said when he first read the announcement. The pianist retired, and there was heightened applause as Herr Fricke entered. He looked exactly like one of those Prussian Guardsmen they had met on the Taunus Strasse. A greater contrast to Gervain Moir could hardly have been imagined.

He regarded the audience through gold-rimmed pince-nez. His straw-coloured hair was brushed away from his forehead. His moustache bristled fiercely. He was a magnificent man and his presence was enhanced by the beautiful girl he led by the hand. Terry caught his breath. Why had Lois Hanray changed her name to Dorothy Rose? Mrs. Durden was aware of his excitement, and imagined that Terry was threatened with that disorder, beloved of her favourite author which is known as "love at first sight." Her matronly instincts were aroused.

"Now, Terry. Don't you be put about by a pretty face. Remember, you're preparing for your concert. We didn't ought to have come."

"But, Mother, I know her. I've seen her scores of times. It's Lois Hanray. I've played for her at Sedgeway."

"Well, you ain't playing for her now. What's she doing with that German?"

Lois wore an Empire gown of pink silk. It made Terry think of the pictures in the Greenaway Room. She gave a wonderful impression of youth. When he had met her at the end of his first concert she had seemed to tower above him. By Fricke's side she looked the veriest girl. She was more of a Romney than ever. She wore a single pink rose at her breast. Terry

wondered if it were an imitation La France, or whether it had been cajoled into being by some process of forcing. He wondered and gazed while she sang the song of Eurydice in faultless German. Where had she been, and why had she changed her name. Eurydice had gone down into Hades to reappear, more lovely than ever. Lois had disappeared, but she had come back, and she was the very spirit of the April day, as she had been on that morning when Terry had first seen her, with her hand on the bell, at Sedgeway Manor. Terry's gaze went to the blond giant seated before the piano. How frail Lois looked by contrast. To Terry's heightened imagination it seemed that she stood to the pianist in the relation of a captive. Had Eurydice really emerged into the sunlight? In that moment Terry seemed suddenly to become aware of himself. He was no longer a boy. Lois was part and parcel of Sedgeway, that Sedgeway which had changed his life. He felt the call of an old loyalty. Lois was not happy, it was his business. Was it mere coincidence that she wore a La France, fellow to the three that had lain in the little round basket he had given her. She had a claim upon him, a claim that he would not shrink from fulfilling whatever it might be. Lois went on to sing Schubert's

Litany. Her singing did not so much enthuse as set her audience in a mood of intellectual strenuousness. There was a gravity and restraint about it, even in the bravura operatic passages that increased in Terry that sense of something held in captivity. At the end she came back and sang "The Cradle Song." The Schubert was her only concession to the sentimental among her audience.

Terry and Mrs. Durden waited outside for a sight of Lois. After a time she appeared, hatless and cloaked, as ladies were wont to go in Wiesbaden where the hours for opera are strenuous. Herr Fricke walked by her side, a massive figure in fawn overcoat and Homburg hat.

Terry stepped forward to make himself known. He could see that Lois had recognised him, but that she was going to pass without a word. Then she hesitated and finally turned and stopped. Terry came up to her. Fricke stood beside them like a monument.

"It's Terry Hood," she said. "I was almost certain I recognised you, but I couldn't be quite sure. How funny, little Terry Hood." Her colour heightened. She gave a quick, hysterical little laugh. Now she had decided to stay and speak it seemed necessary for her to speak at a great rate.

"This is Mrs. Durden," said Terry. "My foster-mother. You've often heard me speak of Mrs. Durden."

"Rather!" said Lois. "Dame Durden kept three milking-maids to carry the milking pail. Isn't that how the song goes? I always thought of your Mrs. Durden chaperoning those milking-maids. Dear Mrs. Durden. It is jolly to meet you."

"Pleased to meet you," said Mrs. Durden, in a tone that gave her the lie.

"How did you like my 'Eurydice'?" Lois rattled on. "Some intervals, weren't they? Hermann, these are some English friends of mine."

"Zo!" Herr Fricke was not effusive.

"Dear Mrs. Durden," Lois continued the cataract of talk. "You make me think of all the dear comfy things. And Terry, what of you? You can't be so very famous yet, or I would have heard of you. Little Terry Hood, why do you always make me think of the wind in the spruces at Sedgeway? I wonder what Sedgeway's looking like now."

"Vir sind spate," said Hermann Fricke.

"Yes, we are late," said Lois. "We're going to the opera, Terry. One has to eat first."

She put her arm in Fricke's, and he bore her off like a child. Terry stood undecided. She had vouchsafed him nothing by way of address, had made no attempt to ensure another meeting, unless Terry were meant to be in attendance at the opera house.

"One can't live on music," she rattled on, "one must eat."

She was borne away on the arm of the big man, but as she went she turned and looked at Terry, and to the boy, with the song of Eurydice still fresh in his ears, it seemed that she looked at him out of Hell.

"Lois!" he cried, and made as if to run after her, but Mrs. Durden held him by the arm.

"Don't be a little fool," she said. "Let her be. We don't expec' no manners from the likes of 'im. She didn't want to see us. I made her think of the comfy things, did I? I daresay I made her feel ashamed of herself. She would have given us the go by if she could."

"Let me go," cried Terry.

"I'll not let you go after such a person."

"How dare you speak of her like that! Let me go."

Terry wrenched himself free and rushed blindly after the fugitive. Just at the moment the old gentleman who had wheezed by him in

the concert room took it into his head to cross the path. Terry collided with him violently. His quixotic dash ended in a ridiculous fandango. The air was rent with "achs!" and hochs!" Uncomplimentary things were said of the egregious English. In the meantime Lois and Fricke had boarded an electric tramcar. Terry returned to Mrs. Durden, looking like a young steer at bay.

"I hope you're happy now," he said.

Poor Mrs. Durden did not look at all happy. Terry used to look like that in the old days after she had spanked him.

They walked back to the Black Goat in silence. The "little 'oliday" had been spoiled at the eleventh hour. Terry had resolved to go to the opera that night and to see Lois at all costs. He was in a mood to throw everything to the winds. He was a man and would no longer be tied to Mrs. Durden's apron strings. But when he reached his room every object on his chest of drawers seemed a testimony against him in that rebellious mood. There was his brush and comb in the leather case which Mrs. Durden had bought for him at Boot's on his tenth birthday. There was the manicure set she had bought for him before he went to lunch with Hilda Croft. He went down to *abendessen* and

found her standing by the great stove in the hall with some knitting in her hands. Of late years she had dressed for the part of Terry's mother. She did not carry off a black evening gown as did Mrs. Worrall, but she made a stately figure nevertheless. Her hair was parted in the middle and caught up in a little bun at the back of her head. She was by no means the smallest figure in a somewhat portly gathering, but her expression was forlorn. She was not at home in the Black Goat. Terry was smitten with remorse at the sight of her. How she had devoted herself to him since the days, almost, of his infancy. He had taken so much from her as a matter of course.

"I'm sorry, Mother," he said, laying his hand upon her wrist.

"Not 'ere," said Mrs. Durden. "Not among all these Germans. Say you're sorry when we're by ourselves, Terry, dear, and then perhaps I'll say I'm sorry, too."

Terry did not go to the Opera House that evening. Instead he devoted himself to Mrs. Durden. They walked towards the Nuremburg Hill and found an empty seat in a small public reserve.

"'Oh, to be in England, now that April's 'ere,'" said Terry's foster-mother, as she settled

down with a sigh. "Terry, don't say our little 'oliday's been spoilt. I always had my misgivings about the Continong."

"I'm sorry," said Terry. "You've made it a beautiful holiday, something to remember always."

"And I'm sorry, too, Terry. I suppose I'm old-fashioned or something. You're an artist, Terry, and artists is different from other folk."

"Why do you hate her?" asked Terry. "Why don't you trust her?"

"Why has she changed her name, and 'oo's that German she's with?"

"I might have found out if you'd let me."

"Terry, dear, we came for this 'oliday so that you might have rest—rest for your body and rest for your mind. Think what depends on your concert. Why should she spoil your chance of doing your best? Remember, that's what you owe to Miss Croft, nothink but the best."

"How could she spoil my concert? She would make my concert. Still, I won't worry, Mother. I'll concentrate on the concert." Terry began to laugh.

"Oh, Terry, I like to hear you laugh like that," said Mrs. Durden. "Laugh at anything, laugh at me if you like. I'm a bit of a comic."

"I wasn't laughing at you," said Terry. "I was thinking of somebody I had forgotten."

"Well, go on thinkin' of 'im," said Mrs. Durden.

It had just occurred to Terry that Brown Smock had not entered his thoughts all that day. He could not have explained why he laughed. Only Brown Smock seemed to throw everything into perspective. Brown Smock, so frail and yet so steadfast. There was something tonic in the thought of him. There was fever and unrest in the thought of Lois, a fever that Brown Smock seemed strangely to allay.

CHAPTER XV

"THE BEST LAID SCHEMES OF MICE AND MEN"

TERRY left the Bechstein Hall and walked down Wigmore Street. He was by himself, which seemed odd, as he had just finished the third of a successful series of recitals. He had manœuvred for that solitary walk. The world seemed very good to Terry upon that late afternoon in July. The newspapers had been enthusiastic in their praise and, what was more gratifying to him, there had come to hear him certain people by whose good will he set great store. The Maestro himself had risen from a sick bed in order that he might assure himself that all was well with his pupil. Terry had signed a contract for a long provincial tour and for a number of appearances in London during the winter. He had realised that dream he had indulged as he snuggled beside Hilda Croft's fur coat or, at any rate, the dream was in process of realisation. It was the fag end of the London season, that season of 1914, of which so

much has been said that it seems an impertinence to say anything further. Terry was bound for Mrs. Spenlove's house at Rutland Gate. Mrs. Spenlove was one of those people who had especially gratified him with her praise and support. She was one of the pupils of Gervain Moir, who had neither broken down or become illustrious. She had married Mervyn Spenlove instead. She had made the house of the famous publisher and man of letters a rendezvous for all sorts of clever and interesting people. It was the kind of house that Lois would have dreamed of in the days when she first met Terry, only it was not situated in St. John's Wood. Upon that afternoon Mrs. Spenlove happened to be giving a children's party to celebrate her little girl's eighth birthday. Terry had been bidden as an honoured guest because the *mana* of Hilda Croft was upon him. Terry had lunched with the Spenloves on the eve of his first concert and had displayed a wonderful knowledge of the works of Hilda Croft. Not only that. He was able to reel off story after story of Hilda Croft herself. So Terry was among the few honoured Olympians.

The party had entered upon its last stage when he arrived. Everyone wore a paper cap and played upon some outlandish instrument. Terry

had always loved pretty frocks. As a little boy it had been his delight to go with Mrs. Durden to such places where one could glimpse sashes and white lace and the crowning glory of little girls' hair. Now as he stood in the midst of the revels, meeting at every turn some model for a Kate Greenaway, a Du Maurier or a Baumer, he felt something of the old pleasurable awe. He watched the rout from his place by the wall, and now he would single out a child whose bearing seemed to suggest the presence of some overseeing destiny, and now he would follow with his eyes a child whose beauty justified all the picture books. Terry answered a fellow Olympian by his side in abstracted monosyllables. He was wondering what Brown Smock would have made of the scene. Once or twice he almost fancied he caught the flick and flash of the little smock among the kilts and sailor suits, the black jackets and white collars, and the varied sea of frocks and frills. He thought he understood now what Hilda Croft had meant when she had declared that Brown Smock was all the children. Nowhere could there be found a more poignant example of the loveliness that passes in that ample hall with all its windows flung wide to the summer evening. One saw mockery on many of the little faces, here and

there one saw something uglier. But beauty that is born of nurture and breeding, beauty enhanced by every device of form and colour, was there in so full a measure that Terry fell to wondering what he had done to deserve such largesse. Yet Brown Smock was not the comeliness of these children in essence. He was something else, something that came into a little face uplifted to him as it passed, came and went like the flash of a bird's wing. Terry fancied he knew what it was. It was the thing that he had fought his way back to do. Brown Smock was the spirit of that moment. He was too steadfast to change as all those children would change. "Pan is never sorry," Clothilde had said. "Brown Smock is never bored," Terry said to himself. "He is bored neither with pain nor with ecstasy. When shall I find him a tune?" As he pondered his eye caught the intense gaze of a little girl in a green flounced dress with a string of coral about her white throat. Her hair was almost of a colour with Terry's, a chestnut that some might have called red. It was not very long, but innocent of anything in the way of ribbon or snood. Terry was wondering why her eyes should set him thinking of that day when he had bought the La France roses, when one of

those blue and searching eyes closed in a solemn wink. Terry laughed and held out his hands. The little girl approached him. A more flagrant "pick up" one could not have desired.

"Who are you?" said the little girl, proffering Terry a marsh mallow which emerged from a little bag by her side, and left its trace upon the green frock.

"I'm Terry Hood. Who are you?"

"Betty Drever. Are you lonely?"

"Well, yes. I hadn't thought of it, but I suppose I am."

"So am I," said Betty Drever. "I wish my mummy would come."

"Bored?" said Terry. "Oh, no, no."

"What's bored?" asked Betty Drever, but just as she put the question something prompted her to turn her head.

"There she is, my mummy," said the little girl. Terry followed the direction of a sugary finger. She looked like a tiny filly as she tossed back her red mane and hopped from one foot to the other. The mysterious association of those candid blue eyes with La France was explained. Betty's mummy was Bunty Wentworth. She had hardly altered at all. She was perhaps a little fuller and more matronly, but

Bunty had been no sylph in the old days when they had first met.

"Well," said Terry, "your daughter took to me more kindly than you did when you first met me. Do you remember the small boy who bought three roses for Lois?"

Bunty Drever did not wink as her daughter had done. She blinked.

"Terry Hood!" she said. "How did you come by Betty?"

"Oh, we chummed up," said Terry. "Do you know, I believe I knew she belonged to you."

"How nice of you." She took a strand of Betty's hair in her fingers. The little girl clung to her skirt. "I heard you at the Bechstein Hall," she said. "I'm not musical, but I loved it."

"Your painting?" Terry inquired.

"It wasn't painting," said Bunty, "it was black and white. Oh, I got under in the scrum. I've produced this instead. Feel her, Terry, lift her up."

Terry obeyed.

"It was a choice between laudanum or domesticity and I chose the lesser of two evils. I want Bill to let me illustrate one of his books. He's awfully sweet and polite about it, but he says he prefers a man. Isn't this news about

Germany worrying. I can't help thinking of Lois."

Terry gently set Betty on her feet again. Bunty laughed.

"Do you know you've suddenly changed back into that bit of a boy we picked up by the Round Pond."

"I want to know," said Terry. "I met her once—at Wiesbaden. She was singing with Herr Fricke."

"Yes," said Bunty. "Dorothy Rose. That was my suggestion."

"Yours?" said Terry.

Bunty regarded him with the old half-quizzical, half affectionate look. "I couldn't stop her going with him," she said. "The old man at the Rectory Farm said the name of Hanray had been dragged in the dirt enough. Emphatic old boy. Lois' father, of course——"

"I never asked," said Terry.

"Fricke wrote Lois a song. He heard her sing at her first concert. Afterwards they went off together. A very perfect collaboration—if only he hadn't been Fricke."

"Do you hear from her?" said Terry.

"I did for a time. She's fond of you, Terry."

"She thought I was a kid."

"So you were," said Bunty.

"Not when we met in Germany. I should have followed her. She wanted my help, but Mrs. Durden stopped me. Poor Mrs. D. Did you ever meet my foster-mother?"

"I heard of her from Lois. What could you have done any way, Terry? If you could compose songs for her that are better than Fricke's she might leave him and go with you. Lois must have someone to look after her. Fricke's big and clever and rich."

"Fricke's married."

"Very much so—a frau in every capital, some people say. I begged her not to, Terry. You may believe me or not as you choose, but I harped upon those three roses of yours like a Bancroft."

Terry bent down and kissed Betty.

"Which being interpreted is," said Bunty, "how ripping of you, Bunty Wentworth. When the three roses failed I played my last card—Hilda Croft."

"Didn't that stop her?" said Terry.

