

A MEMORY OF JULY

Published by Special Arrangement BY THE Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker

A man, wearing a gray suit and holding a sketch book in one hand and a large white umbrella in the other, was leaning lazily against the red arch of the gateway. He had come to the conclusion that it was too hot to walk or to draw—to do anything in fact, but to dream. Besides he had been lately ill, and he felt that he deserved to be idle. As he stood, with eyes half closed, his arm leaning on the warm lattice that felt cool to his touch on this blazing July afternoon, he pictured to himself a procession of strange figures passing down the roadway. In the glimmering light beyond the archway they glided by through the dead centuries. Men in armor, reflections from the slowly-flowing river striking silver helmet and breastplate; stately gentlemen in black velvet with long necks in ruffs, dames in full skirts of "taffeta," with bright eyes smiling under their hoods. Then broad-faced Flemings came past, sailors with pigstails, stout Puritans and jesting cavaliers, princes and sturdy beggars. Once or twice the man started at the incongruity of some utterance echoing from the road, or one of the portrait-called barges on the water before him. The modern slang word, the coarse or vulgar laugh, jarred upon his nerves. It was some moments before he could again take up the thread of those pleasant imaginings. But anyhow, in however prosaic an epoch he might be living, he could console himself with the knowledge that on this particular July day life was a very good thing. Every instant of it seemed to be some new and distinctive joy. The atmosphere, shimmering with heat as it was, was yet pure and healthful. The green English landscape through the gateway possessed the charm and color that a traveler home from many lands sees with a poignant pleasure that is akin to tears. The sweeping boughs of the ash trees in a grove beyond the distant field cast shadows in which children had stretched themselves to rest after school. The scarlet sails of the barges gave vivid patches of color, which served to lighten the repose of this grass-grown expanse. To the left a row of tiled houses, sleepy, old-fashioned dwellings, led to the bridge, and yet another gateway. The man slowly opened his sketch book. "I've wasted a whole afternoon again," he found himself saying aloud. He yawned, sighed, inhaled the air, which held a mingled scent of tar and lime blossoms, and took a last look upward at the arch, where, in old days, the portuliacs had been raised to admit the traveler. Then another and longer gaze at the fields, from which a soft, hot mist was rising. His steps led him down silent streets toward the cobble stones and the jingle of spurs, and that he could see the bejeweled mayor in his robes bowing obsequiously at the King's right rein. Then the swarthy face, with the black curls hanging around it, the courtiers, the horses and pages, vanished around the corner of the street, and Mr. Walter Alleyn found himself in the newly-restored entrance hall of his inn, with its very modern water-closets and its clusters of gilt storks in the corner. He mounted the stairway, went down the corridor, and the several little flights of steps which still give the inn its character of an old-world house, and ordered tea in the coffee room. "What a mercy to have no evening papers, he thought, as he took a parcel of them, neatly wrapped together, out of his pocket, and read one or two. The waiter came in bringing a nickel teapot, thick, soft toast, and some jam. Mr. Alleyn was in a humor to be pleased with most things. The somnolent charm of the town had exercised a wholesome effect on his worn-out nerves. He had had an unusually hard spring of work in London, and the do-nothing life of the last few days had been to him an unmixt delight. He had astonished the hotel manager by not caring to play golf, for he found that loafing by the river bank, strolling in long grass, which rustled and whispered at his feet, and listening to the song of the larks, which seemed almost as sweet to his ears as more than that of any bird. He was thoroughly tired out. It was gratifying to find that no familiar friend seemed likely to come his way. Anyone looking at him, as he sat stirring his tea, and glancing from time to time at his letters, would have guessed him to be a hard worker. His clean-shaven face had the sallowness of a man whose occupation takes him in a vitiated atmosphere—the lines round his mouth and across his forehead might have seemed the faces of a man ten years older. His eyes, when he raised them to glance at