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## Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931)

Austrian dramatist, novelist, short story writer and critic. Schnitzler dealt with the theme of illusion and reality in many variations. Several of his plays and other texts have found their way onto the screen. His work shows deep understanding of the unconscious and the subconscious - he has often been classified as the creative equivalent of his friend Sigmund Freud. After the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Schnitzler lost the cultural background of his world.

### EIN BUCH SPRÜCHE

Ein Wahlspruch? Lange sinn' ich hin und her,  
ja, Kinder, wenn die Welt so einfach wär'!  
Ich brauche, wie ich mich beschränken mag,  
doch ungefähr ein Dutzend jeden Tag.  
Und wollt' ich je für morgen einen sparen,  
dass er verjährt war, musst' ich stets erfahren.  
So schreib' am besten ich "von Fall zu Fall"; -  
doch leider gilt auch der nicht überall.

Arthur Schnitzler was born in Vienna, the son of Professor Johann Schnitzler, a distinguished Jewish throat specialist. He started writing as a boy, with poetry that was published in a prominent newspaper. He also became a competent amateur pianist. At the age of 16 Schnitzler visited a prostitute and when his father found out, he showed his son an illustrated treatise on sexually transmitted diseases. Although his father disapproved of his writing aspirations, Schnitzler held him in high esteem; the title character of *PROFESSOR BERNHARDI* (1912) is supposedly modelled on him. The play was suppressed until 1918 and caused outrage amongst anti-semites because of its portrayal of a Jew who refuses to compromise his convictions. Following in the footsteps of his father, Schnitzler qualified in medicine at the University of Vienna in 1895. He developed a keen interest in psychiatry, and his close acquaintance with Sigmund Freud, led him to write a thesis on the hypnotic treatment of neuroses. At the age of thirty-one he gave up his hospital post and kept only a few private patients.

In Café Griensteidl Schnitzler met Hugo von Hofmannstahl and other Viennese writers, and sometimes traded mistresses. Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, appeared later in the character of Leo Gowolsky in Schnitzler's autobiographical novel *The Road to the Open*. Georg, a gifted composer, begins a love affair with a singing teacher, Anna Rosner, who becomes pregnant. Georg, who could be seen as a portrait of the author himself, avoids commitments. Anna accepts his decision calmly - but perhaps not in real life.

Schnitzler's early literary reputation was largely gained through his plays, which explored the relationship between the sexes in a manner

daring for his time. His stories of sexual intrigue and portrayals of women were well received by a faithful circle of readers. Although Schnitzler had a variety of mistresses his experiences with Marie Reinhard between 1894 and 1899 influenced his writing most extensively. He had started to write plays in the early 1890s, using the pseudonym 'Loris'. The plays were presented, in Czech, in Prague. With *LIBELEI*, produced at the Burgtheater in 1895, Schnitzler become famous all over Austria and Germany.

*DER REIGEN* (1900, *Hands Around*, also known as *La Ronde*) is among Schnitzler's best-known works. It is a skilfully constructed play in ten dialogues, in which the characters are seen after coitus as well as before - love making is marked by asterisks in the written text. Beginning with the seduction of a Soldier by a Prostitute, each subsequent dialogue is related to its predecessor to form a cycle. The character number ten, the Count, makes love to the Prostitute, and closes the circle. The play caused one of the greatest scandals in the history of the German theatre. It provoked anti-semitic riots in Berlin. A six-day obscenity trial resulted in an acquittal but the author banned any performances of the play in Europe until after his death. *Hands Around* was not performed until 1920. The light-hearted juxtaposing of the love-and-death theme inspired Max Ophuls's film *La Ronde* (1950). It was the second time the director had adapted a play by Schnitzler, the first being *Liebelei* (1931). Ophuls used in the film a "master of ceremonies", played by Anton Walbrook, who keeps *La Ronde* "moving" and directly addresses the audience. Ophuls refuses to judge his characters, he leaves this solely to the spectators.