"No, she said Miss Croft would understand. *Tout connaître*, etc., etc. There was rather an irony about it. I always imagined my tolerance was about as ultra as anybody's at the hostel, but I couldn't stomach Fricke. I'm sorry, Terry, I'm hurting you. I daresay it will come

out all right. He daren't marry her, anyhow. Lois will come back some day, the sooner the better, if one can believe the papers. I feel such a beast with my Betty and my Bill. It's a funny old shuffle, isn't it? Fancy our meeting at Mervyn Spenlove's, and me with this appendage."

"It makes me think of one of Mrs. D.'s jingles," said Terry.

"'I'm just longing to breathe the air,
Breathed by the people in Grosvenor Square.'"

"Bill took his squaw to Buckingham Palace the other day," said Bunty. "I don't know how I went to pieces like this. I'm a complete snob, Terry, and I had such fine moments when I was at the hostel. Betty, we must be going. Say good-bye. Come and see us, Terry. I didn't like to bother you, but Betty seems to have butted in." She scribbled an address on Betty's dance programme. "Terry may keep this, mayn't he, dear? Some day he'll come and tell you how he met the lady who wrote *Dobbin of Beechtrees*."

"Oh, Mummy, did he know her?"

"Yes, but we must be off. We mustn't keep daddy waiting."

Terry met Bill Drever a few days afterwards. By that time he had read again *Owl's Feather*

and *Pots and Pans*. He had known of W. W. Drever chiefly as a war correspondent and an authority upon sculling until he had lit upon the two fantasies on a certain memorable day at Frankfürt. They had formed part of the portable library of a continental chaplain, who was staying for a time at Terry's pension. He had read *Owl's Feather* in the Palm Garden and had lost all count of time. When he first met Bill Drever it seemed impossible that so large a man could have produced such gossamer work. That evening spent with the author and his family was memorable, too, if only by reason of its position in the calendar. The air was filled with rumours of war, but in the little porch at Phillimore Gardens there was peace that evening at any rate. It seemed that Bill Drever had deliberately set himself to make that evening such a one as should be remembered in the dark days to follow. It became associated in Terry's mind with the smell of new paint and the aroma of Boer tobacco. The house was in the hands of the decorators as if to add to the general air of unrest, but Bill Drever sat in a nook of the tiny porch with his feet among the paint pots and smoked while he indulged in a delightful train of reminiscence. He spoke of that greatest game in the world, the making and publishing of

books. He had little stories to tell of the men whose work appealed to Terry, and discussed nuances of style and shades of character with Bunty. Bunty, seated in a deck chair on the grass plot outside her drawing-room window, contradicted him at all points and was, for the moment, at any rate, entirely happy. Terry and Betty sat on the mat and listened for the most part. The little girl had followed up that first bold advance by a dumb fidelity. She seemed to break silence only to show him some picture upon which she was at work. She seemed perpetually to have a pencil in her hand. So they sat while the daylight failed.

"Why do people want to leave London in the summer?" said Bunty during a lull in the talk. "What an evening. The old monster can be benign when he likes."

"I thought London was a lady," said Bill Drever. "That child's bedtime is overdue, isn't it?"

"Yes, half an hour. 'In summer quite the other way, I have to go to bed by day.' Come along, Bets."

Terry rose to take his leave.

"I'll walk with you a little way," said Bill Drever.

They went together as far as the Knightsbridge

barracks. Terry was sharing rooms in the Strand with a brother artist. Mrs. Durden had found her way back to Devonshire, where she had taken a cottage, Terry's real home, as she always insisted on calling it."

"I wonder how many families managed to avoid the one topic as we did this evening," said Bill Drever.

"It was rather remarkable," said Terry.

"Some might call it fiddling while Rome burns," said Drever. "I've had a very happy married life. That kid of mine is fond of you, Hood. She may do something some day. She has inherited a gift from her mother. Some day! What's the use of talking. It looks as if we have to get something out of the way before Miss Bets has a chance to make a fairyland. Good night."

Terry never met Bill Drever again. He went on tour in August, and on his return at the end of September he decided to cancel the remainder of his engagements. After a miserable period of indecision in which he feverishly set to work upon an ambitious scheme of musical composition, he entered upon the first stage of a process which was to end in his enlistment. It was somewhat drawn out, for Terry had a rooted

conviction that his business in life was to make music. However, it seemed that Brown Smock could not hope for his tune until the tyranny should be overpast. In the meantime Bill Drever had been killed in Flanders.

Terry was swept into the vortex without time for more than an hour or two with Bunty and Betty. As the little girl clung to him at the end, he recalled very vividly that dream or vision in the tithe barn. If ever a child had the matter of Brown Smock in her it was that frail and intense little daughter of two artists. Lois had been called a Romney. Betty, with her white skin and her wealth of fine red hair, was a pre-Raphaelite child, and would some day resemble the girl in the milliner's shop who conquered the heart of Rossetti. That day was a long way off. The years that intervened promised darkly. Nevertheless Terry had an odd conviction that Brown Smock was there to witness a pact he made with the child.

"Some day, Bets, you and I will help to bring the fairies back."

"Oh, don't," said Bunty, as she gently disengaged her child.

"Why? Don't you want them back?" asked Terry.

"I want you back—and Bill."

"Terry will come back," said Betty.

"Perhaps. When I've helped to make things a little more possible for Brown Smock."

"I don't know what you're talking about. I suppose it's a quotation," said Bunty. "It isn't something of Bill's, is it?"

Terry felt that he was about to cry like a boy.

"Yes. It's something of Bill's," he said, and tore himself away.

CHAPTER XVI

BROWN SMOCK IS LOCKED OUT

"I WILL arise and go now."

The second-hand phrase kept on worrying its way into the prelude upon which Terry was working. It was one of a suite composed by a Russian, a former guest of Hilda Croft, she who had been given to sleep-walking to the consternation of Mrs. Worrall. Terry was at work upon a programme that was to mark his first appearance after the war. Beyond this prelude and a study of his own it was to be strictly classical. Much depended upon the success of this first concert, for Terry, like many fellow-artists, was finding the business of reinstatement a difficult one. His reputation would have been firmly established if he had been allowed a little more time before the outbreak. As it was, he had to persuade agents and managers that his public had not forgotten him. Terry had learned many things about himself during the years of the

conflict. On the whole he had come through unscathed. There had been several repetitions of that experience that had followed upon the accident on the day of the news of his father's death. Again and again Terry had won his way back to the open. One of the many catch-phrases of the war had been specially applicable to him. He had possessed "the will to live." There was something he had to do that called him back. Sometimes he associated this urgency with Lois, but there was another claim, deeper and more insistent, the claim of Brown Smock. These two calls had sometimes seemed to conflict. This had troubled him. During a long spell of enforced idleness he had overcome a natural repugnance to the business of notation, and had covered many sheets of manuscript paper with quavers and minims and other recognisable hieroglyphs. He had even managed to recapture something of the essence of that good hour when he had improvised after his encounter with Brown Smock in the tithe barn. The result of this was the study which he hoped to include in his programme. He had also set some of Bill Drever's lyrics. One of the fantastic dreams that sustained him was the dream of hearing Lois sing them some day. That was one of the particular delights with which he

tantalised himself when he joined his companions in a profane chanty which had for its burthen "When this —— war is over." He had heard regularly from Bunty and Betty. Occasionally there came through meagre items of news concerning Lois. It appeared that she was still abroad. Someone had recognised Fricke at Liege. Someone else purported to have seen him in Mespot. It was all very vague. When Terry had called at Phillimore Gardens after his return Bunty could give him no news of Lois at all. So he had set about the business of becoming the real Terry Hood again. He had taken rooms in Creswell Mansions, hired a piano, and begun upon the preparation of his programme. He might have continued upon his normal course, had it not been for the selection of that prelude

"I will arise and go now."

Yeats had written of Innisfree when he borrowed the phrase from the parable of the Prodigal son. Terry's Innisfree was Sedgeway. Sedgeway was the place that had given birth to the music, wherever it may have been scored and amplified. Instinctively Terry knew it for an improvisation inspired by Brown Smock

"I will arise and go now."

The phrase continued to run in his head as he worked,

> "Nine bean rows will I have there,
> And a hive for the honey bee."

At Sedgeway you could watch the bees go in and out of their sweet thatched storehouses. You could hear them drone like the bee that droned about Dickory Stile where Terry fell asleep, and met Brown Smock for the first time, face to face. At Sedgeway Lois and Terry had filled a colander for Clothilde with broad beans. The kitchen garden had made a green setting for her frock of pink linen. How nimble they both had been. How they had laughed at Clothilde's surprised "*Ma fois!*" at their speedy return. Terry had wondered if any boy could possibly be as happy as he.

"I will arise and go now."

He closed down the lid of the piano, and rose with a little cry.

Out in the wintry street someone piped shrilly and dismally. There was a certain note of sinister triumph in the sound. It was diabolical music.

"I will arise and go now."

"Thou fool!" came the answer from the street.

Terry was visited by a memory of old Pan. It was an extraordinarily vivid picture, as had been the case in the dream at the tithe barn. Old Pan smiled.

"It is winter. Hilda Croft is dead. The glory of Sedgeway has departed. Let well alone."

"Is Brown Smock dead?" cried Terry, and he was startled at the sound of his own voice. In a neighbouring room someone moved a chair uneasily. People who talked to themselves were not popular in Creswell Mansions. Then, in a very literal sense of the word, did Terry "panic." There are two ways of showing fear. The first and more obvious, is to run away from everything. But there is that second, and quite explicable way of running at everything. So will the hare by the roadside precipitate itself under the wheels of the flame-eyed juggernaut as it bears upon him through the night. So will the sea-bird dash itself against the awful brilliance of the lighthouse tower. So did Terry dash off to Sedgeway upon a bitter winter morning to confront Pan, since there was no escape from the thought of him.

The man in the next room heard his feet clatter down the uncarpeted stairs of Creswell Mansions.

"These temperamental musicians," he thought to himself. The sound of Terry's heels upon the concrete would have amused the smiling god of the garden. The first manifestation of Pan that Terry encountered on emerging into the street was an omnibus.

"*Pas Pasa Pan. Omnis Omne*," sang an inconsequent little demon at his elbow. The omnibus held out an offer to take him to King's Cross. He boarded it, buttoning his great coat about him as he did so. He looked a very ordinary young man upon some lawful occasion. No one would have guessed that he was engaged in a kind of perverted flight. Don Quixote had charged the windmill on horseback.

Terry only knew that he was going to Sedgeway, and being a Londoner he went there on wheels.

It was only when he was in the train that he began to ask himself whether he was a lunatic or a tired man in need of a day's outing. The tired man seemed to say, "There is a very passable inn at Sedgeway, and a good train back to London in the evening." That other one cried out, "What shall I do if Pan has killed Brown Smock?" The railway carriage was thick with tobacco smoke. Someone offered him a cigarette. He accepted it gratefully. The cigarette seemed

to stay him in a world of tangible things, managers and contracts and press notices, things that must wait until the big thing was settled. It was like the war over again. Something had to be settled first. Terry closed his eyes. "I will arise and go now."

The wheels of the railway coach had taken up the refrain. The wheels stopped. There came the breath of unvitiated frosty air as the carriage door was opened. They were free of London. The man who had proffered Terry the cigarette was discussing phosphates and guano with his companion. A woman, laden with a huge basket, bundled a boy in front of her.

"Now then, slow-coach."

Terry could have laughed, so exact was the likeness to the tones of Mrs. Durden. The boy was swathed in just such a muffler as Terry had worn in his Bermondsey days. He looked as if he might be recovering from some illness. The woman pointed out a beautiful collie a girl held by a leash upon the platform. The boy's eyes smiled. For a moment it seemed to Terry that Brown Smock smiled. Then the carriage jerked ahead, and Brown Smock was gone. Terry, realising that he had been staring the unfortunate child out of countenance, closed his eyes. The wheels started their symphony again,

and now it was a phrase from the "Hound of Heaven" that they turned upon,

> "Yet still within the little children's eyes
> Is something, something, that replies."

Terry speeded forward upon his spiritual quest or débâcle.

The little boy had smiled with a sudden premonitory wistfulness. Beauty had caught him, as it were, unawares. Then once again he was the schooled and conventional small boy on his defence against a thousand contingencies, including the scrutiny of strangers in railway carriages. He was afraid of everyone too. Only Brown Smock was free. Again the wheels came to rest. Terry heard the scrape of milk cans upon the platform. Someone called out Nuttleborough in the musical burr of the county. Nuttleborough was the nearest station for Sedgeway. Terry alighted. The cold caught at his throat. He fumbled for his ticket, while the official stamped his feet at the barrier.

The way to Hilda Croft's old home led across flat country. On either side of the road, which ran as straight as if it had been drawn with a pencil and ruler, the sunken hedges of the low-lying fields showed black and stiff. The road beckoned one on to the tower of St. Mary's

Church, backed by Hurzel Slope in the shelter of which nestled the hamlet of Sedgeway. Terry set out upon his walk of a mile or so feeling like a man who has forced himself into a scene in which he has no relevance.

As he drew nearer the familiar landmarks waited upon him with a question. The windows of Lois Hanray's old home stared blankly at him. The trees that once had sheltered it had been cut down to make way for a motor garage. To Terry the house seemed like a bearded man who had endeavoured to disguise himself by a clean shave. Elsewhere there were other signs of change, yet in its essence Sedgeway was the same, despite the season of the year. She had thrown off her garment of blossom, and her garment of green, but she was not ugly beneath.

"I will arise and go now."

Terry felt the same call of the place. He was a stranger in irrelevancy, but might he not become part of it again, if only Brown Smock still lived. He must find the answer to that question. If Brown Smock were dead along with the best of his friends and half of the world, it seemed, beside, along with the boys whose games he had watched from Dickory Stile, then indeed would it be better to go into silence, and leave the field to Pan. The staring windows

had given no word of Lois. Was she dead too? Had she gone on her separate way? Hilda Croft had gone. Mrs. Durden had gone. He had been thrice orphaned, as it were, for he had lost his own mother, and these two friends who had watched over him with such wonderful devotion. He walked on past a plantation of pines. Surely Lois was not dead. He could not bear to think that she no longer breathed the sweet air, such as he breathed under the pines, while the life-blood raced through his veins. Lois had been so palpably alive. There had been such tremendous possibilities for joy in her. He longed for a sound of that mocking, maddening laughter again. Lois always laughed as if she would hide something. So she had laughed when he met her for those few fleeting minutes at Wiesbaden.

He passed two little boys, carrying a sack of onions between them. He half expected a greeting. They were so absurdly like the two little bumpkins he had once studied so superciliously as they swapped their "fag cards." At last he reached the great copper beech and knocked at the door of the lodge. He heard a chair scraped upon the brick floor and Mrs. Tule came to the door. Her hair was quite white, but otherwise the gardener's widow had

worn well. It was a little time, however, before she could place Terry. Her hand went up to her head in her effort to get the puzzle aright. At last she had it. He would be the little boy that fell out of the cherry tree. She became garrulous once she had satisfied herself as to Terry's identity. She was all that was left of the old Sedgeway Manor. The Colonel was wintering at Mentone. She feared that it would be his last. The Manor had a sub-tenant, an American.

"Oh yes, and there's another bit of news," she began, and then, oddly enough, she hesitated and shuffled.

Terry, not wishing to embarrass her, asked if she thought the American would receive him kindly. He had a great desire to peep into the music room, and to take a walk to Dickory Stile. Mrs. Tule thought there was no harm in asking, so Terry went on, under the denuded sycamores, and presently he came within sight of the house and the bowling green. Old Pan was not dead, at any rate. An icicle depended from his beard, but he piped on unwearied.

Terry rang the bell, and was ushered into the presence of Mr. Theobald Hackett. Theobald Hackett did not put a cryptic initial after his first name in the manner of his countrymen. It was

his sister who had wilted under Gervain Moir after his interview with Mrs. Durden.

He greeted Terry warmly and begged him to stay to lunch. Certainly he might look at the piano. Might Mr. Hackett be so bold as to beg him to play the "Chanson Triste" upon it? He had heard his Tchaikowski recital, and the memory lingered. The piano was never touched except when Miss Hackett came to stay with him.

Terry said he would be delighted to play, but begged to be excused from lunch. Perhaps he might come some other time if Mr. Hackett would care for his company. He was on pilgrimage that day.