the patch of velvety blue above the opposite gables, were keen and shrewd, as if more accustomed to note the foibles of humanity than the beauties of nature. Though in no ordinary sense good-looking, Alleyn's face was somewhat attractive from its alertness of expression, and the air of kindly humor that seemed to fit across it when he spoke and smiled. His figure was slight and active, his hands strong and refined in shape. He poured himself out a second cup of tea, and the head waiter came in again with the bland, half-patronizing smile on his lips that he considered suitable to his position. He laid a printed circular on the table before Mr. Alleyn. "Oh! a concert," said that gentleman, with an air of indifference that vexed the head waiter, not being acquainted in the hotel. "Tickets can be procured in the hotel," he remarked firmly. "Thank you, thank you"—and Alleyn laid down the circular, and looked thoughtfully at the overhanging roof of the opposite house. "Shall I say you require tickets, sir?" remarked the head waiter with grave persistence. "It's for a good bobbeek," he continued rather more sternly, as this gentleman seemed very absent-minded. "All right, all right," said Mr. Alleyn, suddenly looking round. And he laid a sovereign on the cloth by the crust stand. "Ow many tickets shall I book, sir?" The waiter bowed and smiled a sad, but more approving smile, as he took the money. "Oh, it won't matter, keep the change," said Mr. Alleyn, who only did not want to be bothered. Then he picked up his gray "Homburg" hat and sauntered out of the dining room, away from the cold meat and the flies and the gilt-edged mirrors, down the shallow stairs again. It seemed hotter than ever when he emerged into the street. This time he went up the town, away from the gateway and the river. He stopped to look at an old house, with a curious doorway, round which winged figures were carved, and read the date over the entrance "1718." He wondered what sort of woman had lived in the old house when it had first been built. He imagined her with brown curls piled high on her head and falling over right, white shoulders, and a string of pearls slung across her breasts like a picture by Kneller that he had always loved in his old home.

The stones scorched his feet as he walked very slowly up the gentle slope of the street. He turned aside, past a draper's shop, where an anaemic young woman was staring at him from the window; by the quaint Flemish houses with their half-tragic, half-peaceful crowd of memories, into the open country once more. A stretch of waste land under the shelter of a wall looked green and inviting, and down this Alleyn went. Behind the inclosure stood an old house, so smothered in ivy, Jesamine and clematis that it was some time before he discovered that it, too, was built of red brick like the wall. It was the sleepest, most silent dwelling that he had as yet observed in this town of drowsy surroundings. Not a breath of air stirred the leafage, not a face or hand appeared at any casement, not a voice came floating from the old garden. The place breathed only silence and sleep. Alleyn, sketchbook in hand, drew backward some steps into the long grass. He had determined to waste no more time, and to do a quick impressionist sketch of a corner of this house. "What a delicious warm glow there is on the tiles!" thought he. "And the shades of the lichen, golden, brown, green, why they are simply glorious!" A door in the wall suddenly opened and a girl came out of the shadows. The low, red sun smote her on the forehead and dyed her muslin dress softly pink. A smile flitted over her face at the sight of the enthusiastic artist. His eyes were screwed up with the intensity of his gaze at the roof, and for a few moments he did not see the graceful young figure standing watching him from the door. He looked up, and she came towards him in the most natural and simple manner in the world and asked him if he would not be able to do his sketch more to his satisfaction if she were to bring him out a chair. Alleyn took off his hat. "That is very good of you," said he, "but I am only trying the merest little dab, a study, perhaps, for a larger drawing." She came and looked over his shoulder. "How pretty that is! And how wonderfully, just with that one splash of violet, you have got the effect of the clematis!" Alleyn put down his sketch book and smiled gratefully at her. She was very young and fresh, pretty as so many English girls are fair, in early youth, but Alleyn noticed that her hands and wrists were burned brown with the sun, that her neck was too thin for beauty, and that her waist looked square