**SOLDIER:** There isn't a soul about, you know.

**PARLOURMAID:** Let's go back where there are people.

**SOLDIER:** We don't need people, Miss Marie, we need ... ha ha ...

**PARLOURMAID:** But Mr Franz, I beg you, for God's sake... if only I'd realized... oh, oh ... come on then ...

\* \* \* \*

**SOLDIER:** [blissfully happy]: Dear God, one more... ah ...

**PARLOURMAID:** I can't see your face.

**SOLDIER:** What's my face got to do with it?

(from *La Ronde*, adapted by John Barton, from a translation by Sue Davis, 1982)

Schnitzler's fiction is considered more important than his plays. In *STERBEN* (1895), depicting a dying man, he gave an example of an early 'stream of consciousness' technique. 'Leutnant Gust' (1900), a short story, was considered an insult to the whole Army and is thought to have cost Schnitzler his officer's rank - Schnitzler was removed from the reserve list of the Austrian Medical Corps. In the story a poor young officer is unable to satisfy his 'honor' after he has been insulted by another man, a master baker. Gust's suicidal thoughts are recorded in a stream-of-consciousness technique - one of the earliest examples of "interior monologue". *DER WEG INS FREIE* (1908, *The Road to the Open*) depicts a composer, who has real gifts but lacks drive. Central

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themes in the book are anti-Semitism and the ending of a romantic relationship. FRÄULAIN ELSE (1926) is a monologue of a girl forced to show herself in the nude to his father's friend because of her family's debts. Living up to a daughter's duty, she yields to this demand but then commits suicide.

TRAUMNOVELLE (1925, Rhapsody: A Dream Novel) was adapted for the screen by Stanley Kubrick in 1999. "Overlong, and flawed, but still compelling, with two megawatt star performances," wrote Leonard Maltin in his *Movie & Video Guide* (2000). "Nudity is plentiful, but the European version is even more graphic." Schnitzler makes a parallel between sexual fantasies and real life. Doctor Fridolin's wife Albertine reveals to him one morning her dream in which secret sexual desires come into the light. Fridolin finds the confession disturbing. He visits a house where he nearly participates in orgies, but is then forced by two men to leave the place. Now it is Fridolin's turn to reveal his adventure or dream to Albertine. He starts to understand his wife from a new basis. The end of the novel is open both to the renewal and the break-up of the marriage.

Most of Schnitzler's later years, spent in a luxurious villa overlooking Vienna, were devoted almost entirely to writing. After the Hapsburg monarchy had collapsed, Schnitzler shifted from playwriting to fiction. His social-political criticism was veiled, and once he said: "Martyrdom has always been a proof of the intensity, never of the correctness of a belief." The suicide of his married daughter in 1930 was a great shock to the author and he never fully recovered from it. Schnitzler died on October 21, 1931, in Vienna. His works were banned by the Nazi party in Germany, and also in Austria.

**For further reading:** *A Companion to the Works of Arthur Schnitzler* by Dagmar C. G. Lorenz (2003); *Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture, 1815-1914* by Peter Gay (2001); *Political Dimensions of Arthur Schnitzler's Late Fiction* by Felix W. Tweraser; *Arthur Schnitzler's Late Plays: A Critical Study* by G. J. Weinberger (1997); *Arthur Schnitzler and the Discourse of Honor and Duelling* by A.C. Wisely (1996); *Vienna: Image of a Society* by B. Thompson (1990); *Arthur Schnitzler and Politics* by A.C. Roberts (1989); *Dekadenz im Werk Arthur Schnitzlers* by A. Fritsche (1974); *Arthur Schnitzler* by G. Badman (1973); *Arthur Schnitzler* by R. Urbach (1973); *Arthur Schnitzler: A Critical Biography* by M. Swales (1971); *My Youth in Vienna* by A. Schnitzler (1971); *Studies in Arthur Schnitzler* ed. by H.W. Reichert and H. Salinger (1963); *Arthur Schnitzler* by S. Liptzin (1932)

#### SELECTED WORKS:

- EPISODE, 1889 - An Episode
- ANATOLS HOCHZEITSMORGEN, 1890 - The Wedding Morning
- ALKANDIS LIED, 1890 - The Song of Alkandis
- DIE FRAGE AND DAS SCHICKSAL, 1890 - Ask No Questions

"You may be very clever and modern, Miss Hope," said Mrs. Quabarl firmly, "but I should like you to leave here by the next train. Your luggage will be sent after you as soon as it arrives."

"I'm not certain exactly where I shall be for the next few days," said the dismissed instructress of youth; "you might keep my luggage till I wire my address. There are only a couple of trunks and some golf-clubs and a leopard cub."