Mr. Theobald Hackett understood perfectly. He quoted Longfellow. Some day he (Mr. Hackett) contemplated a similar pilgrimage to an old house in Maryland. Did Terry realise that "Home Sweet Home" had been written by an American? It had come into Terry's mind to retort, "Then why do you have such a craving for places like Sedgeway?" but he refrained.

The music-room was practically untouched. Terry sat down and played the "Chanson Triste" while Mr. Hackett lit a cigar and indulged in the less expensive luxury of tears.

"Sir, I trust you will pardon my effrontery, but I have always obeyed the maxim, 'Ask and ye shall receive.' This has been a morning, sir, that I shall mark with a white stone. I beg of you to come again and stay with me. Come when the blossom is out."

"Thank you," said Terry. "I shan't forget. I may want to beat a retreat to Sedgeway again some day. Now may I go?"

"Surely," said Mr. Hackett, "I understand your view-point perfectly. What is it that Emerson says. The old fellows said all the good things. These modern degenerates make me tired. I'll let you out."

"Hallo!" said Terry, as his host turned a Yale lock. "I don't remember that."

"I guess not. Your Miss Croft seemed to think that Sedgeway was the Garden of Eden."

The mild cynicism of the remark chilled Terry, like the icy-breath that greeted them. There was a dead, cold stillness outside that appalled him the more by reason of the talk and firelight and music from which he had so recently turned. He managed to stammer some conventional reply, and stepped out on to the frozen gravel.

"Come again," said Mr. Hackett, and Terry heard the door close with an efficient little click

of the Yale lock. Thus it was that Brown Smock had been locked out of his home. Brown Smock in whom so many of Hilda Croft's little guests had had some part. The girl who had composed the prelude had known him in her childhood. Terry had known him. It was this thing in common that had brought him upon this wild goose chase. The spirit of Sedgeway Manor had informed the music upon which he had been working, and the spirit was banished. There remained only the cold, and Pan. Pan who had smiled as Hilda Croft and Gervain Moir paced the bowling green and discussed the position of Maeterlinck in literature. Pan, who sat and smiled at all our pathetic attempts to mitigate the silence. The bowling green seemed unbearably silent as Terry turned away. The clipped yews stood stiffly like trees in a theatrical scene.

Terry's panic increased.

"Why did I come?" he asked himself. Two beings in him seemed to fight for possession of his will. The rational urged a speedy return to London, and an end to this nonsense. That other one, the poet, the artist, the spirit—what you will—cried out against such acquiescence. He had come to have it out with old Pan. He would find a tune for Brown Smock or perish.

He walked blindly in the direction of Dickory Stile. He walked, as it seemed, among the ruins of old Sedgeway. Many of the finest trees had been cut down to meet the exigencies of war, but there was a further desolation not to be measured by the physical eye. Hilda Croft was dead, and Brown Smock locked out of his home. Terry suffered as he went. We unconsciously arm ourselves against the inrush of memory that, so it is said, waits upon us to overwhelm at the extreme hour. We hold at bay, as it were, the number of our days, because we must needs live in the one day that we have to call our own. In that ascent to Dickory Stile it was to Terry as if he had divested himself of this armour. As the cold overwhelmed his body, so there took possession of his higher faculties a kind of horror of being. It was unlike anything he had known during the war. Fear then had been a tangible thing, associated with an instinct for self-preservation. This new horror was a horror of himself, of the world in which he lived, of the sum total of his days.

He seemed to battle against everything, and curiously enough his own self was in the van of his enemies. Terry was in the grip of Pan. He fought his way up Hurzel Slope, stumbling

over the frozen clods like a drunken man. At last he reached Dickory Stile, and clinging to the upright post, waited, as it seemed to him, for some spiritual *coup-de-grâce*. It seemed that all things were coming to an end. Yet in the moment of deepest horror and gloom there remained the consciousness that outside his despair something lived that was not in thrall to Pan. He might perish. The fountain and source of all inspiration within himself might fail and turn to a dreary horror. Yet a spirit would still be abroad that justified the happiness he had known.

Terry clung to the post in a dumb anguish, while the silence of that icy afternoon seemed to beat upon him like a physical weight. He wondered whether he was dying, and this were Pan's way with all creatures. It seemed terrible that the retrospect should be so dismal. Terry had always told himself that he had known great happiness in his comparatively short life-time, but it was just those occasions that he loved to remember in his normal state that now seemed to mock him. Their colour and tone, as it were, took on a note of alien dreariness. Terry's mind worked curiously even while his whole being suffered.

"I suppose this is what Tennyson meant when

he wrote of 'sorrow's crown of sorrow.' Only it is something worse than sorrow. It is something very like disgust. I will be silent." The horror tightened upon him, so that he was physically sick where he stood by Dickory Stile. Yet he never lost that sense of loyalty to something that was outside the dominion of Pan. It was not in vain that folk kept alive the spirit that had informed those happy days of his. It was only that he, Terry Hood, had not been strong enough to face the sneering smile of Old Pan. . . . If a man could have died of his own volition, or lack of it, then the body of Terry Hood would have lain by Dickory Stile for the first comer to find. It may be that he would have died, but for something that happened of which no living creature was aware. In his extremity Terry was companioned. He turned from his stooping posture, and was aware of the presence of Brown Smock. There was nothing either to be seen or heard. Below him the stiffened clods lay in black ranks where the plough had turned them. The fringe of grass under the bare hedge was white with rime. Down in the valley Sedgeway seemed to recline stiffly, like an old man. The tower of St. Mary's Church looked almost blue. Elsewhere grey and brown intermingled. It was a scene of peace. The peace of death. But

Terry was suddenly aware of returning life, of a restored individuality in the knowledge of companionship. Old Pan had done his worst. There was nothing by way of sight or sound to indicate that Terry was no longer alone. He was visited by no vision such as had swum before his eyes after he had fallen from the cherry tree. There were only the rows of clods, and the grey sky overhead, but suddenly it seemed that there was something to be made of those straight black lines, something to be made of the grey pall over his head. Brown Smock waited for his tune. Terry spread out his arms, and ran down Hurzel Slope as he had done in his boyhood. He stumbled over the clods but regained his equilibrium with a laugh.

"Brown Smock, Brown Smock," he called. "I have the tune in my ears."

For answer St. Mary's chime beat up through the still air. One, Two, Three. Terry had been nearly two hours by Dickory Stile, waiting for he knew not what. He had passed through a loneliness more awful than anything he had ever known. Now as he raced he knew that he was no longer alone. He had spoken Pan squarely, as Brown Smock had done, and Brown Smock had come to his aid.

He had taken his side against Pan even as Terry had endeavoured to come to the rescue of Brown Smock in the dream of the tithe barn. At length Terry found himself under the surviving trees, and close to the lodge where Mrs. Tule had first stood to welcome him. It seemed like a kind of ratification of his new-born hope that she should be there now, wrapped in an old-fashioned voluminous cloak with a shawl about her head. She was evidently on her way back from some errand in the village. At sight of Terry she halted. As he approached he saw the concern upon her face.

"Why, Master Terry. What has happened? What have you been doing?"

"Doing?" Terry echoed with a feeble little laugh. Then he tottered and swayed. Mrs. Tule's strong and capable arms went about him.

"I believe you're starving," he heard her say in the musical speech of her native county. "What would Miss Croft say! Come Master Terry. This won't do, you know."

He allowed himself to be led within the lodge. With the exception of the cigarette he had taken nothing in the way of sustenance since his early morning biscuit and cup of tea. Within the little parlour a log fire was casting a dancing pattern upon the low dark ceiling.

"Sit you down," said Mrs. Tule as she led him to a wicker arm-chair. Terry obeyed her, laughing apologetically. It seemed the most natural thing in the world that he should be taken in hand thus by Mrs. Tule. She was of the old order of Sedgeway. She had been left to keep the lodge open for Brown Smock after he had been locked out of the Manor.

"I'll bring you some soup, Master Terry. Sit you there."

When she returned she found him fast asleep. Something in his expression restrained her from waking him. She stole back to the kitchen with the Miss Muffet bowl in her hands. Brown Smock defined himself out of the firelight before Terry. The man in the arm chair was reminded of one of those puzzle pictures where one is shown the rose tree and bidden to find the gardener. He is suddenly there, and you wonder how you can have been so obtuse as to miss him.

"Brown Smock," said Terry, "I think you were just in time."

The brown eyes were full upon him. Once Terry had joined a party of Boy Scouts about a camp fire. He had come as a very timid guest from a neighbouring farm-house. He had been aware of bright eyes all about him, friendly eyes,

for the most part, lit by the dancing glow. He had been little more than a boy himself at the time, but his spirit had been swept by a mingled sense of camaraderie and pathos. The bright eyes wished him well, and yet they just seemed to fail him at a point. Brown Smock's eyes were bright with the firelight, but they did not fail him. They were wise and tender, and fearless. They concealed nothing.

"What do you want of me, Brown Smock?" asked Terry. "Why did you save me from Pan?"

"I want my tune, Brother."

"You shall have it, Brown Smock. You shall have all of me. I shall only live that I may find you a tune." Brown Smock knelt before him.

"All of you, Brother?"

His eyes searched Terry's with such a wistful intentness that the latter cried out as if to reassure himself. Then he was aware of Lois Hanray's voice close at hand. It seemed that Brown Smock turned away with his face hidden in his arm. Terry woke with a start. A woman was standing before him with her arm linked in that of Mrs. Tule. She wore a dark skirt and jumper, and her high boots were splashed with mud. About her head and shoulders she had wound a great red scarf which seemed to increase her

pallor. A strand of black hair had escaped from this covering. A blackness seemed to lurk beneath her eyes. The cheeks that had once been so rounded showed the angle of the bones. The eyes alone seemed to belong to the Lois Hanray that Terry had known. They were shadowed with fatigue and suffering, but the old mockery was there. She looked down upon Terry and smiled quizzically.

"Lois!" he cried as he sprang to his feet.

"Oh, Terry," she said, "how very nimble. Not a sign of arthritis about you, anyway. How are you, Terry. Shake." She held out her left hand. Terry took it in his.

"I don't mean to be sinister, Terry, but I've learned a lesson since I met the Vicar. It's neuritis, Terry. I'm getting better. What's your trouble? Wasn't it Disraeli who always used to greet anybody he wasn't quite sure of with 'How's the old complaint?'"

"It's starvation," said Mrs. Tule. "That's what's wrong with him."

"How interesting," said Lois. "Asceticism. Splendid, Terry. Or are you doing it for a bet."

"Lois," stammered Terry, "I—I didn't know."

"Didn't know what?"

"Oh, let him have his soup, Miss."

"Oh, his soup, yes. I'll sit and watch you eat it, Terry. You will do it so much more prettily than my old man."

Terry searched her with his eyes.

"Don't look like that Terry. I'm only referring to Grandpapa Hanray. Here comes the soup. Wire in Terry. Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet. I'll sit here and watch you." She sat down upon one of the rush-bottom chairs with her arms upon the deal table. Terry took the bowl from Mrs. Tule. Its aroma brought the tears to his eyes. He was conscious of appearing ridiculous in what was to him one of the great moments of his life. Lois noted his confusion, and her eyes softened. It was as if the years that had passed had never been.

"You mustn't mind me, Terry. I've been nursing an old man. It's so refreshing to see somebody young. Polish it off, and then we'll talk. I wouldn't believe Mrs. Tule when she met me in Sedgeway, and told me you were here. I went to look for you."

"You went to look for me?"

"Yes. I went to Dickory Stile."

"To Dickory Stile? When?"

"Oh about half-past three. I thought you might have torn yourself away from your

American friends by then, and I had fixed up the old man."

"You just missed me," said Terry. He looked at her curiously. "Why did you think of Dickory Stile?"

"Oh, I used to go there with Miss Croft," said Lois lightly. Terry concentrated upon his soup for a minute. He was wondering what would have happened if Lois had been half an hour earlier. He was also troubled by the memory of that dream from which she had awakened him. Why had Brown Smock buried his face in his arm? Mrs. Tule urged him to eat more, but he handed her back the bowl with an embarrassed smile. Lois produced a cigarette case.

"May I try him with one of these, Mrs. Tule. You don't mind if I smoke too?"

"Master Terry knows best, I suppose," said Mrs. Tule. "I'll leave him to you, Miss Hanray. Smoke by all means. It's not a thing I've taken to myself, but I don't judge others. I only know Master Terry is overjoyed to see you."

"Now, Mrs. Tule," said Lois, "how can you possibly know that?"

"I was afraid to tell him when he came," replied Mrs. Tule, and left them to themselves.

"Cryptic, isn't she?" said Lois as she lit the cigarettes. "What did she think I was going to do to you?"

"I don't know," said Terry lamely. He wished that Lois would drop that bantering mask. He longed to ask her questions about herself, and yet he shrank from so doing.

"You notice how she came out with the 'Miss Hanray'? I don't know what's happened to Mrs. Tule's morals. I must talk to the Vicar. Only I shall keep my hands behind my back. What a grasp. He's like the man in Milne's play who strangled lions."

Terry watched her inhale the smoke of her cigarette, and wondered whether she meant to tell him anything about herself, or whether this barrage of small talk would continue. He felt absurdly like the boy who had listened to her raillery as they walked in Kensington Gardens. As then he waited upon her behest. Lois Hanray must reveal herself in her own time. Lois Hanray. Had she ceased, then, to be Lois Fricke?

She met the old terrier-like gaze.

"People like Mrs. Tule," she went on, "make me wonder at the bed-rock of sheer kindness one may sometimes strike. . . . You would think that a person of her education and outlook

would adopt the 'drooping Magdalene,' 'Prodigal Daughter' attitude towards me."

Terry threw away his cigarette.

"Lois for God's sake——" he began.

"Oh, Terry. What language."

"What—what is it that has happened?"

"Well, there's been a war, for one thing. I suppose you were in that."

"Oh yes. I was in it. But you? What of your singing?"

She seemed to recoil, ever so slightly. Then she sent out a little cloud of tobacco smoke.

"Oh, I sing in my bath sometimes," she said. "Then it wakes the old man, and upsets the day. What of you, Terry? Who's looking after your press for you? It's a positive fact that I didn't know whether Terry Hood were dead or alive until I met Mrs. Tule. She said she wouldn't tell you until she'd seen me. She thought you might be painful to me, Terry. Isn't she quaint?"

"Why—why aren't you singing." Terry came out with the question so peremptorily that Lois was constrained to laugh.

"Because I've settled down, Terry. How long is it since you heard me at Wiesbaden?"

"Eurydice." Terry blurted out the word, half to himself. Lois recoiled again.

"You're wondering what Eurydice's been up to—or down to." She gave a tired little laugh.

"I hate people who are always talking about hell," she said. "It's so theatrical."

"I'm in hell when you laugh like that," Terry burst out. "Eurydice, why don't you sing? I'm not a boy now, Lois. I've a right to know about you. We are two of Hilda Croft's men, and Hilda Croft's men stand together. Won't you be decent to me, and tell me things?"

"Really, Terry. What an outburst!"

Nevertheless she was moved by the outburst for she went on, as if to herself, "Why don't I sing? Oh, I don't know. I'm old and tired, I suppose. He used me up. I don't believe I could sing without him."

"Fricke!" Terry almost seemed to bark the word.

She smiled at him oddly.

"You were curiously attractive then, Terry," she said slowly. "All the same I think I ought to tell you that if we are to keep friends you mustn't talk like that of my husband."

"I didn't talk," said Terry.

"No. You barked."

"Your husband." Terry spoke like a stunned man. "I didn't know. I thought."

Lois laughed.

"Oh yes, Terry. He's my husband. I'm Frau Fricke. 'I've got me lines.'"

"I wish you wouldn't talk like that."

"Talk like what? Terry, you're as bad as Mrs. Tule. You want to make a divorcee of me, or something of that sort. I'm not the only woman who doesn't live with her husband. Think of all the sailors' wives. They can't take them with them, can they. That's the irony of the situation, Terry. I'm a most respectable person, but here in Sedgeway the mothers call their children to their side as I pass. I feel like someone out of a Thomas Hardy novel."

Terry rose, and stood with his back to the fire. Lois watched him with the old half affectionate, half quizzical look.

"Out with it, Terry," she said.

"He may be your husband," Terry blurted out.

"He *is* my husband."

Lois caught him up with a quick little laugh.