in a badly-made spotted muslin dress. But he was sure that in spite of these defects she was attractive, and also good, frank and sincere. He felt that it would not be disagreeable to exchange a few words with her, although only an hour ago he had been congratulating himself that he had at last discovered a place where he need talk to no one. This girl seemed merely a part of the pleasant, restful summer. Health shone on her cheeks and in her eyes; there was no trace of self-consciousness, no seeking for admiration, in her manner. It was simply very cordial and kind. She asked him if he had ever seen the tower before, if he had observed the dead old Flemish houses, the carving over lintels and doorways, and if he had looked at the monuments in the church yard? She told him that there was a pretty view of the tower at the corner of the field, and they sauntered towards it through the grass that grew nearly as high as her knees. "Have you noticed the butterflies here?" said the girl. "Yes, what a wonderful variety! That's a lovely fellow, that white one, with his black spots. And I say, look at the blue one, why, he's too pretty—like a flying turquoise!" "This field here seems to attract them. There are such beautiful kinds of grasses, you see. Do watch that fly! I have only noticed him when the weather is almost tropically hot!" Alleyn followed the direction of her eyes, which were brightly enthusiastic as those of a woman who receives the gift of some new jewel. An insect, whose wonderful wings like green enamel had brilliant spots upon them, was poised upon a spray of purple vetch. In a few moments he rose and darted across the grass. "If there were any wind to-day I should say it was a geranium petal blown from your garden," said Alleyn. "Ah! there's another. How full of exquisite things just this one little patch of grass!" "Yes, indeed, indeed! Such colors! One can spend hours here finding out more and more about all these lovely creatures and their ways." "You live here most of the year?" asked Alleyn. "All the year. I have never been out of this place that I can remember, excepting for one week once long ago at the sea." "And you don't get a bit tired of it?" "Oh, no; why should I? At least not when I can be out of doors. I have to read aloud a great deal to my old aunt, when I live with her. Now and then I get a little weary of that, perhaps. But to-day I am let off, so that I may have a rest before the evening." "Then you have a party to-night?" The girl laughed. "No, indeed! Fancy Aunt Lucy giving a party! I am only going to sing at a concert." She blushed vividly and pulled a printed programme out of her pocket. "Oh, I have seen that," said Alleyn. And he added: "Yes, by Jove, and I've taken tickets, too, I remember." She blushed quite poppy red this time. "You are coming then this evening?" "Well, I don't know. I hadn't thought—" Her face fell, and the naive disappointment that gave her eyes an expression almost of pain was not lost upon him. Walter Alleyn was the last man to embark on a flirtation with an unknown country girl, but he was kind hearted in his way. "Well, if you advise me to come I must look in," he said. "Ah, your song now, which is it?" She pointed with her sunburnt hand to the name, "Miss Janey Cunliffe." "Oh, so that is your song?" "Yes, and one on the next page, too. Do you think 'Janey' a silly name? I was christened like that, I am sorry to say." "Well, it's uncommon," said Alleyn, feebly, wishing to be civil. "And so you work hard at music, and are not obliged to be present in the law courts, he was in the habit of attending concerts. He had a thorough knowledge of modern German and other music, and he felt sorry for himself when he thought of the evening looming in store for him in the Town Hall. Perhaps the expression worn just then by his shrewd face was not exactly cheerful. "It will really be a very nice concert!" said Janey, earnestly clasping her brown little hands together. "Do I work hard? No, not very. But it is exciting, isn't it, to see one's name actually in print? That is the first time I have seen mine. Don't you think it rather fun?" Alleyn smiled and his face looked pleasant now. "Well, I suppose it would soon pall on you." Miss Cunliffe replied that she thought it