"A leopard cub!" gasped Mrs. Quabarl. Even in her departure this extraordinary person seemed destined to leave a trail of embarrassment behind her.

"Well, it's rather left off being a cub; it's more than half-grown, you know. A fowl every day and a rabbit on Sundays is what it usually gets. Raw beef makes it too excitable. Don't trouble about getting the car for me, I'm rather inclined for a walk."

And Lady Carlotta strode out of the Quabarl horizon.

The advent of the genuine Miss Hope, who had made a mistake as to the day on which she was due to arrive, caused a turmoil which that good lady was quite unused to inspiring. Obviously the Quabarl family had been woefully befuddled, but a certain amount of relief came with the knowledge.

"How tiresome for you, dear Carlotta," said her hostess, when the overdue guest ultimately arrived; "how very tiresome losing your train and having to stop overnight in a strange place."

"Oh, dear, no," said Lady Carlotta; "not at all tiresome—for me."

## *The Death of a Bachelor*\*

BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

SOMEONE had knocked at the door, quite gently, but the doctor awoke at once, turned on the light, and sat up in bed. He glanced at his wife who was sleeping quietly, picked up his dressing-gown, and went into the hall. He did not at once recognise the old woman who stood there, with the grey shawl over her head.

"The master is suddenly taken very bad," she said; "would the doctor be kind enough to come at once?"

\* from *Little Novels*

Now he recognised the voice: it was the housekeeper of that old friend of his who had never married. The doctor's first thought was, "My friend is fifty-five years old, his heart has been out of order for years—it might well be something serious," and he said, "I'll come at once—will you wait for me?"

"Excuse me, doctor, but I have to hurry round to two other gentlemen," and she mentioned the names of the merchant and the author.

"But what is your business with them?"

"My master wants to see them again."

"See them again?"

"Yes, sir."

"He is sending for his friends," thought the doctor, "because he feels very near to death," . . . and he asked, "Is anyone with your master?"

"Of course," the old woman answered. "Johann is with him all the time." And she departed.

The doctor went back into his bedroom, and while he was dressing quickly and as noiselessly as possible, a feeling of bitterness came over him. It was not so much grief at the possibility of losing a good old friend, but the painful consciousness that they were all so far on in years, though not so long ago they had been young.

The doctor drove in an open carriage through the soft, heavy air of that spring night, to the neighbouring suburb where his friend lived. He looked up at the bedroom window which stood wide open, and whence the pale lamplight glimmered into the night.

The doctor went up the stairs, the servant opened the door, greeted him gravely, and dropped his left arm in a gesture of grief.

"What?" asked the doctor, catching his breath. "Am I too late?"

"Yes, sir," answered the servant, "my master died a quarter of an hour ago."

The doctor heaved a deep sigh and went into the room. There lay his dead friend, with thin, bluish, half-open lips, his arms outstretched over the white coverlet; his meagre beard was in disorder, and a few grey wisps of hair had strayed over his pale damp forehead. The silk-shaded electric lamp that stood on the night table cast a reddish shadow over the pillows. The doctor looked at the dead man. "When was he last in our house?" he thought to himself. "I remember it was snowing that evening. It must have been last winter." They had not seen much of each other latterly.

From without came the sound of horses' hoofs pawing the road. The doctor turned away from the dead man and looked

across at the slender branches of the trees swaying in the night air.

The servant came in and the doctor then enquired how it had all happened.

The servant told a familiar story of a sudden attack of vomiting and breathlessness. Then his master had leapt out of bed, paced up and down the room, rushed to his writing-table, tottered back to bed again, where he lay racked with thirst and groaning and after one last effort to raise himself he had sunk back upon the pillows. The doctor nodded and laid his hand on the dead man's forehead.

A carriage drew up. The doctor went over to the window. He saw the merchant get out and glance enquiringly up at the house. Unconsciously the doctor let his hand fall just as the servant had done, who opened the door to him. The merchant threw back his head as if refusing to believe it, and the doctor shrugged his shoulders, left the window, and sat down in sudden weariness, on a chair at the feet of the dead man. The merchant came in wearing a yellow overcoat unbuttoned, put his hat on a small table near the door, and shook the doctor by the hand. "How dreadful!" he said; "how did it happen?" And he stared dubiously at the dead man.

The doctor told him what he knew, and added: "Even if I had been able to come at once, I could have done nothing."