"But he's made you unhappy. He's taken you and used you for his own ends and now he's deserted you."

"That's harsh, Terry. Desertion is an ugly word. Perhaps circumstances have been against him. Perhaps it is I who have done the deserting."

Terry squared his shoulders.

"I know what you have done. You've found your way back here like a—like a homing bird."

She winced a little, but smiled.

"Homing bird. That's very pretty. I'm not sure that 'bird' is quite proper."

Terry lifted his arms and let them fall, a foreign little gesture of his.

"Won't you let me help you?" he cried. "Lois, you are starving yourself. I can see it in your eyes. I—I don't understand about Fricke. If you don't want to talk about him there are other things we can talk about. Eurydice, why don't you sing?" The question came out like a command. Terry's voice was vibrant with a power that surprised himself.

"Because I prefer Sedgeway, and good works."

"You sent Clothilde away," Terry continued. "I'll get her to come back. It would be a rest for you and your grandfather. I know it would. Lois, why do you shun your friends? There's Bunty Drever, Bunty Wentworth that was."

Lois seemed to fight against a sudden urge tc capitulate.

"No, Terry," she said slowly. "That was very perspicacious of you—but no. I've come down here to work out my salvation. I must

work it out alone. That sounds a little theatrical."

"It may be," said Terry a little grimly. "It is also false and absurd. I'm going to send Bunty down here. Something must be done. You've no right to bury your gift in a napkin. Let me send her to you, Lois. What are friends for? What am I for?

"You said you could not sing without Fricke. I could make you sing, Eurydice."

Lois considered him. She looked very beautiful as she sat there with her arms upon the table, and the red scarf about her head. She was another Lois, a Dorothy Rose grown to womanhood.

"Why, Terry, I believe you could," she said slowly. "I keep on thinking of you as a boy. I'm forgetting that we haven't met for—how long is it?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Terry.

"How would you set about it? Making me sing?"

"I have songs for you, ready and waiting—in manuscript. I made you sing in Miss Croft's music room. I could do it again."

"You made me sing? Why, you weren't much more than an infant."

"I could make you sing again."

"Perhaps. There would be dangers in the experiment. There is Fricke, you know, Terry. He was a widower when I married him. I'm something of a Puritan, Terry. You wouldn't think so from what Grandpapa Hanray has let forth. He's a good living old man, but his mind is like the mind of one of the more scurrilous of the Hebrew prophets. He interests me."

"I don't understand about Fricke," said Terry miserably. "I only know that you're not doing the thing God meant you to do. I loathe waste. I've seen so much of it. If you're not working with Fricke I suppose it's because he has made it impossible."

Lois laughed.

"He may find that he needs me. Terry, I'm not sure whether you're Satan, or a messenger from Hilda Croft."

"Then you know that you're a fool to shun your friends. You know that you ought to be singing. Lois, I came down here this morning in a queer frame of mind. I'm at a fork in the road, so to speak. I haven't any very definite plans. Couldn't we join forces. Let me send Bunty down to talk it over."

"But, my dear Terry, you've your own career to consider."

Terry laughed.

"There's no such thing as a career," he said, "There's only music. I shall do what I'm meant to do."

"You are very young, Terry," said Lois.

"Let me send Bunty to you," Terry insisted, and in the end he won his way. When he boarded the train at Nuttleborough his mind was dominated by the one idea of the rescue of Eurydice from the silence. He had fled Creswell Mansions that morning on a kind of stampede. Brown Smock had gone to his rescue. Was it possible that as he went on his way back to London, the spirit of Sedgeway Manor still hid his face in his arm?

Was it Brown Smock's tune that ran through Terry's head, or a tune that should rescue Eurydice from the shades?

CHAPTER XVII

CHARIOT WHEELS

TERRY and Lois came back to bow for the third time.

Lois laughed and shook her head as the audience demanded another song. Then she turned to Terry with a pretty affectation of indecision.

"Up into the cherry tree," said Terry. "My setting. Shall us?"

"*Mais oui*," laughed Lois. "*Bien sûr*."

She sang Terry's setting. It was practically an improvisation. They had worked it out on Bunty Drever's piano one snowy afternoon, for the delectation of little Betty. It was a risky thing to do, but they carried it off.

Behind the scenes they were surrounded by friends and by others with various axes to grind. There was a general air of enthusiasm which Terry did not mistake for an infallible sign that he had successfully rehabilitated Lois Hanray. The critics had yet to speak, and, more important still, it had yet to be seen whether there would

be a run on the booking office for their next concert. The programme had been by no means what would be called "popular." Terry and Lois had endeavoured to reproduce the atmosphere of Dorothy Rose's concert at Wiesbaden. There had been enthusiasm then, but the times had changed. Still the enthusiasm of those who had "come behind" to congratulate Lois Hanray was very infectious. Terry felt the glow of it and smiled. Mrs. Spenlove was there, looking like a benevolent Cleopatra, with a diamond star flashing in her jet black hair. Beside her, Bunty Drever had what she would herself have called a "bitty and endy" appearance. At times of stress and excitement she generally managed to lose some essential brooch or comb. Betty was by her side, distracted at the novelty of finding herself behind the scenes.

"I feel a bit like Alice Through the Looking-glass," she said, when Terry had delved into her luxuriant red hair by way of caress.

"And that was your very own song," he said, still retaining a handful of her untamed mane. "'Up into the cherry tree.' They liked it, too, Bets."

Then he was claimed by a man with a head of light curly hair. He had evidently tried to

plaster the curl out of existence, but had only partially succeeded. He had a somewhat massive chin, and wore gold-rimmed pince-nez. His shoulders were unusually broad, but he was below the average height, so that he seemed to look up at Terry like some acquisitive bird. Terry recognised in him the hero of many romantic theatrical successes, and equally romantic failures, that is to say, from the commercial point of view. Gerald Farquhar only appeared on the stage to make speeches. He was a favourite comedian, however, when he appeared in the courts, for he was both daring and litigatious. He understood very well the art of advertising both himself and his wares.

"I must introduce myself," he said.

"It isn't necessary," said Terry, with a laugh. "I am very much honoured, Mr. Farquhar."

"We are both honoured," said Gerald Farquhar. "Let us put it like that. It costs nothing and acts like a cordial. I am wondering what prompted me to come this evening. I am a collector of first nights, and, to my mind, we have had a notable première this evening. It is rather a unique collaboration. Such a nice balance. Can you afford to do it, sir? I am presuming that you mean to continue in partnership."

Terry replied that he could not say. It rested with Lois.

"If she is wise she will grapple you to her side," said Gerald Farquhar. "But I warn you. It will not be 'Terry Hood and Lois Hanray.' It will be vice-versa."

Terry wanted to shout at him: "You miserable little guinea-pig. What does it matter who comes first? Isn't it enough that I have rescued Eurydice from the nether world? I have restored her to her place. Lois Hanray was made to triumph and lead."

"I sincerely hope that you will stick together," said Gerald Farquhar. "It is refreshing to see an artist who is prepared to make sacrifices. There is an element of picturesqueness in it which appeals to me. . . . Now, I must move on and congratulate the lady."

Terry saw him insinuate himself into the little group of men that Lois had attracted about her. His eyes met Bunty's as he looked away. She had been thinking of the prophecy she had delivered in the Kensington High Street concerning the men who would bring flowers to Lois and not make off as the shy boy had done. She came up to him with Betty by her side.

"That American has brought her the first Sedgeway Manor daffodils," she said, "but she

is wearing a Gloire de Dijon. I bought it for her. It isn't real, but it's a symbol."

"You're the last person I would have thought capable of such a thing," said Terry.

"Is that an insult or a tribute?" said Bunty. She laughed at him, but her eyes softened.

Mr. Gerald Farquhar had his word with the cantatrice.

"Is this a reversal of the Trilby legend?" he said. "Have you mesmerized him?"

"Thank you," said Lois. "Do I look like Svengali?"

"You look extraordinarily beautiful," said Gerald Farquhar.

Lois laughed. She could not be angry with the little man. He looked so like a cheeky London sparrow she had watched on her window sill that morning. She was radiantly happy. Whatever the popular verdict might be, she knew that she had sung as she had never sung before. Terry had made her feel that she was free. It had been like singing in the little music-room at Sedgeway Manor, with the difference that she had all those years of work and experience behind her. She had never been free when she sang with Hermann Fricke. What did that ridiculous little man know when he spoke of the Trilby legend?

She felt, as never before, that she had given herself out to her audience, as indeed was the case. Lois Hanray had dominated the evening. Terry's threefold success as executant, accompanist and composer seemed a secondary thing. He had insisted upon an exacting programme because he did not want them to fall below the standard set by Fricke. His own two compositions had been as exacting as anything on the programme. He had set two of the lyrics from Bill Drever's *Owl's Feather* to accompaniments that made the songs seem like a *tour de force* both for voice and piano. "Up into the Cherry Tree" had been less exacting. It was a breakaway from the discipline of the rest of the programme.

"Now you've got him," continued Gerald Farquhar, "keep him. He's half a romantic already. You must wean him away from that old nurse, Gervain Moir. Terry Hood has the Moir manner. Very admirable. Still, from my point of view it lacks spaciousness. I'll bet that young man doesn't know quite where he is this evening. You have awakened him."

"Mr. Terry Hood knows exactly where he is," said Lois.

"I must have a chat with you both," said Gerald Farquhar. "This concert has set me thinking."

"I guess you want to float them into a limited liability company," said Theobald Hackett, who was very prone to wait upon the lady to whom he offered flowers.

The little concourse of pleased and happy people dwindled away until there remained only a few tired officials, and the two principal people of that evening, along with Bunty Drever, and Betty.

Terry's little Renault awaited them, parked away from the entrance of the Hall.

"Well, to-morrow there won't be no such person as Dorothy Rose," he said. "Look at Betty. She's nearly dropping. It's a scandal."

"What about you?" said Bunty. "You have to get back after you've decanted us."

"I shan't sleep, so what does it matter? Come along."

He took an affectionate farewell of the night watchman and went to start up the Renault.

"Lois in front and Betty and me in the boot," said Mrs. Drever, and so they disposed themselves.

"Terry, let me have the wheel. I must have something in my hands."

In the half-light Lois looked like the Eurydice who had turned for a last glance as she was borne away on Hermann Fricke's arm. Her

white cloak and spangled scarf enhanced the impression of frailty. She did not look like a masterful driver.

"You?" said Terry. "You couldn't. You're tired."

"That's just why I want to drive. Do you imagine that I don't know how to drive. Good Lord, I ought to know!"

"Righto!" said Terry. "This is your evening."

He resigned the driver's seat to her, and the little car leapt forward and purred its way along the almost empty street.

Every time they flashed past a street light Terry stole a glance at Lois. There was the same odd blend of fragility and power in the white-clad figure that had so intrigued him when, as a little boy, he had watched Lois taking down the Rector's sermon in shorthand. She looked as vulnerable as a child, and yet she was carrying Terry along in his own car, as she had carried him along in the course of that evening's concert. She had danced her way through the intricacies of his two songs, and he had followed upon her like some attendant djinn.

He had given her the support of his name and his skill, given it passionately, as he had given her the little basket of roses. Lois had

taken his gift and used it without compunction. That was how he would have it. His mind traversed the few weeks that had elapsed since that day of searching cold, when Lois had broken into his dream at the Lodge.

On his return to London he had decided to refuse both the offers he had under consideration. Instead he had called upon Bunty Drever and unfolded a scheme. As a result Mrs. Drever descended upon Sedgeway, and bore Lois back with her to Phillimore Gardens. There had followed a rapid renaissance. Mrs. Spenlove had been called in, and she had smoothed the way in many directions for the appearance of Lois Hanray in conjunction with Terry Hood.

To Terry those weeks of preparation had been the happiest he had known since the days of his second appearance in London. He had worked hard upon every side of the enterprise, both commercial and artistic. He had argued his manager down, when the latter had pleaded for a more popular form of programme. He had not wanted to fall below the Fricke standard. He wanted Lois to feel that the support he gave her was not something second rate.

Well, the first stage in the enterprise had been past, Eurydice had re-appeared from the shades.

She had dominated that evening. Gerald Farquhar was quite right. It was Lois Hanray and Terry Hood. Terry was well pleased that it should be so, and as the car sped along with the tense white figure at the wheel he was conscious of a new refrain in his ears. It was not the song he had heard as he raced down the hill in pursuit of Brown Smock. That he would have to go and seek in due course. But that night the tune in his ears was the song of Lois Hanray's chariot wheels.

CHAPTER XVIII

TERRY WRITES A WINNER

GERALD FARQUHAR folded the piece of notepaper into the form of a dart and aimed it at Terry. They were sitting in the garden of Mrs. Spenlove's riverside bungalow, watching Lois and her hostess at the graceful pastime of archery.

"That is a potential hit in every sense," he said.

"Read it."

Terry unfolded the dart and obeyed.

"Tushery!" he said.

"Unimpeachable sentiment," said Gerald Farquhar. "Set that to an appropriate tune, with a nice little arpeggio introduction, and we have a winner. Those words have almost as interesting a history as 'The Rosary.' They were given to me by a hospital orderly. They seem to have passed from hand to hand, and every time they changed hands it was in payment for the greatest debt a man can owe."

"How did you save the hospital orderly?"

"Never mind. The point is, those words are my property, and you could set them in a suitable manner for Lois Hanray to sing. The result will be most happy. She will get just what she wants at this critical juncture. She will get her name associated with a 'winner.'"

"I can't do that sort of thing."

"You've never tried."

"I don't like the idea. There's no need for me to put my tongue in my cheek and concoct the sort of thing you mean. I can't take such a commercial view of things."

Gerald Farquhar adjusted his pince-nez and regarded Terry with his head a little on one side.

"That's a pity," he said. "The commercial side of things is not to be despised, especially when one has the temperament of a Lois Hanray."

"What do you mean?" said Terry.

"I had better leave my answer for another time," said Gerald Farquhar, as Lois turned towards them. "Try your hand at a winner, Hood. I'm giving you a great chance." Terry laughed.

"I believe I could," he said. "I'll do the thing for a rag."

He ran his eyes over the verses.

"This is not the sort of thing for Lois," he said.

"On the contrary," said Gerald Farquhar.

"She's not a catholic singer," said Terry. "She ought to go along certain well defined lines."

But here Lois made it impossible to continue the discussion by insisting upon their taking their turn with the bow.

Terry's first shot was a ringer.

"Madame la cantatrice," said Gerald Farquhar. "Terry will do better than that for you. I have just commissioned him to write you a 'winner.' He has accepted the commission."

"I don't think he could improve on *Owl's Feather*," said Mrs. Spenlove. "Let's be precious. If you keep in that vein, Mr. Terry——"

"That is where you are wrong, if I may be pardoned," said Gerald Farquhar. "People want something they can play themselves."

"Oh, blow the people," said Terry.

"We can't afford to blow the people," said Lois. "There are too many Lois Hanrays about."

"There will only be one Lois Hanray if she finds her niche," said Gerald Farquhar. "I can place her exactly in my mind's eye."

"Music is not a trade or a game," said Terry.

"I like people to be comfortable," said Gerald Farquhar.

That evening Lois and Terry appeared together in London. Their first success had hardly been followed up as one might have supposed. Gerald Farquhar, who seemed to have constituted himself a sort of presiding genius over the partnership, advocated a less severe programme, but Terry who had sacrificed so much already was not disposed to make any concessions. He remembered the impression that Dorothy Rose's concert had made upon him at Wiesbaden. The Schubert songs had been the nearest approach to anything of the catchpenny order, and Schubert was hardly what one would call a composer of "winners." Terry had endeavoured to take Fricke's place. Artistically, the subjugation of Lois by the big Prussian had brought forth the happiest results. Terry, listening to Lois at Wiesbaden, had felt the restraint and severity of her singing, and it had thrilled him. He had little doubt in his mind that Hermann Fricke had treated Lois badly, though her reserve was so profound on the subject of what had passed during the years of the war that he had only a few stray utterances to justify the belief. Terry had almost come to believe in the

influence of unseen presences when he reflected how he had been thrown in Lois Hanray's path. He could, in a measure, make up to her what she had paid as a price for her freedom from Fricke. During those weeks of preparation for her reappearance he had come to a knowledge of her temperament that had enabled him to compose her the two songs from *Owl's Feather*. Despite that outward appearance of practicality, Lois needed the stimulus of someone single-minded and masterful to hold her upon the strait and narrow way. A certain kind of facile success could be hers for the asking. Her beauty ensured that. Terry felt that this was what had to be avoided, but not being a masterful Prussian, he could only try to safeguard Lois from herself by precept and example. He was conscious all the time that he was only little Terry Hood, towards whom Lois had turned in her hour of need. He had no hold upon her, unless it was the spiritual relationship that existed among all "Hilda Croft's men." He had not even the right to be jealous when other men flocked about Lois Hanray at the end of a concert. That was Fricke's right, if it were anyone's. Nevertheless Terry was exceedingly jealous. He was jealous as an artist, for he knew what he could do with Lois Hanray's voice.