would be a long time before she would cease to be gratified by such notoriety. Then they looked at the church tower, and the windows all crimson and twinkling in the sunset. Walter glanced at the rough sketch in his book. Then at his watch, and he wished Miss Cunliffe a friendly good night, turning back when he got to the end of the long grass to take off his hat again. He thought that she made a pretty picture standing by the door, with her hand shading her eyes from the light. The butterflies and little gray moths were fluttering at her feet, the swallow flying over her head, and a blackbird calling to his mate in the garden behind her. She was lonely perhaps, but surely not sad; simple, but not stupid. Happy with her friends the winged creatures, and the July flowers. Alleyn pictured to himself the despair that would overtake some women friends of his now in London, if they had to change places with this girl. Then he wondered for how long he himself would be able to endure such a life? His recent illness had made him yearn for absolute quiet, but with returning health he knew that no one more than he would miss the excitement, the work and the pleasures of his daily existence. Six items on the concert programme had been disposed of before Alleyn found himself in the overheated Town Hall. By good luck his seat chanced to be close to a window, which he surreptitiously opened ever wider as time went on. The velvet-blue of the sky was spangled with stars. A planet, white and glittering, kept watch over the church tower. He listened, occasionally with patience, but more often his eyes and thoughts wandered. A fat man, with a song which sang the glories of pig-sticking. "The boar, the boar, the mighty boar!" he belayed. "How well I say that," thought Alleyn, sadly. Then a lady in a blue dress, cut very straight across her thin shoulders, played a solo on the mandolin; and after that, Miss Janey Cunliffe, dressed all in white, with pink cheeks, and a nervous quiver round her mouth, came shyly forward. She was evidently popular, for the applause that greeted her was loud and hearty. A stout young man, with a red face and fair mustache, who sat on the platform, clapped vehemently with his enormous hands. Had Alleyn not already met Miss Cunliffe, his attention would have been attracted by the pure and noble voice, in timbre like that of a boy-singer. What she lacked was expression. The pathos of the words of her song seemed to have nothing in common with the young joyousness of her notes. "Let us forget we loved each other much," she sang. Alleyn felt sure that she had never loved anyone. "Let us sit down upon the daisied grass, And hear the larks, and watch the swallows pass." He thought of her, lightly smiling, among the butterflies and the long grasses. Then, for no reason whatever, except that the hall was oppressively hot, he sighed. Miss Cunliffe stepped off the platform, her hand being held by the fat young man with the broad face. It was his turn now, apparently—Alleyn glanced at the programme, and observed that his name was Mr. William Van Ryn. A lady who sat near the window smiled, nodded, and stamped on the floor with large feet shod in white satin. The performer bowed graciously, and he had the unmistakable air of the popular favorite as he did so. His patriotic state was greeted with loud shouts and encores. "A grand, noble voice, has he not?" said the lady of the white shoes to Alleyn. "Yes, and plenty of it," responded that gentleman. "Is he a native of the town?" "What, you don't know young Mr. Van Ryn? Our banker's son? Why, the family have been here since—since—when was it that dreadful Spanish duke persecuted the poor Dutch?" "Ah! Since then, they've been here? That's very interesting." "And their house, Willy Van Ryn's father's house. Why! it's quite a sight for the neighborhood, is St. Mildred's! Such carving and chimney stacks! I don't know like such gloomy old things, but no doubt it's a curiosity!" The lady gasped and gazed at the platform again. Meanwhile Mr. Van Ryn descended with heavy steps from the dais, and Alleyn watched him making his way to the side of the hall where Miss Cunliffe was sitting. Then, with a self-satisfied expression, this descendant of the Dutch merchant, was joined by the young girl. Walter Alleyn glanced at his programme. "Shall I wait for her other song?" he asked himself. The room was stifling and the singer of the "Mighty Boar" was to perform again. Alleyn looked at the starlit sky, hesitated, rose, and went out into the sweet freshness of the July night. II. The following afternoon turned out as golden and sultry as any of the preceding ones that Alleyn had spent in the old-world town. At the clock he sauntered toward the church, sat down beneath a row of trees, and began to sketch the tower with its triple tier of arches. Suddenly he heard a voice addressing him from behind the iron railings which inclosed the churchyard. He lifted his eyes and saw Miss Cunliffe, looking very childlike and sweet in a dress