"Fancy," said the merchant, "it is exactly a week to-day since I last spoke to him at the theatre. I wanted to have supper with him afterwards, but he had one of his secret appointments."

"What, still?" said the doctor, with a gloomy smile.

Outside another carriage stopped. The merchant went to the window. When he saw the author getting out, he drew back, not wanting to announce the sad news by his expression. The doctor had taken a cigarette out of his case and was twisting it about in an embarrassed sort of way. "It's a habit I've had since my hospital days," he remarked apologetically. "When I left a sick-room at night, the first thing I always did was to light a cigarette, whether I had been to give an injection of morphia or to certify a death."

"Do you know," said the merchant, "how long it is since I saw a corpse? Fourteen years—not since my father lay in his coffin."

"But—your wife?"

"I saw my wife in her last moments, but—not afterwards." The author appeared, shook hands with the other two, and glanced doubtfully at the bed. Then he walked resolutely up to it and looked earnestly at the dead man, yet not without a contemptuous twitch of the lips. "So it was he," he said to

himself. For he had played with the question which of his more intimate friends was to be the first to take the last journey.

The housekeeper came in. With tears in her eyes she sank down by the bed sobbed, and wrung her hands. The author laid his hand gently and soothingly on her shoulder.

The merchant and the doctor stood at the window, and the dank air of the spring night played upon their foreheads.

"It is really very odd," began the merchant, "that he has sent for all of us. Did he want to see us all gathered round his death-bed? Had he something important to say to us?"

"As far as I'm concerned," said the doctor, with a sad smile, "it would not be odd, as I am a doctor. And you," he said, turning to the merchant, "you were at times his business adviser. So perhaps it was a matter of some last instructions that he wanted to give you personally."

"That is possible," said the merchant.

The housekeeper had left the room, and the friends could hear her talking to the other servant in the hall. The author was still standing by the bed carrying on a silent dialogue with the dead man.

"I think," whispered the merchant to the doctor, "that latterly he saw more of our friend. Perhaps he can throw some light on the question."

The author stood motionless, gazing steadily into the closed eyes of the dead man. His hands, which held his broad-brimmed grey hat, were crossed behind his back. The two others began to grow impatient, and the merchant went up to him and cleared his throat.

"Three days ago," observed the author, "I went for a two-hours' walk with him among the hills and vineyards. Would you like to know what he talked about? A trip to Sweden, that he had planned for the summer, a new Rembrandt portfolio just published by Watson's in London, and last of all about Santos Dumont. He went into all sorts of mathematical and scientific details about a dirigible airship, which, to be frank with you, I did not entirely grasp. He certainly was not thinking about death. It must indeed be true that at a certain age people again stop thinking about it."

The doctor had gone into the adjoining room. Here he might certainly venture to light his cigarette. The sight of white ashes in the bronze tray on the writing-table struck him as strange and almost uncanny. He wondered why he was still there at all, as he sat down on the chair by the writing-table. He had the right to go as soon as he liked, since he had obviously been sent for as a doctor. For their friendship had nearly come to an end. "At my time of life," he went on, pursuing his reflection, "it is quite impossible for a man like me to keep



friends with someone who has no profession and never has had one. What would he have taken up if he had not been rich? He would probably have turned to literature: he was very clever." And he remembered many malicious but pointed remarks the dead man had made, more especially about the works of their common friend, the author.

The author and the merchant came in. The author assumed an expression of disapproval when he saw the doctor sitting at the deserted writing-table with a cigarette in his hand, which was, however, still unlit, and he closed the door behind him. Here, however, they were to some extent in another world.

"Have you any sort of idea? . . ." asked the merchant.

"About what?" asked the author absent-mindedly.

"What made him send for us, and just us?"

The author thought it unnecessary to look for any special reason. "Our friend," he explained, "felt death was upon him, and if he had lived a rather solitary life, at least latterly, at such an hour people who are by nature socially inclined probably feel the need of seeing their friends about them."

"He had a mistress, though," remarked the merchant.

"Oh, a mistress," repeated the author, and contemptuously raised his eyebrows.

At this moment the doctor noticed that the middle drawer of the writing-table was half open.

"I wonder if his will is here?" he said.

"That's no concern of ours," observed the merchant, "at least at this moment. And in any case there is a married sister living in London."