He was jealous as a man, for he worshipped Lois, and these men were only attracted by something new. They came with their flowers, and they did not make off in hot embarrassment as little Terry had done. They stayed to be amused and excited by the beautiful cantatrice with the interesting history.

Gerald Farquhar came assiduously. His little acquisitive eyes summed Lois up from behind his gold-rimmed pince-nez. They summed Terry up, too. The collaboration appealed to him. It appealed to his innate sense of drama. He saw the sacrifice that Terry was making and approved. Nay more. He hankered after something on a bigger scale. Terry should compose Lois "a winner." He should go down to posterity on the front page of a popular song. His photograph would stand side by side with Lois Hanray's, separated only by some chaste emblematic design. The design would have to "feature" the cornflower, for the title of Gerald Farquhar's song was "Cornflower Blue."

That evening Terry had come upon "Cornflower Blue" as he was changing for the concert on his return from Mrs. Spenlove's bungalow. His first impulse had been to roll it into a little ball and throw it out of his window, but he reflected that the thing was not his property,

and put it away among his papers. At the end of that evening his manager baited him in his dressing-room. Lois and he had signed a contract for a provincial tour. The manager was of the opinion that the provinces would be better pleased with a programme less exacting. Terry grew argumentative, but later he found that Lois gave her support to the manager's contention. He capitulated.

Next day he went to pay a call upon Bunty Wentworth. Lois had been whisked away to the Spenlove's bungalow. Gerald Farquhar had also been of the party. Terry learned this of Betty, who had presided over Lois Hanray's departure, and had seen the little man perched on the jigger seat. To verify her statement the little girl produced a charcoal sketch of Mr. Farquhar as he had appeared to her. Terry forgot his little pang in his admiration of Betty's skill.

"Don't fuss over her, Terry," said Betty's mamma.

"That sort of thing is in the family."

But when she had Terry to herself she returned promptly to the subject of Betty's gift.

"She has all Bill's fancy, and it won't be long before she has acquired all the technique I ever had. I wonder why she adores you so, Terry."

"What a question. Am I not adorable?"

"At the present moment," said Bunty, "you're miserable."

"I am nothing of the sort. How do you know?"

"You're looking absurdly like a boy I once met in Kensington Gardens. You're worrying about Lois."

"Well, I suppose I am. I suppose that's why I came to see you. I do think this is a critical time for her. I wish she had backed me up. I had a bit of a rumpus with our manager. He wants to popularize Lois, commercialize her. So does that little jackanapes, Farquhar. I want her to take her rightful place."

"And what of your rightful place?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of Fricke. I was thinking of your career. This new partnership is very pretty and exhilarating to watch, but it isn't leading you very far, Mr. Terry Hood."

"It will lead me to Dickory Stile," said Terry. "That's all I care about."

"Who is Dickory, and what has his style got to do with it. Is this some new form of mysticism that's bitten you, Terry?"

"I'm sorry if I were cryptic. I've never talked to you about Brown Smock, have I?"

"Brown Smock? No."

"I must do so. It will explain Betty's attachment to me. At least I believe it will. I have the Spirit of Sedgeway Manor upon me, and Brown Smock is Sedgeway Manor."

Bunty put down her needlework.

"This is a smock for Betty," she said.

"So I observe; but it's not brown. It's blue—cornflower blue—which sets me off upon another train of thought."

Bunty turned on the light and drew the curtains across the window.

"Tell me about Brown Smock," she said. "Are you going to be very spooky, Terry. If so I'll put on another log."

"I'm going to tell you the truth," said Terry.

Bunty bent over her sewing as he proceeded.

"What makes you think my Betty is part of him? she asked without looking up. "It's rather a tremendous allegation. Is 'allegation' the word?"

"I don't know," said Terry. "Betty has intuitions. She has a tune for Brown Smock in her heart."

"A tune? Why, Betty's like Bill. She can hardly recognize 'God save the King.'"

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter," said Terry. "Hilda Croft never

touched that little grand in the music room, but her books sang. Ask Betty if they don't."

"And you think that Betty. . . . "

"Betty is her father's daughter, and yours."

"I? My dear Terry, I don't see Brown Smocks. I make blue ones."

"Are you angry with me? Will you trust me with Betty after what I've told you?"

"No, I'm not angry," said Bunty. "I'm just a little puzzled, that's all. As for Betty, I don't see what harm Brown Smock could do her. Yes, Terry, I think I would trust you with her before anyone else that I know. Brown Smock may be an hallucination——"

"Thank you," said Terry. "I did get a knock on the head when I was a kid."

"I wish you'd allow me to finish," said Bunty. "I was going to say, whatever it is, or he is, it has only confirmed something that I spotted in you long ago."

She lifted her eyes to Terry's for a moment. Terry remembered that half-humorous and wholly sympathetic look she had given him when he stood before Lois with the little basket of roses.

But here, to Terry's immense relief, Betty appeared at the door in her red dressing-gown.

She seemed to be holding something behind her back, and looked from Terry to her mother in a tentative way, as if she were meditating a confidence.

"What is it, Bets?" said Bunty. "You ought to be in bed."

"Come and show me," said Terry, who had caught a glimpse of a white paper against the red.

Betty came without a word, and laid her work upon his knee. It was a little sketch of a boy running down a hill with his arms outstretched. It might have been Terry himself as he raced after Brown Smock with the tune in his ears.

"You can't see the wind," she said, "but it's holding him up."

"Is there a story?" Terry asked.

"I fink so," said Betty, "but the picture comes first."

"Let mummy see."

Bunty held out her arms. Betty went to her with the picture. Her mother took it from her very gently, and with scarcely a glance at it she clasped the child to her side.

"Well, you're real, any way, Bets. You're a true story."

Terry was to remember the little picture they

made. It may sound banal enough, but no two women are exactly alike, and Bunty with her child seemed, for the moment, to hold some high place in her turn, and in her own way. Outside the night gathered. A bough scraped on the wrong side of the window curtains. Outside old Pan waited and smiled, but Brown Smock turned away from the window weeping because of the fear that underlay Bunty Wentworth's love for Betty. He wept for Terry, too, poor Terry who imagined so fondly that Lois would help him to find a tune for the brown whistle.

Terry stayed on and consulted with Bunty when Betty had been sent off to bed. She was very candid on the subject of Lois. Lois needed money. She could not afford to wait until Terry had educated the public mind. She also needed Terry. No one knew that better than Bunty. Lois was ready to listen to any man who would give her the opportunity to make a quick success. Gerald Farquhar had offered her success through the medium of Terry. If Terry failed him there were others. Of course, if Terry were to consult his own interests he would break with Lois, but if he meant to keep up the partnership he must face the facts and be guided by Gerald Farquhar.

Terry, in a kind of panic, went home resolved to write Lois a "winner." He would set "Cornflower Blue." It would not be the tune for which Brown Smock waited, but that would come later, when there was breathing time.

CHAPTER XIX

THE DOORMAT

A SYLPH in cornflower blue, cut out in the manner of those effigies of hospital nurses that greet you as you enter certain chemists', stood in the background of a music-seller's shop in the Kensington High Street. In one hand she held a large straw hat by the strings. In the other she held a bunch of paper cornflowers. Terry regarded her somewhat grimly from the other side of the window. The floor she stood upon was paved with copies of his song, and the walls of her apartment were likewise decorated. Here and there were little pots of cottage ware filled with more paper cornflowers. "Cornflower Blue" had justified Gerald Farquhar's belief. Terry had composed a winner. The cover of the song showed a photograph of Lois Hanray. Terry had taken up his last stand in the matter of his own photograph.

He would not consent to appear on the cover by Lois Hanray's side. He had set "Cornflower Blue" to music for her advancement, not his own. Already "Cornflower Blue" was proving itself a little gold mine to her. She had sung the song for recording purposes, of course, at a fee, that satisfied even Gerald Farquhar. She had written magazine articles on the genesis of "Cornflower Blue," and had sung the ballad at a number of parties given by hostesses who were willing to pay anything in order that their guests might hear the *dernière cri*. The bookings for the recitals had gone up at a bound. Terry had gasped when his first cheque on account of royalties had arrived from the publishers.

He thought very sadly of Mrs. Durden as he surveyed the glorification of his "winner" in the shop window. What a moment that would have been for her. How often Terry and she had glued their noses to the shop windows of the High Street, in the old St. Luke's days. Then he had dreamed dreams. The lay figure in the cornflower blue frock ought to have been a materialisation of those dreams, but instead Terry found himself reviling her as a hussy. How could Lois approve of that sort of thing? Lois seemed to thrive on it.

Gerald Farquhar had blunted her perceptions, had blunted his, for that matter. He heard two men behind him in the crowd that the window display had attracted, and recognised the ultra-English drawl of one of Lois Hanray's admirers.

"By Jove. She *has* got her goods in the window, hasn't she?"

A gruff voice made reply.

"She's mopped up Terry Hood, hasn't she? That would make Gervain Moir turn in his grave."

"Well, if there's a doormat handy why shouldn't she——"

Then Terry turned.

"Yes, why shouldn't she?" he said. "That's what they're for. Is there anything equivalent to that"—he rapped on the shop window—"that you could give her?"

The young man's jaw dropped. He stammered an apology; but Terry lowered his head and charged in the opposite direction. He heard the man with the gruff voice laughing as he went on his way. He came at length to the Round Pond and sought a seat. The children crowded about him. He was humiliated to find that they irritated him. He had the absurd fancy that some of them set their faces sternly

as they passed him. A little boy in a sailor suit went by, hanging on his nanny's arm, and droning a song. Terry thought the child had adenoids. He disliked him. But the words of the chant came back to him.

> " All the tune that I could play,
> Was ' Over the hills and far away.' "

Far away on the top of the hill Brown Smock was waiting for his tune, and the tune was certainly not "Cornflower Blue." Terry had despised himself as he wrote it. Why had he written it? He had imagined that he had done so in a spirit of altruism. Bunty had made him think that. Was Bunty helping him to deceive himself? Was his longing to serve Lois the single-hearted motive she seemed to think it was? Perhaps he was just courting Lois with his gift like the other men. Why not? But here Terry seemed to come upon something of toughness in his own being. He was not like the other men. Lois had freed herself from Fricke, and Terry had helped to set her free. He had found out that Fricke was really her lawful husband. Bunty's story of a frau in every capital held no weight. Fricke had married Lois on the death of his wife. Of course it would be a simple

matter to obtain a divorce on the ground of desertion, but this was not a course he could urge upon Lois. He had argued to himself speciously that he had made what sacrifice he had for Lois out of loyalty to the Sedgeway tradition. Was not "Cornflower Blue" a sign and a token that not only did he wish to save Lois, but also that he wanted passionately to go on saving her. He was jealous of Gerald Farquhar, jealous of all the other men. Yet he had not the right to be jealous. That was Fricke's right. He believed in his heart that though Lois Hanray's had been a physical escape from Fricke, he still dominated her mind, wherever he was. Terry had taken his place as no other man could have done, but he wondered whether he could hope to give her more than a temporary respite. And here Brown Smock found his way into his thoughts, as was so often the case when Lois vexed his spirit. Brown Smock was Sedgeway, and Terry was striving after the belief that it was for the sake of Sedgeway that he had lain his gifts at Lois Hanray's feet. Brown Smock had been at his side when he had fallen with the broken branch of blossom in his hand, that blossom, every petal of which seemed to shout the name of Lois to the sky. This undercurrent of bitterness in his love

for her would not be gainsaid. It gave a stringent quality to the joy he had felt in serving her.

So Terry sat and meditated, and it was as if he sat on some spiritual see-saw. At one moment it seemed that his love for Lois was part of the miracle of Sedgeway Manor, and then it appeared merely as a very obvious and rather vulgar passion. At one time it seemed that Brown Smock would come by his tune through his love for Lois, and at the next moment it seemed that he hid his face and wept.

And then something tilted the see-saw. Someone had called Terry "a doormat." At any rate, he would be damned if he allowed that to be said of him. He had the right to protect Lois, to protect her from herself, if necessary. He had won that right. He would make no more concessions. She must maintain the Fricke standard. What was the use of rescuing her from Fricke only to deliver her over in bondage to men like Gerald Farquhar. Gerald Farquhar had patiently and insidiously undermined his own self-respect as a musician. He would go and put a stone through that shop window, and when a sufficient crowd had collected, he would solemnly recant, bare-headed before

them, and ask forgiveness of the shade of Gervain Moir. But Terry did not smash the window. Instead he went to lunch with Bunty Drever.

CHAPTER XX

EURYDICE RECALLED

TERRY came upon Betty seated like Simeon Stylites, atop the gate post of the house in Phillimore Gardens.

"Hallo, Bets. I've come to ask myself to lunch. Do you think mummy will mind?"

"I'm on the watch-tower, Dobbin," replied the little girl. "It's fish. You can have mine. I'll have three sponge cakes instead. Mummy's not back yet."

Terry went by the name of one of Hilda Croft's creations when he came to the house at Phillimore Gardens.

"I'll be Dobbin in fact," he said, as he lifted Betty from her perch on to his shoulders. "Dobbin was a vegetarian. I'll have the sponge cakes. What I really want is you, Betty."

"You can't eat me, Dobbin."

"Have you made a story for the boy on the hill yet?"

"Yes."

"Oh, let's have it, Betty."

Terry felt a hunger for somebody else's ideas as he set the little girl down on the mat. She stood for a moment with her fingers on the handle of the door, dressed in her favourite green with a red neckerchief knotted under the collar of her jersey. As she looked up at Terry she seemed as lithe and fragile as an elf.

"I've got a new name for you, Bets. It's Miss Once-upon-a-time. What have you got on the other side of that door?"

"How do you mean, Dobbin?" Betty questioned him with those searching blue eyes.

"I thought perhaps you'd got a little boy called Terry Hood. May I come in?"

Betty opened the door, still a thought bewildered. . . . She led the way into the room that had been Bill Drever's study.

"I do my lessons here," she said, as she cleared a chair.

Lessons seemed to involve a large amount of paraphernalia. It was an immense relief to Terry to watch how swiftly and deftly she went to work. Here was somebody with a hold upon life, some one with a hold too upon the world of faëry.

"What of the story of the boy on the hill?" Terry took his stand by a sketch of Bill Drever

that hung upon the wall. It had been done in charcoal by a fellow-correspondent. He had caught the author of *Owl's Feather* in one of his happiest moods.

Betty looked up at him with an expression of such sweet seriousness that Terry bethought him of a picture of the recording angel done in the Pre-Raphaelite manner.

"I'll say it to you if I can turn my back," she said, and forthwith seated herself upon a stool facing the window. Terry studied the wave of the chestnut hair as he listened to the gentle intoning. It was a quaint entertainment. The poem, for such it was, was a little shaky in grammar, and freely larded with "dids" and terminal "eths," but it was coloured by the thoughts of a wonderfully observant and imaginative child. First came a recital of the little sights and sounds of a house minutely observed, and then one was transported to the hill-top where the imagination ran riot. As Terry listened he seemed to feel the spring of the stubble beneath his feet as he raced down the hill in pursuit of Brown Smock with the tune in his ears.

"Oh, I like that," he said when Betty had concluded with a solemn "Amen."

She turned and smiled at him.

"I like it too, Dobbin."

"And where is the hill that listens and waits?"

"I don't know. It's just a hill I think about."

"I believe I know it, Bets. Some day I'll take you there. It's a very good place to be in."

But here Bunty arrived, and Terry's mind was switched back to his own affairs. Nevertheless, Betty's little poem had made a mark upon his spirit. He was not to forget it.