of dark blue cotton. She told him that she had been to Xanthus to place some flowers on her father's grave. "You may as well show me all the interesting features of the building now we are here," said he. "And I must congratulate you very much upon your song of last night." "You liked it, I am glad! You knew it before, I daresay?" "Yes, but I have never heard it sung so charmingly." Alleyn's thoughts went back to a concert in a large London drawing-room—a room with walls of red damask, and filled with pretty women in striking dresses. "I liked the song better last night," he said, half absently, as they strolled towards the church porch. Janey showed him the holes in the dark oak door, from which the bullets of Cromwell's troops had been extracted. She remarked that she herself had no sympathy with the Parliamentarians, but that young Mr. Van Ryn, who was church warden, and here Miss Cunliffe blushed brightly, was an ardent admirer of Cromwell's. She pushed open the door, and they entered the church, the atmosphere striking like a face-lifter on her hand. Alleyn duly admired the worm tiles, resembling sea-waves under their feet, the half effaced brasses; the still grandeur of the recumbent stone figures in the side chapel; the delicate interlacing and horse-shoe pattern of the carvings. Janey took an intelligent interest in all these things, and it was pleasant to wonder, in her sympathetic company, about the dead knights and honest merchants asleep there after their warfare and toil. "That is an ancestress of the Van Ryns," Janey remarked, pointing to the kneeling stone figure of a woman with full skirts and folded hands. "The young man has got just the same square jaw and firm expression, hasn't he?" said Alleyn, looking sideways at Janey. "I gather that he is very popular here, from what a lady told me at the concert?" "Oh, yes, he's very much liked." Janey assumed an air of careless indifference, and they passed out through the side door together. "Let's walk round and look at the tombs, shall we?" she asked. "Through the ever-

greens shone a glimmering of red roofs with the sun burning hotly upon them. A pair of tiny warblers clung to an elder bough and swung merrily up and down. The air was very still and fragrant. "This would be a happy place for one's last sleep," said Alleyn. His hat was raised a little off his forehead, and in the brilliant light he looked rather old and tired. They passed very slowly round towards the other side of the church. Perhaps they both wished, half unconsciously, to prolong their walk in this peaceful corner under the shadow of the gray walls. The girl grew graver and more silent. She showed Alleyn a tomb with its strangely carved device of skulls and an hour glass, surrounded by the serpent with its tail in its mouth which signifies eternity. By her direction he carefully read an inscription to a "commander of ships" and "his careful wife, zealous to God, and a tender mother."—and then they left the old townfolk to their long slumber beneath the grass where the bees hummed, and went on together towards the iron gateway. Standing outside, very erect, his broad red face glared to the bars, his prominent eyes fixed fiercely upon them, was Mr. William Van Ryn. In spite of his thin, thick-lipped, ponderous, with a highly colored complexion and a stony gaze. He did not appear to be in a good humor. Even Alleyn's honest appreciation of his idol Cromwell failed to restore him to his usual imperturbability. He was almost childlike in his desire to get rid of this gentleman. "Yes," he growled, "that's my father. It's a rum old place. But people do admire it, no end, I believe. A chap from London offered my governor three figures for one chimney piece." And he glared defiantly at Mr. Alleyn with his stony, round eyes. When the latter had left them to return to his hotel Mr. Van Ryn still walked by over his shoulder. "So you know him, that wizened chap from London. Well, I'll tell you who he is. He's the celebrated lawyer mixed up, don't you know, in all those horrid cases—murders, divorces and so on! Yes, that's your friend!" "I never read the papers, so it does not much to me," said Miss Cunliffe, sharply. "Should hope not! No lady would read those things. I should be sorry myself—I know that—to have a finger in such! Why, just think of that chap—there—he looks gloomy and salow enough, and no wonder getting murderers and most awful brutes over his shoulder. Why, it's not work for a gentleman, I say!" Mr. Van Ryn had quickened his steps and was more scarlet in the face than ever, and was swinging his stick around and around. "Yes," he continued, "it was Alleyn