The servant came in. He respectfully asked what arrangements he should make about having the body laid out, the funeral, and the mourning cards. He knew that a will was in the possession of his master's lawyer, but he was doubtful whether it contained instructions in these matters. The author found the room stuffy and close, he drew aside the heavy red curtains over one of the windows and threw open both casements, and a great waft of the dark blue spring night poured into the room. The doctor asked the servant whether he had any idea why the dead man had sent for him, because, if he remembered rightly, it was years since he had been summoned to that house in his capacity as doctor. The servant, who obviously expected the question, pulled a swollen-looking wallet from his jacket-pocket, took out a sheet of paper, and explained that seven years ago his master had written down the names of the friends whom he wanted sent for when he was dying. So that, even if the dead man had been unconscious at the time, he would have ventured to send for the gentlemen on his own responsibility.

The doctor took the sheet of paper from the servant's hand and found five names written on it: in addition to those present was the name of a friend who had died two years ago, and another that he did not know. The servant explained that the latter was a manufacturer whose house the dead man used to visit nine or ten years ago, and whose address had been lost and forgotten. The three looked at each other with uneasy curiosity. "What does that mean?" asked the merchant. "Did he intend to make a speech in his last hours?"

"A funeral oration on himself, no doubt," added the author. The doctor had turned his eyes on the open drawer of the writing-table, and suddenly these words, in large Roman letters, started at him from the cover of an envelope: "To my friends."

"Hullo!" he cried, took the envelope, held it up, and showed it to the others. "This is for us." He turned to the servant and, with a movement of the head, indicated that he was not wanted. The servant went.

"For us?" said the author, with wide-open eyes.

"There can be no doubt," said the doctor, "that we are justified in opening this."

"It's our duty," said the merchant, and buttoned up his overcoat.

The doctor had taken a paper-knife from a glass tray, opened the envelope, laid the letter down, and put on his eyeglasses. The author took advantage of the brief interval to pick up the letter and unfold it. "As it is for all of us," he remarked casually, and bent over the writing-table so that the light from the shaded lamp should fall on the paper. Near him stood the merchant. The author remained seated.

"You might read it aloud," said the merchant, and the author began.

"To my friends,"—he stopped with a smile—"yes, it's written here also," and he went on reading in a tone of admirable detachment. "About a quarter of an hour ago I breathed my last. You are assembled at my death-bed, and you are preparing to read this letter together—if it still exists in the hour of my death, I ought to add. For it might so happen that I should come to a better frame of mind . . ."

"What?" asked the doctor.

"A better frame of mind," repeated the author, and continued: "and decide to destroy this letter, for it can do not the slightest good to me, and, at the very least, may cause you some unpleasant hours, even if it does not absolutely poison the life of one or other of you."

"Poison our lives?" repeated the doctor, in a wondering tone, as he polished his eyeglasses.

"Quicker," said the merchant in a husky voice.

The author continued. "And I ask myself what kind of evil humour it is that sends me to the writing-table to-day and induces me to write down words whose effect I shall never be able to read upon your faces. And even if I could the pleasure I should get would be too trifling to serve as an excuse for the incredible act I am now about to commit with feelings of the heartiest satisfaction."

"Ha!" cried the doctor in a voice he did not recognise as his own. The author threw a glance of irritation at him, and read on, quicker and with less expression than before. "Yes, it is an evil humour, and nothing else, for I have really nothing whatever against any of you. I like you all very well in my own way, just as you like me in your way. I never despised you, and if I often laughed at you, I never mocked you. No, not once—and least of all in those hours of which you are so soon to call to mind such vivid and such painful images. Why, then, this evil humour? Perhaps it arose from a deep and not essentially ignoble desire not to leave the world with so many lies upon my soul. I might imagine so, if I had even once had the slightest notion of what men call remorse."

"Oh, get on to the end of it," said the doctor in a new and abrupt tone.

The merchant, without more ado, took the letter from the author, who felt a sort of paralysis creeping over his fingers, glanced down it quickly and read the words: "It was fate, my dear friends, and I could not alter it. I have had the wives of all of you: yes, every one."

The merchant stopped suddenly and turned back to the first sheet.

"The letter was written nine years ago," said the merchant.

"Go on," said the author sharply.