Bunty smiled oddly as she interrupted the little sèance.

"Why, Terry. This is very nice of you," she said.

"I invited myself. You don't mind? I want someone to take me in hand. I believe I'm going to pieces."

"Why, what is the matter?"

"I've got the blues—the cornflower blues. I believe Lois and I are upon the wrong track."

"Don't be absurd. 'Cornflower Blue' isn't a crime."

"It isn't the sort of success I meant for her."

"It's the sort of success she likes. You've given Lois what she wants—notoriety, notoriety of a pleasing order. My dear Terry, you mustn't misjudge Lois. That kind of thing is what she needs. It's good for her. It's a wholesome

antidote to what she has been through. It is necessary for her to be moving constantly among different people, to be invaded with fresh interests, to be flattered and lionized."

Terry looked stubborn.

"I don't think so," he said.

Bunty smiled.

"I know her better than you. I'm in the conspiracy to let her have what she wants. She affects me like that. I don't know why."

"I want her to have what is hers by right."

"My dear Terry, you know as little of Lois as you know about polo or watchmaking."

"And yet you brought all your influence to bear on what I have done. I stood by and applauded. It was very fine."

Terry laughed.

"I see you agree with the gentleman I overheard as I was looking at that blatant display in the High Street. He called me a doormat."

Bunty smiled as she led the way to the dining-room.

"I certainly shouldn't call you that, Terry."

"You believe I'm something that Lois can make use of?"

She turned upon him with a merry, searching candour. "That's exactly what I think, I have a

lust for human sacrifice. You've done something fine, Terry. Can't you leave it at that."

"I wish you wouldn't speak in the past tense. I haven't finished with Lois yet."

"She may have finished with you."

Terry gasped.

"I suppose that sounds brutal," said Bunty, as she took the head of the table. "What is it the man says in *John Bull's Other Island?*"

"'I wish I knew of an island where all the dreams are not untrue, and all the facts are not brutal.' Is that what you mean?" said Terry.

"Yes. *Chacun pour soi.* You know what I used to call Lois? Magda."

"Brown Smock is not untrue," said Terry, half to himself.

Bunty shot him a quick glance.

"Oh yes," she said, "I'd forgotten. At least I hadn't forgotten. I've thought over what you told me. It is very curious."

Involuntarily their eyes both went to little Betty, seated at the side of the table.

"Brown Smock?"

The child questioned her mother with those clear blue eyes. Bunty seemed to hesitate at the challenge.

"A friend of mine," said Terry lightly. "It's

just a nick-name for a little boy I know. Tell me about the new paint-box, Bets."

The talk righted itself, and ran along a smooth and beaten road.

Terry felt the recital of little interests act upon his spirits like some course of soothing treatment. It was very good to feel that he was welcome in a home where there seemed to be such a number of things to be pleased over. As he left its shelter he seemed to realise afresh what Hilda Croft had meant when she had said that Brown Smock was all the children. . . . Bunty Drever had not reassured him in the way that he had sought, but reassurance had come nevertheless. He felt happier in his mind about Lois. The old premonition that he was to suffer through her did not appal him as he made his way through the crowd in the High Street. He knew that he loved her with all his being, that all things that were of the essence of her had a peculiar worth in his sight.

To be with her meant a quickened sense of all beautiful things. Yet it was strange that he should be haunted by the idea of disloyalty to Brown Smock when his longing for her seemed to overmaster him. He wondered whether he should take a stand against Gerald Farquhar, or whether Bunty was right. He had a tremen-

dous respect for that lady's wisdom. Lois might thrive spiritually on the kind of success that Gerald Farquhar wanted for her. Who was Terry Hood to lay down the law as to the functions of art? Nevertheless, Terry Hood felt with all his being, that he knew what it was that Lois Hanray should give to the world. In that he and Hermann Fricke were of one mind. He continued on his way, still in a state of indecision. He would go and see Lois before their concert on the morrow. Perhaps she would help him. That was not altogether a novel idea. It may have been that he had taken too much upon himself. Why should not Lois come to his rescue by way of a change. He sought the little service flat she was occupying for the time being in the Knightsbridge District. As he drew near the place he was aware of a quickening of his pulses.

Little incidents of those weeks of preparation passed rapidly through his mind. How delightful it had been, that period of enfranchisement and wonder—Orpheus and Eurydice. So they had been working their way back to the sunlight. He mounted the twisting stairs, and rang the electric bell. He heard a step within. The door opened, and Fricke stood before him.

"Zo."

"Herr Fricke."

Terry spoke quietly, but in his heart he was aware of instincts suddenly awakened that had been studiously exorcised since the war. He felt himself the little street boy, the terrier once again, torn between the desire to cut and run, and the desire to lash out at somebody or something.

"You are Mr. Terry Hood, hein?"

"That is my name."

"You have come to see my wife? Zo?"

"Yes. We are performing to-morrow. Possibly she has told you."

Hermann Fricke laughed.

"Oh yes. She has no secrets from her husband."

Terry heard Lois Hanray's voice in the passage behind him.

"Terry, you must go. You must go at once."

"I will go if—you wish," Terry began, but as he spoke Fricke's hand tightened about his throat. He started back and stumbled upon the step, Fricke seemed to lurch down upon him, and the two men fell heavily down the stairs together. Terry was aware of a blow such as he had received when, as a child, he had started back to avoid the motor car. Then he knew no more.

CHAPTER XXI

"THE HARVEST BRIDE"

"CLOTHILDE, surely that clock is slow?"

"No, Master Terry. It's right by Greenwich."

Terry raised himself on his couch. It was just a week since he had left the hospital, and he was once more back in his old rooms. Clothilde had been Bunty Drever's discovery. The affair with Hermann Fricke had led to much publicity. It appeared that the composer had read of his wife's reappearance, and had found his way to her flat with the persistence and the luck of a madman. There could be little doubt as to his insanity. Lois Hanray said no more than was absolutely necessary, of what passed between them before Terry's arrival. Fricke had disappeared after the fall. The story of his subsequent suicide is not one on which it is necessary to dwell. It was impossible to take Terry's depositions for some days. By that time Fricke had simplified matters somewhat by shooting

himself. The cheaper papers had made the most of the romantic tragedy. There was a neatness about this particular triangle with a famous composer at either end of the base, and a famous singer at the apex. Clothilde had read of it at Sedgeway, and had written to Bunty Drever to know if she could do anything to help. As a result she had been ensconced at Terry's flat as his nurse and factotum, for the period prior to his leaving for a sea voyage.

Upon that August morning he was awaiting his first visit from Lois since the unfortunate affair. He waited with a very poor show of patience. He was weak and fractious after his illness. In his delirium he had called continually upon the name of Lois. There had been nothing else that his heart desired, nothing but the knowledge that she was somewhere near him. Bunty and Betty and Clothilde had come to him, but Lois had only sent messages. He quite understood why she dreaded to come. He was involved in the tragedy of her life. Fricke had given her complete freedom now. It might have been otherwise if Terry had not appeared at that moment. It might have been. It might have been. A thousand and one journeys he had made in his mind over that same ground.

If he had not come, would Eurydice have gone back to that nether world, or was it possible that she, with her added strength and assurance might have been able to exert some influence over Fricke? He could not tell. He longed to know how Lois regarded him. The people who read the papers thought of him as her lover, the inevitable third point of the triangle. He could not expect to be regarded as anything else. Maybe the world was right. Then there had begun the old see-saw of opposing motives, until Terry in desperation had turned his mind upon something altogether outside his affairs. Little Betty Drever had given him much help in this respect. After her visit with her mother she had written Terry a daily letter. He looked for the coming of these little illustrated billets as eagerly as he had looked for the numbers of a children's weekly paper that had contained a serial story of Hilda Croft's in the old St. Luke's days. Betty recreated for him that kingdom of the mind to which Hilda Croft had shown him the way in *Dobbin of Beechtrees*. It was a kingdom out of which he had been hurled upon the instant and pressing tragedies of life. Betty helped him to recover a belief in the existence of that kingdom, that kingdom it is so good to glimpse even as one is hurried past. Side by

side with Betty's drawings of flowers and gnomes and children was one of Bunty's.

There was an inscription on the back, "I slipped this in when I was posting off Betty's issue of to-day. Don't let her see it. I drew it from memory. I think you must be a little touched with your Brown Smock and all, but I repeat, if ever Betty is in need of a friend you will come first in my thoughts. You can read a symbol in the little sketch if you like. Yours, Bunty D." The sketch showed Betty in a fur coat and little bonnet. She seemed to have halted by the wall of a stone church to take stock of a carven figure that occupied a niche in the wall. It had evidently been placed there in bygone days to put the fear of the devil into folk. Betty regarded it solemnly. It seemed as if she challenged it in the name of Brown Smock and his army born of gentle spirits of fond ways and firelight.

Terry had put the sketch carefully away. The thought of it sustained him through hours of pain, and when he found himself slipping back to that ineffectual fretting condition, when his longing for word and sight of Lois seized him, he would take the sketch from its place, and it would somehow seem to him to be be one with the memory of Brown Smock as he bent over

him after the fall from the cherry tree. On that morning when he inquired of Clothilde concerning the clock, however, he had no thoughts for Brown Smock, for he was awaiting the coming of Lois, and the thought of her filled his mind entirely. Clothilde regarded him with a motherly expression in her little eyes. She had grown more parrot-like than ever. Terry loved to hear her call him "Master Terry." It restored in him a sense of continuity. He was peevish with Clothilde. That was a luxury he allowed himself and she seemed rather to enjoy his humours. That made her feel her power.

"Perhaps she'll change her mind," said Terry.

"Perhaps," said Clothilde, "*C'est une femme, n'est ce pas?* But I think not. I think not."

"I daresay," said Terry, with a laugh, "there are people still waiting for our concert. They'll have to wait a long while. I wonder. I wonder. Oh, I can't help wondering."

Then came the sound of the bell, and Clothilde stole from the room. Terry pushed down a topknot of hair, and gave a glance at his hands. They had always been first in his thoughts on such occasions. The old awe of Lois returned to him. She came in.

She was dressed daintily in grey, the skirt of her simple frock cut short in the modern manner.

Her hat of pearl grey crinoline straw was turned up at the front, and trimmed with a black scarf. She stood for a moment, like a quiet grey mouse, regarding Terry. Terry had never seen her look so pretty. She seemed years younger than she had been upon that winter day when they met at the Lodge. She had regained her exquisite colouring. Her lips were full and red. She was a perfect Romney. Only her eyes were troubled, propitiatory. Terry was aware of an odd reversal in their relationship. Hitherto it had always been he who had sought justification in her eyes. Now it was she who seemed to plead for favour. The change disturbed him, even while her beauty gladdened him. He was glad of Clothilde's presence. If Lois had loved Fricke one thing was certain. His going had set her free of something that had crushed and cramped her. Physically she had recovered her zest and spring, whatever her sense of bereavement might be. He fancied that she was almost ashamed of her new hold upon life with that tragedy so close behind them in point of time. It was Terry who had paid the price of her freedom, and it seemed that she realised this.

"He is himself again, you think? Yes?" questioned Clothilde with her head on one side.

Terry held out his hand.

"I'm tip-top," he said. It seemed odd for him to be taking the lead. Lois had always been so self-possessed.

She took the proffered hand hesitatingly.

"I should have come before."

"It must have been difficult for you to come."

Clothilde slipped out of the room.

"Difficult? What a funny word to use, Terry."

"I didn't know whether everything had come to an end," said Terry. "I don't know now. There's a question that has been tearing at me all this time."

"I think I know. Yes. I was going back to him. Terry, it wasn't Hermann who sprang at you like a—like——"

"I know. You're wonderfully staunch, Lois."

She gave a little laugh.

"Staunch? Why, I ran away from him. I don't think there's anything very staunch in not squealing. One has one's self-respect."

"I knew him as a great musician. There's little else that I know. It isn't my business."

"Yes. I was going back to him," said Lois. "I might have been able to do something. He settled it once and for all. It was very strange,

that feeling of surrender, and yet I fancied there was something new. He needed me. I wonder if I deceived myself. I shall never know."

Terry watched her face as she spoke on, half to herself. She seemed like a puzzled child. Then she turned to him.

"There was only one thing to do, Terry. Work."

"I haven't heard. They don't let me read the papers yet. Of course I realised that you couldn't wait—that is to say——" His speech tailed off into a murmur. He felt the blood surging into his face.

"People have been very kind," she went on. "I went back to Sedgeway. Incidentally I released Clothilde. That was all I could do—I mean for you, Terry. I was there when the old man died. There was nothing left then. Gerald Farquhar wrote to me, Terry. I believe he's right."

Terry tightened his grip on the rug that Clothilde had spread over him.

"What did Gerald Farquhar say?"

"He says I need an entirely new environment, new scenes, new faces. I wonder if you realise, Terry, what you have sacrificed for me. If I had only known how you would have stepped into my tragedy, I would never have listened to

you or to Bunty. You're not built for that sort of thing."

"What do you mean by that, Lois. I don't understand."

"You know how we figure in the eyes of the world?"

"Of course. That's why it was so hard for you to come and see me. But you've got over that. What does it matter——"

Again his speech tailed away. Lois pleaded with her eyes for something, something that he dreaded. Instinctively he realised her preoccupation with something in which he had no part. He had brought about her emancipation, and now it seemed that he in turn stood in the way of her freedom, though his only claim upon her was the claim of a faithful seconder. Their partnership had been a perfect thing in its way. The motive of it had been very simple, despite the talk of the papers. It had been a genuine hatred of waste on Terry's part. As an artist he could not bear to think that Lois was not using her gift, and he had helped her to use it to the utmost.

Lois had accepted his help and inspiration, because that way lay escape, escape from those thoughts with which she found herself encompassed if she tarried over long at the Rectory Farm.

Fricke's return had precipitated their relations into something else.

"Gerald Farquhar is producing a light opera in New York—*The Harvest Bride.* The music is by Victor Lorraine."

Involuntarily Terry snorted.

"Yes. I know it sounds sugary, but this is something better than he has ever done. Gerald Farquhar believes in it. *The Harvest Bride.* The book is quite literary, and some of the lyrics——"

"He wants you to play the leading lady," said Terry flatly.

Something of the old mockery came back into Lois Hanray's eyes.

"That's a quaint phrase, Terry. Well, as a matter of fact he is very anxious for me to create the name part. It's rather a leap in the dark."

Terry looked grim.

"There's no doubt about the leap," he said, "but I don't think it will be in the dark. There'll be limelight, and to spare."

"You're not pleased," said Lois. "I didn't think you would be. What can I do, Terry? What does the man in *Maud* say? 'I come at last to be glad of a little thing.' It's a fascinating process, turning into a light opera star. I've

begun upon dancing lessons. It's nice to be part of a thing that grows."

"I could have helped you to a big thing," said Terry. "This is a side-track. I know where it will lead you. Second best. Second best. Lois, don't do it. Hang on for a little while. I don't ask you to wait till I'm better. You could find an accompanist who would understand you. Break with Gerald Farquhar I implore you. That man has the soul of a shopkeeper. He'll advertise you, Lois. He'll 'feature' you. We had a taste of that over 'Cornflower Blue.' It isn't excitement that you want. It's genuine work of the right sort."

"Really, Terry, I must beg of you to leave me a small portion of my own mind."

"Oh, I know I've infernal cheek. It's because I care so frightfully. I think I've won the right to care."

"You've been very good," said Lois. "It has been hard to come, Terry, for that very reason. Don't make it harder."

"You've made up your mind?" said Terry slowly.

Lois nodded her head.

Terry gave a bitter little laugh.

"Then why come to tell me?"

His tone struck fire in her.

"Do you know," she said, "that's the first time you've spoken to me in anything but a gallant tone. I thought you were different from other men."

"Well, I'm not," Terry grunted. "Do you know what I heard a man call me? Your door-mat. I resented that. It may seem very odd to you, but I did. I don't know. I may be talking like a fool, but I believe I have a right to protest against your having anything to do with such a second-rate thing as a musical comedy by Victor Lorraine."