who got off the famous murderer, somewhere near Slough, you know. And then there was that brute of a woman—" "I don't in the least want to know about her!" Janey was evidently not in the best of tempers herself. She turned around quickly a minute afterward and said goodbye to the young banker, who thereupon left her with a fierce glare in his eyes, and tramped back to St. Mildred's as if walking for a wager. The next day it was by the old gateway that Mr. Alleyn and Miss Cunliffe met again. And on Sunday, although he did not attend church, he managed to time the exact moment when the worshippers quitted it. Young Van Ryn, being church warden, had been detained by the vicar in the vestry, so the lawyer was able to escort the young lady to her home. And when they arrived there it seemed a pity to go indoors, so they strolled on together through the grass, admired a brown butterfly with his wings set in red spots like a border

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of jewels, and listened to the madly happy song of the larks rising ever higher and higher above their heads. To do Alleyn justice, he had never from the first moment of his meeting with Janey had the smallest intention of embarking on a flirtation, either trivial or serious. Such a course would have been absolutely foreign to his nature. He would have argued that in any case a busy man, no longer young, with a successful career to look back on and to anticipate, would be committing an absurd action if he wasted his time or amused himself in trying to engage the affections of an inexperienced country girl. Moreover, in his special case there were other reasons why such a thing would have been impossible to him. It was understood by Alleyn's friends and by Alleyn himself that when he married, which would probably not be soon, there was only one woman to be thought of by him. His intimacy of many years past with Mrs. Franklin was a well-established fact. That lady's acquaintances were mostly not the sort of people who would have expected her to remain faithful to an ill-tempered and paralyzed husband. The butler at her house in Pont street was being extremely astonished if Mr. Alleyn had not looked in most days after his work at the law courts. A few months ago all that was left of Mr. Franklin had been conveyed in solemn state to Kensal Green, and Mrs. Franklin, looking, as her friends said, "so well in black, with her lovely fair hair," only received at present two or three visitors, including most often the celebrated lawyer. Now that his future marriage was practically settled, Alleyn would have found it difficult to define his inmost feelings on the subject. He was probably above all he was used to be accustomed to her. She was clever, ambitious and interested in his work, and, as people said, a delightful hostess. He sometimes was inclined to feel impatient when he noticed the undue stress that she laid upon trifles connected with social life and at her overtures craving to be fashionable. She was conventional and never romantic. But she was devoted to him and proud of him. He knew that he had every reason to be satisfied. That evening when he returned home from his walk in the churchyard, he wrote her a long and affectionate letter. III. "I have come round to say good-bye, Miss Cunliffe." She was sitting in the grass-field outside the door, and was reading aloud. "So July is at an end," said Alleyn, "and all my pleasant days here!" He threw himself on the grass beside her. "And I feel so much stronger, Miss Janey—so very fit and well, in fact, that I mustn't be idle any more." "You are going back to London?" "Yes—and abroad, I think, later on—in August." She looked away from him, at the waving yellow fields of barley beyond the green one at their feet. "You are reading poetry?" said Alleyn. She nodded, and he took the book from her. She had scored one stanza with a pencil, and Walter Alleyn read it aloud. "Things are given us once, and only once, yet may we keep them ours, If, like this day, we take them out of time, And make them portions of the constant peace. Which is the shadow of Eternity." "Lovely lines," said he, "but you are much too young quite to understand them?" "Am I? I don't think so." Alleyn, with his sunset's eye, looked keenly at her. He wanted somehow to remember her always just as she was then. She wore her little frock of dark blue cotton, softened by a broad white collar. A shadow fell from her hat over her eyes and forehead. Her face, fair, and yet sunburnt, was graver than he had ever seen it. Her mouth—she had very red lips—twinked a little, and she moved her hand hurriedly over it, as if to hide its expression. Alleyn was surprised at the sadness which came over him, a long regret for the dying summer, an unshed tear, perhaps, for the grim destiny that wills that "Parting ever follows meeting." He rose. "I am really very, very sorry to say