"I'm sorry, Terry," Lois replied, and her voice was dangerously calm. "I came to see you, because it was the only natural thing to do after what has passed. I didn't come to quarrel. The idea is too horrible. People don't quarrel before an open grave. But this I must say. No man in the world has any right to say what I shall do and what I shall not. I am free: I've spent a good part of my life in bondage to a man, and an idea. I tell you frankly, you're not going to take up an attitude towards me as if we were members of some order from which I am trying to run away. Hilda Croft gave me my musical education without any conditions. I'm weary of this cant about the high purpose of art.

This new work is going to be interesting. That's all I care about."

Terry threw discretion to the winds. His head throbbed painfully. He felt like a beaten boy. He only wanted to say something that would sting.

"If you mean by 'interesting' having your photographs sold by the bushel, and your picture on the wrapper of somebody's soap, Gerald Farquhar will supply you with as many such thrills as you like. I can't stop you from flinging yourself at the public in the guise, or disguise of 'The Harvest Bride.' You're quite correct. I haven't the right."

"Terry, you'll be sorry you've spoken like that."

"I expect I shall. Is there any need to prolong this scene?"

Lois bent down, and, taking Terry's face in her hands, she kissed him. "Good-bye, Terry. I know what you've done for me. It's better like this. Dear Terry, I think you're the one gentleman I have ever met." In another moment she was out of the room.

"Lois, Lois. Come back, come back."

He tried to raise himself from his couch, but was overtaken with a sudden sickness. Clothilde came running to his aid. Long after she

sat with her arm about him, while he sobbed like a child. She called him by all the old endearing French phrases, while she tried to assure him that things fell out for the best. But to Terry life seemed like an instrument wrung and snapped, or a broken thing, like the bough of blossom he had held in his hand when Brown Smock had knelt beside him.

CHAPTER XXII

BLOSSOM TIME

"Oh, to be in England, now that April's there!"

Terry had repeated the old tag to himself a hundred times as the Orient liner had made its way up the channel. It was such a very obvious quotation.

It brought back memories of Mrs. Durden sighing portentously under the linden trees, of overheated continental post-offices where one inquired for letters bearing the beloved stamp and post mark. Then it had been a joy to play at being an exile. How different it had been for Terry on that trip which had rounded off his convalescence. He had gone without desire. The doctor had ordered a sea-voyage, and the Canary Islands seemed as good a destination as anywhere else.

He had hardly realized before how self-centred and one-sided his life had been. He did not seem

to know how to take a holiday by himself. He had obeyed his doctor's instructions in the letter but not in the spirit. It would have been difficult to find a more steadfast patient. The increasing scale of physical exercise had been rigorously observed. He had been particular, but not faddy, in the matter of diet. But what he had not done was to forget himself. He had not the wisdom of Lois Hanray. She had plunged headlong into the adventure of *The Harvest Bride*, simply because it was an adventure. Terry followed her rake's progress miserably in the illustrated papers. *The Harvest Bride* had made a big hit in New York. It had been an inspiration of Gerald Farquhar's to introduce "Cornflower Blue." It was "featured" in Act Two. When Terry had received Farquhar's letter asking for his consent, he had acquiesced in a prim little note the sarcasm of which was quite lost on the little man. Terry found that "Cornflower Blue" was making him rich. He was besieged with requests for a similar work, to all of which he turned a deaf ear. He had made a number of concert engagements for the spring and the summer. Otherwise he was singularly vague in his mind as to the future. Subconsciously he was aware that he waited. Was it for Lois? Did he think of *The Harvest*

Bride as a kind of miasma from which she would emerge some day to become her true self. He did not know. He only knew that he was very homesick. "Oh, to be in England, now that April's there."

So the refrain had run in his mind, while yet it was winter in the island of his exile, and with the spring he had set out for home, restored in body, though still restless in his mind. On arrival in London he had found awaiting him a letter from Theobald Hackett. Would Terry spend a day with him at Sedgeway Manor? Terry accepted the invitation eagerly. To go to Sedgeway Manor seemed such an obvious thing to do on his return to England. The world is crowded with people who bear a single name in their hearts, a name upon which they will cry in the hour of desolation. For Terry that name was Sedgeway. Nowhere in England did the blossom grow as it grew in that quiet valley between Hurzel Mount and the hill crowned by the abbey ruins.

> "And since to look at things in bloom
> Fifty years are little room,
> About the woodland I will go
> To see the cherry hung with snow."

He whistled a verse of the "Shropshire Lad" to himself as he stood with the note in his hand,

a rather blatant note, but with the dear, familiar name in the right hand corner.

So Terry went for one more pilgrimage to the shrine of Brown Smock. It seemed as if he went for a confirmation of that first lesson he had received on the day that he had met the Secretary bird. It may be we are intended to be happy, but it is certain we are not intended to be satisfied, at least by the outward show of things. As he drew near the Rectory Farm House the old longing surged back, that longing to make something of it all. Sedgeway seemed lovelier than it had ever been. Every little green lane he passed seemed to call on him to turn aside, and wrest from the overhanging blossom the secret of its beauty. Sedgeway seemed like a scene set in defiance of man's grief for the passing of loved things, or any cautionary words of psalmist or prophet. One simply had to rejoice upon such a day.

Turning into the little common known as Harrow's Piece, Terry was waylaid by a posse of small boys with bows an arrows. Their caps and coats were decked with fresh greenery.

"Hi, Mister. We're Robin Hood's men. Your money or your life." Then their leader, without much regard to logical sequence presented him with a nosegay of primroses.

As the children stood grouped about him in the sunlight, Terry seemed to see in their faces a sign and sacrament of the presence of Brown Smock. They were conscious, for a moment, of their happiness, and then the illusion vanished, and they seemed conscious only of themselves. He took the nosegay, and refrained from a natural impulse to present something in payment. That would have spoiled the little idyll. He made his onward way to the shade of the copper beech, and paused to pay his respects to Mrs. Tule. She made him welcome in the musical dialect he loved so well. So he passed on, under the shade of the sycamores till the chimneys of the Manor came in sight. Theobald Hackett had timed his coming. At Terry's request he had not sent to meet him. He stood at the front door, with his arm linked in that of his sister, very much the host, in a very perfect setting. Old Pan still bent over his pipe in the shadow of the yew.

"Home is the sailor, home from the sea," said the American, advancing with both arms outstretched. Miss Hackett followed him like a shadow. They were absurdly alike as they peered benevolently at Terry through horn-rimmed spectacles.

"I guess it isn't necessary to introduce us,"

said the lady. "We've both sat at the feet of Gamaliel."

Terry agreed that it was not necessary. Miss Hackett made him feel at home at once. Might he inquire if any one occupied the Greenaway room?"

"No, Mr. Hood. Theobald has turned that into a Hilda Croft museum. We get quite a number of pilgrims down here; people who have read her books and felt her up-lift. I guess we'll have to be drawing the line soon."

"An Englishman's home is his castle," said Theobald Hackett. "If Colonel Croft would sell me the place, I'd run up a 'Hilda Croft Memorial Library' somewhere near the lodge gate, and the pilgrims might be satisfied with that."

Terry felt that Brown Smock's right of entry into the lodge would soon be in jeopardy. The thing that Theobald Hackett contemplated, however, depended for its sanction on Colonel Croft. Terry felt instinctively that Noel Croft could be trusted to safeguard his sister's desires. He went down to lunch with little misgiving.

Sedgeway was very lovely upon that day. It seemed that the spirit of the place was renewed. He sat down in the place he had first occupied as the guest of Hilda Croft. The thought of

her seemed to forbid any shadow of repining. Terry thought of a line from her Tussetala, "My great task of happiness."

Theobald Hackett and his sister confirmed him in this mood of light-heartedness. The luncheon was quite a merry meal. Good talk flowed in a manner that would have delighted the authoress of *Dobbin of Beechtrees*. They talked of Stephen Laycock, and of G. K. Chesterton, whose American volume Miss Hackett had just read. Then they went on to the state of the theatre in the two countries, and, as was inevitable, there was mention of *The Harvest Bride*. A little cloud seemed to obscure the sunlight for Terry. When would Lois come to her senses? It was only a matter of time. Miss Hackett proposed an adjournment to the bowling green for cigarettes and coffee.

The little breeze caught at the sheets of the daily newspaper which Miss Hackett carried with her.

"I'll give you some snippets of news, while you laze," she said.

"Very good," replied Theobald Hackett. "We don't want a strain on our minds on this delicate spring day.

"Proceed," said Theobald Hackett as he spread a rug upon the grass.

"First of all I'm going to ask something of our visitor. I want a spray of that blossom, something that a little girl can hold over her head. I'm making a study of one of the Sedgeway children for a keepsake. It's vandalism I know, Mr. Hood. That's why I'd rather you than me."

Terry threw away a cigarette, and looked about him for a suitable branch in all that snowy wealth. He made his choice at length, and climbed into a tree some yards from his host. Miss Hackett may have thought him farther away than he was. Otherwise she would not have read an announcement from the paper to her brother. Just as the bough snapped in Terry's hand he heard her clarion-like voice addressing Hackett:

"Well, now, Theo. Listen here. If this don't beat the band. 'The Harvest Bride' to be a bride in fact. Lois Hanray weds her manager."

Terry did not fall from the tree, but it was just as if he had done so. The sky was hard and blue as if it had been of enamel as he stood with his foot in the fork of the tree, and the great spray of blossom in his hand. It seemed to press down upon him. The brightness of the day was no longer a joy. It was a torment. The blackness that closed about him was a blackness of the soul. He cursed Gerald Farquhar in his

heart. The sky and the blossom mocked him as of old. Very deliberately he descended to the ground, and presented Miss Hackett with her branch of blossom. His lips were forced into a smile. He made some inane remark intended for gallantry. The beauty of the orchard seemed to stab him.

He was reminded of the occasion of his first sight of Brown Smock, that morning, when it had seemed that a child bent over him in prayer. Where was Brown Smock now? Surely there was a greater blackness about Terry now than upon that first morning at Sedgeway. There was no sign of Brown Smock. Only there was Miss Hackett with her jaws working out small talk as from a machine. There was Miss Hackett's propitiatory smile, and Theobald Hackett's look of concern and commiseration. How his sister had put her foot in it! Terry read his thoughts, while he kept up the talking match with Miss Hackett. That was the only thing to do. To talk and talk and keep on talking, and then to contrive a decent form of leave-taking.

Miss Hackett spoke of a collection of etchings that her brother had recently acquired. They were to be seen in the billiard room. A little black and white would afford a change from the somewhat cloying brilliance of the blossom.

Terry thought "cloying" was quite a good word. He panted to see the etchings. Half an hour later he was striding past the little blue stone lodge as if he were engaged upon a walking match. Once he fancied he heard the patter of little feet behind him, and the breathing of a child who is pressed. He turned towards Sedgeway with a little cry of rage. The little stretch of road before him was empty of form or face. It was quiet and green and beautiful. Terry remembered that here he had grappled with the question, "I wonder if Pan has killed Brown Smock." Now it almost seemed to him that it was he, Terry Hood, who had killed the child with that cry, a cry that was very like an imprecation. He lowered his head, and turned once more in the direction of Nuttleborough railway station.

CHAPTER XXIII

BROWN SMOCK COMES IN AT THE WINDOW

TERRY reached his hotel with the imprecations of more than one taxi-driver still ringing in his ears. He had gone on a reckless way after turning out of King's Cross. He fled Sedgeway, and all its unbearable beauty that seemed to mock him as he went. Now he knew himself. There had been nothing chivalrous in his service to Lois. He had simply wanted her, like any other poor passion-ridden egoist. He had dressed-up a very commonplace instinct in a cloak of altruism. He had awaited his *quid pro quo*, like any of the rest. He had not realised that his sense of unrest had its origin in anything so definite and basic until that moment when a hatred of Gerald Farquhar had shaken him like an ague. And now he was just a hurt thing, seeking to hide himself, running away from everything. That former stampede had been a matter of the spirit. There was no chastening fear to govern his present flight.

He found himself turning and answering the infuriated taxi-driver with a kind of savage mirth. He told himself that now he understood how people ran amok in a crowd. He had been hurt, and he wanted to hurt somebody in return. It was humiliating to find how much of the savage there remained in him. It was with a positive sense of relief that he closed the door of his bedroom behind him. The hall porter had put some letters into his hand as he entered the vestibule. He was an officious little man who had conceived a fondness for Terry. The little encounter had been salutary, for there had been a split second when Terry had tightened his arm to strike him. Instead he had taken the letters with a joke. The hall porter had looked like the walrus in the *Alice* book. Perhaps he, too, had been "crossed in love." That was the phrase, wasn't it? A very common experience this. Terry tried to feel democratic about it. He sat down on the edge of the bed, and opened his letters. Here would be something to occupy his mind for a little. Presently it would start again upon its battery of resentment against Gerald Farquhar, against Lois, against the whole sorry scheme of things. The first letter had to do with a concert engagement. Terry threw it down with a little laugh. He wondered whether

he could face an audience. He might do silly things. Gerald Farquhar would get in the way. He would dominate that little chamber of the mind that Brown Smock had occupied on the thundery afternoon at Sedgeway Manor. Brown Smock! Bah! Dreams and visions! They might serve a saint like Hilda Croft; for his own part he only knew that he was hurt. He was a human being, not a whistle for Brown Smock to pipe upon. He tore open the second letter. The jagged envelope seemed to testify to his resentment. The letter was in a woman's handwriting. It was headed by the word "Dictated" in brackets. Terry glanced at the signature. It was that of Colonel Croft, and had evidently been written with some difficulty. "Dear Terry," it ran.

"I am sending you this letter by way of preparation. It will not be very long now before you hear of a matter I have had in my mind for some time. When you find yourself master of Sedgeway Manor you may ask yourself the question, "What am I to do with it?" I can only say that it was my sister's wish that some day the place should be yours. I have not spoken to you of this before, because I did not think it advisable to divert your thoughts from what must be the predominating interest of your

life. You have to establish yourself as a musician. You can make of Sedgeway Manor what you will. There are no conditions. Only you know my sister's theory concerning the place. You may be able to carry on the Hilda Croft tradition. This may involve sacrifice. I cannot say. I want you to understand that you are in no way bound. When the place passes into your hands on my death, you may find a very ready purchaser in the person of Mr. Theobald Hackett. You are free to accept or reject my sister's trust. I am only carrying out her wishes. I have done what I could for her various protégés, but it is for you, Terry, to make Sedgeway Manor the kind of place it was when my sister lived there. I can only assure you of my blessing on the enterprise if you should feel equal to it. It seems a great burden to place on the shoulders of a young man. I could not have attempted it myself. I repeat that you are free to refuse that burden, and subscribe myself

"Your old friend,
"NOEL CROFT."

Terry sat with the letter in his hand. Two lines of a poem by Chesterton ran through his mind:

"We find, like Cain his punishment,
Our pardon more than we can bear."

They had been discussing Chesterton at lunch that day at Sedgeway Manor, which was to be his. It appeared that since that comparatively happy meal they had taken away Lois from him, and given him Sedgeway Manor. It was Lois that he wanted. There was an unreality about this gift. It was like the kiss of an angel, something too splendid to be borne.

Terry spoke aloud.

"I'll try to sleep," he said. "I'll walk after dinner, and then I shall sleep."

He dined at a little table that allowed a view of the street.

Outside a man sang to a zither, "What'll I do?" The banal sentiment ploughed Terry's being. It was a mortifying experience, mortifying to his sense of humour. There was only one person who would have appreciated the irony of the situation, Lois: and she was the cause of it. No. There was one other. Hilda Croft. The thought of her ready laugh haunted him. What was this terrific thing she had done, an act that had a quality of irresponsibility almost.

"It isn't fair, Miss." Terry seemed to hear himself say. He passed the hall porter on his way out.

"Fine night, sir."

"Yes," said Terry absently. "I suppose you've some kids at home, haven't you?"

The hall porter looked as if he were about to embark upon a saga. Terry cut him short with a treasury note.

"Buy something for them," he said, and reached the street feeling that he had eased an almost intolerable loneliness. He thought of Betty and Bunty. No. That would not do. He must not be afraid of being alone. Afraid? Of whom was he afraid? Was it old Pan again? No. He knew why he had given the porter that money. It was an attempt to put Brown Smock off the scent. But Brown Smock would not be gainsaid. Terry could almost have persuaded himself that he heard the fall of little feet. He redoubled his pace.

It almost seemed that he heard the sobbing breath of a child.

"Brother. Am I to have my tune?"

"You're glad I've been hurt, Brown Smock. Little mendicant. What are you following me for? I've nothing to give you. I tell you I'm hurt, and I want to hurt someone back. Why not you, Brown Smock? What if I say, 'You can whistle for your tune till the cows come home.' I want to give them something bitter, something clever and devilish."

"Brother, my tune, my tune. I came to you when you needed me. Only you and I know about Dickory Stile, Brother."

"Brown Smock, you ask a hard thing. Resentment is all I have left now. You take away that, and what do you leave me?"

"A tune, Brother."

"I'm not a tune, I tell you. I'm a man. I can't do it, Brown Smock. You see the sort of person I am. Life broke her, and she acquiesced. That was Hilda Croft. I'm not like that, I tell you."

"Then I will never have my tune. Oh, Brother, Brother."

Terry passed by a lighted shop window. It showed all manner of cheap toys, the whole gay paraphernalia of make-believe. A little boy had his nose to the window. He looked up at Terry as he passed. His eyes were the eyes of Brown Smock for a moment. He seemed to question happiness wistfully. Then he leered at the sight of a woman who approached with a threat in her unshapely arms, and sidled dexterously out of danger.

"Let me sleep to-night, Brown Smock. Let me forget everything. Let me be a healthy animal to-night, and just sleep." He turned back in the direction of the hotel. The little

feet seemed to follow. Terry saw the name of his hotel picked out in electric lights. "I'll tell the hall porter," was his whimsical thought. "He will deal with Brown Smock. There's a law against this sort of thing. Every man has a right to his individuality." The hall porter had, however, been relieved by a stranger who repelled Terry by his uncanny likeness to the bronze Statue of Pan at Sedgeway Manor. He supposed it was the beard that was responsible. He ran upstairs, and locked himself into his room. Then he quickly undressed and got into bed. The window, however, he had not locked. Brown Smock bided his time. Terry fell asleep.

He dreamed in that curious way that one will dream, when one is aware of the details of the room, and yet has not full control of one's powers of perception. It seemed that he could not keep Brown Smock from climbing in through that open window. He waited upon Terry, as if for a decision, and Terry could not let him have what he wanted. It was too much that the child asked. It wasn't reasonable. Oh yes. Terry had promised to live only that he might find him a tune, but that was because the fire in Mrs. Tule's parlour had been so good after the cold by Dickory Stile. He would have promised anything then. No. It was impos-

sible. He could not let Brown Smock have his tune.

"Then I must go, Brother," said the child, and Terry, knowing that he turned to go forever, stretched out his arms with a cry of desolation and woke to find the room as it was. Only there was the sense of a presence that he had known before. Also there was a sense of a delayed decision.

"There is nothing to decide," thought Terry, "Nothing immediate. I'm giving a concert tomorrow night. Sedgeway Manor is not on my hands yet." Still there remained that sense of urgency. A decision pended. The decision did not involve action, but a certain attitude of mind. It was akin to the decision required of one ordained to a calling. It involved not the cutting of Lois Hanray out his life, but the more courageous course of readjusting himself to the needs of her being, which, oddly enough, involved needs of Brown Smock. Terry lay awake through the rest of the night. It may have been that he prayed. Towards dawn he slept, and on his face was the peace of a man who has made up his mind.

CHAPTER XXIV

BUNTY

TERRY followed the nurse up a flight of stairs, and through an empty ward to a stone-balustraded balcony where Bunty Drever was lying upon a wheeled couch. She received him with a brave attempt at the old amused and friendly smile.

"My first visitor," she said. "There's something wrong with this bit of grouping, you know. You would make a much more interesting invalid."

"It does seem absurd," said Terry, "like many other outrageous things. I suppose it's because I've always associated you with sanity and health."

Then he began to stammer.

"You musn't make me laugh," said Bunty. "Tell me the news."

"Don't you want to talk of yourself? If I were you——"

"Oh, I'm better. They talk of sending me away."

"Not the Canary Islands, I hope."

"Oh, they're very vague. I suppose I shall go where I'm told. If it weren't for Betty, there'd be little to worry about."

Terry tried not to challenge her with his glance. Her tone had disturbed him.

Bunty smiled.

"You don't like my docility," she said. "It's the best way of meeting it, whatever it is. I can't expect to be able to do things for a long while, at any rate. Now, let's talk about you. You're looking extraordinarily well."

"I'm feeling well," said Terry.

"You said that very fervently. It was like saying you were saved."

"Did I say it like that? How disgusting!"

"Well, what's made you so well?"

"I suppose it is because I have been docile, too."

"We're both being rather ridiculous," said Bunty. "Why not talk about the thing that is uppermost in our thoughts. We're old enough friends for that, surely."

The Harvest Bride? questioned Terry.

Bunty nodded.

Terry fumbled in his pockets.

"Are you pleased?" he asked at length.

Bunty answered very deliberately.

"On the whole I think, yes. Gerald Farquhar is a kind little soul. Lois might have done worse."

Their eyes met.

"He'd better be kind," said Terry. "I haven't told you my news yet. I'm the master of Sedgeway Manor."

"Master of Sedgeway Manor? You haven't bought it?"

"I have a lease from Colonel Croft. He has given me to understand that it shall be mine some day."

"But Terry, how can you afford to bury yourself down there?"

"I shall not bury myself. I have to give concerts. I can't do everything on 'Cornflower Blue.' I hope to be able to compose something that will be by way of expiation for that atrocity."

"That's silly, Terry. 'Cornflower Blue' was a very nice song. Why quarrel with your royalties. But really this is most astounding news."

"I don't think it is really. There is an inevitability about it. You have heard of Brown Smock?"

Bunty smiled oddly.

"Is that why you're looking so well. Terry, I'm sorry I've said hard things of Brown Smock."

"I don't remember your saying hard things. Now I'm going to ask something of you which may possibly make you very angry. I don't know. I can only try."

"Well, what is it?"

"Clothilde is installed at Sedgeway Manor as my housekeeper. She knows the traditions of the place. She was Hilda Croft's maid. It was Hilda Croft's habit to fill the house with guests—children, I believe, invariably. I happened to have been one of those lucky children. Now I'm going to ask you if you will entrust Betty to Clothilde while you are away. As for lessons, and that sort of thing, I know something of your method. Do you think I could carry on for a bit? I hope to be at the Manor a good deal. The rector has a family of jolly kids. Would you trust me to see that Betty doesn't become too specialized. I want her so much for my first guest. I promise you I shan't herd her with a Czechoslovakian refugee and an orphan from Whitechapel. I must start in a small way. I have such a strong conviction that Betty has something to give to the world. It couldn't be brought out in a better place than Sedgeway. This is a very darling scheme of mine. It only remains to be seen if you think I have been overbold."

Bunty closed her eyes for a while.

"Bill thought that of Betty, too," she said. "He liked you Terry. It's too much you're offering."

"I'm not offering," said Terry. "I'm begging. Mrs. Drever, I'll be frank with you. I was hit about as hard as a man could be when I heard that Lois had married Gerald Farquhar. I believe I was hit for a purpose. Will you help me to believe that by entrusting Betty to Clothilde and me till you are better? I want Sedgeway Manor to do for her what it did for me—what it is going to do for me."

Bunty smiled.

"You are one of the most consistent people I have ever met," she said. "Do you know that is the first time you have failed to circumvent the difficulty of addressing me by name. You've been the shy boy, Terry, all the while. Supposing you call me Bunty. Everybody does."

"I want your answer," said Terry unflinchingly. "Don't be afraid of saying 'no.'"

"I couldn't say 'no,' Terry, I shouldn't dare. Besides, I believe I told you once that if ever Betty wanted a friend I should turn to you. I'm a woman of my word."

"I promise you I shan't attempt to proselytize. I want the child to feel the influence of

the place as I felt it. She may see Brown Smock, and she may not. I shall act as Hilda Croft did in my case. Thank you ever so much."

Bunty smiled and held out her hand. As she did so she turned suddenly white.

"I'm sorry, Terry. I've been talking rather a lot. Will you call my nurse. Come again, and we'll talk about the business side of Betty's stay. You've relieved me of my one great anxiety."

Terry brushed the hand with his lips, and shamefacedly obeyed her request. Then he went on his way to lunch before appearing at the Wigmore Hall in a programme that would have wrung approval from the Maestro himself. Many people came to hear him out of curiosity. The advertisement he had never sought helped to pay the rent of Sedgeway Manor. There were others who came because he gave them what they expected from a pupil of Gervain Moir. Again there were those who came because Terry Hood challenged or delighted them. These were of the younger generation, who possibly had never heard of Gervain Moir.

CHAPTER XXV

BROWN SMOCK'S TUNE

"SEDGEWAY MANOR,
"*October 3rd.*

"MY DEAR BUNTY,

"I have had a super-day. I did not know that such an experience was vouchsafed to anyone over the age of twenty. I must write it down, get it on to paper in something else than musical signs. If I don't I shall be 'sick wi' pleasure.' That was one of Hilda Croft's gags. Very expressive. Let me write of my day. In the first place there has been the day itself. Autumn. Everything still and bronzed. Sunlight gentle and insistent, simply not letting you think about winter. One side of the manor's aflame with Virginia creeper. The whole countryside seems to be talking gently to itself. Sounds are borne upon the air with extraordinary richness and clarity. So much for the day. I'm not a poet. Read those verses in *Dobbin of Beechtrees*, Chapter 3. Hilda Croft once had a

day like this. Now for myself. In the first place your letter awaited me at breakfast. Cheers! Los Angeles has done the trick. I beg of you, make sure of your cure. Don't hurry back. This is sheer selfishness on my part. I don't want to surrender Bets. Do you know what I found the other day? She has unstrung that little necklace of coral beads, the one she was wearing the first time I met her. Each bead is a day that separates you from her, and every night one goes out of a little filigree box affair into her tiny Ruskin bowl. There's something heartless about the way children squander the days. It's also rather hard on me, but I thought you would like to know. All the same, I think Bets is happy. She went to play with the vicarage children the other day, and ate too heartily of a cocoanut with distressing results. However, I hasten to assure you that Clothilde soon fixed her up. She has asked me about the boy on the tapestry by the music room. I simply told her it was Brown Smock, and she said, 'Oh, Dobbin,' and I'm sorry I can't reproduce the tone of her voice. Further than that I can say no more. I can only say that Bets has lost no weight through pondering over the nature of our family ghost. I hope that Sedgeway is going to help her to something great and

good. She is Bill Drever's daughter and yours, so there must be something there to be brought out. We shall see. One mustn't be in a hurry for results. Why! Here am I getting on towards middle age, and it's only to-day that I've done anything to justify Hilda Croft's trust in me. I believe I have done it, Bunty. I'm sorry to be such an infernal egoist, but I'm made like that. I don't know what people will think of my Sedgeway Sonata. I don't think I care very much. I know it is good because of the extraordinary happiness it has given me. I have spent the day in scoring and playing, and only once or twice I have wandered outside to assure myself that the cosmos is still there. The thing got hold of me in an extraordinary way. I'm only realising now at what a pressure I have been working. Well, some day you will hear my Sonata, and you will be able to say whether I have found a tune for Brown Smock. I daresay you think me a little crazy, but you cannot think that my madness is a dangerous order, or you would not have entrusted Betty to my care. She will come to no harm. I am almost afraid of to-day. It has been too good. I feel like something that has slipped into place. I suppose it is what people mean when they talk of 'vocation'. I am a steward of Sedgeway

Manor. Thank goodness, there is someone I can tell of my good fortune. It is not that I have become possessed of Sedgeway Manor, but that Sedgeway Manor has become possessed of me. I think you will understand this chaotic letter. You understood about Lois. It is good to feel you've given yourself away for nothing. I suppose there is no freedom until you have been able to do that. Now I am free to work. I have had to light a candle to finish this letter. 'Day that I have loved, the night is here.'

"Ever yours,

"TERRY HOOD."

Terry folded and sealed his letter. Then he went in search of Clothilde. She was engaged upon the preparation of his dinner.

"I'm going to run down with this to the post. May I be late? I'm badly in need of a walk, Clothilde."

Clothilde looked him up and down, and was inclined to agree. Once she urged temperance. She knew these musicians. Up in the clouds one hour, and down in the depths the next. She supposed it would be a case for the chafing-dish. Clothilde seldom troubled about a "night out." Then Terry sought out Betty. He found

her by the fire of logs in the dining-room. There was a litter of books on the hearthrug, but for the moment the little girl was studying the fire. It was the hour when the witchery of firelight is most strongly felt, the hour for stories and sweet intimacies. It was the hour when Pan is kept out, and Brown Smock is let in. Terry and Betty laughed simultaneously. It seemed as if someone had taken either by the hand and brought them together for a confidence.

"What have you been doing all day, Dobbin?"

"Making a tune."

"Is it finished?"

"Yes. I've been writing to your Mummy about it. What have you been up to Betty?"

"Oh, lessons and things. Dobbin, is he a real little boy?"

"Who?"

"Brown Smock."

History repeated itself. Terry answered her in the exact words of Hilda Croft.

"Ask me something easier, Betty. Good night."

He bent and kissed the red mane.

"I'm going for a walk. I may be back late. Be a good girl, Betty. Don't make a fuss about going to bed. I never did. I was too frightened of Mrs. Worrall."

"Oh, tell me about Mrs. Worrall."

"Some other time. You've all Mummy's letter to think about now."

"I posted my answer at twelve."

"Yes. But you're her daughter, and you've known her for years. I'm only an acquaintance. Besides, I was busy with my tune. Good night, Betty."

Terry was met by the bracing chill of the autumn evening as he emerged from the house. A yellow half-moon already rode the sky. At a distance a dog bayed, and from somewhere near the lodge came the jingle of harness and the song of the driver. Terry's brain still seemed to vibrate with the music that had filled his day. He had a delicious sense of exhaustion which was neither languor nor tension. He had been thoroughly used, like a strong instrument. He walked lightly and quickly, and in a very little while had dropped his letter into the little post office box. Then he set out upon a tramp with no other object than to tire out his frame, and so win sleep. It seemed as he went that schemes of musical composition crowded for admission to his brain. He was aware of power, and with that knowledge came the old fear that must dog every artist, a fear that Keats expressed in the name of all who are conscious of their gift:

"When I have fears that I shall cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books in charactry
Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain,
When I behold upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance."

But there came to his aid some verses from *Dobbin of Beechtrees:*

"The half has not been told
In letter and story,"
Spake Sheba's Queen of old
Of Solomon's glory.

"The half has not been sung,"
Pleaded the singer,
"And wilt thou still this tongue,
Death, the sleep-bringer?"

"Give me the sum of days
For song and story,
"There will be lack of praise
For God's great glory."

"The dawns thou shalt not see,"
Spake the sleep-bringer,
"Shall lack not treasury,
Shall lack not singer."

It was half-past nine before Terry softly turned the handle of his front door. Clothilde was waiting with the chafing-dish in her hands, and a whispered homily on her lips.

"Am I not master in my own house," spoke Terry the rational man, but that other Terry was contrite and oddly thrilled. Clothilde doubtless looked upon him as she looked upon little Betty. He was one of Hilda Croft's guests. The tradition was being carried on. The Glory of Sedgeway had not departed.

Terry dined, and then, lighting a pipe, he went to the music room to put his manuscript in order, a pleasantly mechanical task involving a retrospect of that day's work without its ardours. He lit two of the candles for his task, and was soon absorbed in it. When he finally stood with the roll of music under his arm he caught sight of himself in the mirror over the mantel-piece. Something in his own attitude caused him to smile. He stood there before old Pan with his glean, and his glean was a tune that would nourish and console and strengthen. It was the tune for which Brown Smock had gone in search. It was a tune with no bitterness at its source. For a moment it seemed to Terry that Brown Smock stood by the candle light, a little boy to whom the lit candle was a sacrament of something stronger than Pan, a little boy who followed the play of children with a wistful wonder, who was with them and yet was always a stranger and a suppliant. Terry blew out the candles. As he

groped his way to the door it seemed that his cheek was lightly touched with a child's kiss. It may have been the stirring of the breeze from the garden, or it may have been that Brown Smock had come through the open window.

THE END

Printed by
PURNELL AND SONS
PAULTON, ENGLAND

~~1/- net.~~
Smith.

BROWN SMOCK

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