good-bye," he said in his kind voice, with its rather sharp metallic tones. She looked straight into his face. "Thank you! Shall you ever come back?" "I don't know. Well, I must hope so. Thank you for all your kindness to me." He noticed how very cold her hand was as he held it for a moment. When he was gone she remained sitting, looking up at the infinite sky, watching a lark hovering. Mr. Van Ryn came slowly towards her through the waving grass. He sat down beside her, and his broad red face wore a constrained, painful expression. "Janey," he said, "I'm as clumsy at words, at saying what I truly mean, as most fellows. But I do love you! That's about enough, after all, I suppose, isn't it? Will you marry me, Janey?" His face looked even more crimson, and much sadder when he left her an hour later. He had not shown nearly as much pluck as had distinguished his Dutch ancestors. IV. Two whole July's and the greater part of another had gone since Walter Alleyn had spent his holiday in a sleepy town of red roofs and historical memories. He had been married a year. Twelve months of work, success and prosperity had passed by, leaving the lines a shade deeper in his face, and quenching yet a little more his zest for the repetition of futile civilities and aimless hospitalities which he would appear to appreciate as much as ever. They were sitting at the breakfast table, and she—Alleyn was looking through the Times, and his wife was rereading her notes and cards of invitation. "I must say, Walter, it was rather cool of the paper and his hand shook suddenly. The name "Van Ryn" had caught his eye. In the list of marriages, the public were informed that on the 17th of July William Van Ryn, jr., of St. Mildred's House ... had taken to wife Janey, the only daughter of the late John Cunliffe, Esq. Mr. Alleyn angrily crumpled up the sheet in his thin, nervous hands. He experienced a feeling of intense dislike towards that bridegroom, with his coarse good looks, his vacant, prominent eyes. And meanwhile the cheerful flow of his wife's chatter went on. "Walter, dearest, you look very tired. I shall be thankful when that odious case is over. I wish you might get back a little earlier this evening; you won't enjoy the opera a bit otherwise. And both Monsieur Jean and Edouard are singing to-night." Ah, it was on this very same day in July that he had once on a time attended a concert in a hot town hall, and what a weary age ago it seemed. "Let us forget we loved each other much." ... How fresh her voice was, such a childlike, glad voice! Mr. Alleyn looked across at his wife. Her dress of lilac cambric was an ideal combination of smartness and simplicity. The butler had forgotten to pull down the blinds as low as he usually did at breakfast. Walter could not help observing that there were a good many gray hairs under the fair curls on her head. Her skin looked withered in this unflattering white light. He rose and walked slowly toward the door. "I think I shall start early and walk down the embankment this morning," said he. "Oh, I daresay the air will freshen you up. And Walter, the duchess has asked us to her music! I expect it will be very small! How sweet of her, isn't it?" He nodded kindly, and went out into the street with a curious smile on his face, but he did not look really amused. As he strolled along the river-side he thought of other July breezes, hot and fragrant, bringing scents of lime blossoms and mignonette from behind a wall. Of long grass, full of butterflies with blue and white palated wings—of larks singing. Which is really life-life at its truest and best? he asked himself. Which are the days to sigh and

to weep for? Those spent in this restless fever of living, where the aims are greater, the prizes glitter, and the crowd applauds; or the rarer ones in which man draws very near to the warm heart of Nature, when the wild flowers and birds, and the whispering streams are his friends—when, if the pleasures are simpler, the aches are perhaps less poignant, where love itself is something less complex, less full of smarting, aimless regret? But throughout his walk he could find no satisfactory answer to the question. File and Fistula Cure. Sample treatment Red Cross File and Fistula Cure and book on piles sent free to any address. Res. Bros. & Co., Dept. 25, Minneapolis, Minn.

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