And the merchant proceeded. "Of course the circumstances were different in each case. With one of them I lived almost as though we had been married, for many months. The second was more or less what the world is accustomed to call a mad adventure. With the third, the affair went so far that I wanted us to kill ourselves together. The fourth I threw downstairs because she betrayed me with another. And the last was my mistress on one occasion only. Do you all breathe again—my good friends? You should not. It was perhaps the loveliest hour of my life . . . and hers. Well, my friends, I have nothing more to tell you. Now I am going to fold up this letter, put it away in my writing-desk—and there may it lie until my humour changes and I destroy it, or until it is given into your hands in that hour when I lie upon my death-bed. Farewell."

The doctor took the letter from the merchant's hands and read it with apparent care from the beginning to the end. Then

he looked up at the merchant who stood by with folded arms and glanced down at him with something like derision.

"Although your wife died last year," said the doctor calmly, "it is none the less true."

The author paced up and down the room, jerked his head convulsively from side to side a few times, and suddenly hissed out through his clenched teeth, "the swine," and then stared in front of him as though looking for something that had dissolved into air. He was trying to recall the image of the youthful creature that he had once held in his arms as wife. Other women's faces appeared, often recalled but long since, he had thought, forgotten, but he could not bring before his mind the one he wanted. For his wife's body was withered and held no attraction for him, and it was so long since she had been his beloved. But she had become something other than that to him, something more and something nobler: a friend and a comrade; full of pride at his successes, full of sympathy with his disappointments, full of insight into his deepest nature. It seemed to him not impossible that the dead man had, in his wickedness, secretly envied him his comrade and tried to take her away. For all those others—what had they really meant to him? He called to mind certain adventures, some of old days and some more recent; there had been enough and to spare of them in his varied literary life, and his wife had smiled or wept over them as they went their course. Where was all this now? As faded as that far-off hour when his wife had flung herself into the arms of a man of no account, without reflection, perhaps without thought: almost as extinct as the recollection of that same hour in the dead skull that lay within on that pitifully crumpled pillow. But perhaps this last will and testament was a bundle of lies—the last revenge of a poor commonplace fellow who knew himself condemned to eternal oblivion, upon a distinguished man over whose works death has been given no power. This was not at all improbable. But even if it were true—it was a petty revenge and unsuccessful in either case.

The doctor stared at the sheet of paper that lay before him, and thought of his gentle, ever kindly wife, now growing old, who lay asleep at home. He thought also of his three children: of his eldest who was now doing his one year's military service, of his tall daughter, who was engaged to a lawyer, and of the youngest, who was so graceful and charming that a famous artist, who had lately met her at a ball, had asked if he might paint her. He thought of his comfortable home, and all this that surged up at him from the dead man's letter seemed to him not so much untrue as, in some mysterious way, almost sublimely insignificant. He scarcely felt that at this moment

he had experienced anything new. A strange epoch in his existence came into his mind, fourteen or fifteen years before, when he had met with certain troubles over his profession, and, worn out and nearly crazy, had planned to leave the city, his wife and family. At the same time he had entered upon a kind of wild, reckless existence, in which a strange hysterical woman had played a part, who had subsequently committed suicide over another lover. How his life had gradually returned to its original course he could not now remember in the least. But it must have been in those bad times, which had passed away as they had come, like an illness, that his wife had betrayed him. Yes, it must so have happened, and it was clear to him that he had really always known it. Was she not once on the point of confessing it? Had she not given him hints? Thirteen or fourteen years ago. . . . When could it have been. . . ? Wasn't it one summer on a holiday trip—late in the evening on the terrace of some hotel? In vain he tried to recall those vanished words.

The merchant stood at the window and stared into the soft pale night. He was determined he would remember his dead wife. But however much he searched his inmost consciousness, at first he could only see himself in the light of a grey morning, standing in black clothes outside a curtained doorway, receiving and returning sympathetic handshakes, with a stale reek of carbolic and flowers in his nostrils. Slowly he succeeded in recalling to his mind the image of his dead wife. And yet at first it was but the image of an image for he could only see the large portrait in a gilt frame that hung over the piano in the drawing-room at home and displayed a haughty-looking lady of thirty in a ball dress. Then at last she herself appeared as a young girl, who, nearly twenty years before, pale and trembling, had accepted his proposal of marriage. Then there arose before him the appearance of a woman in all her splendour, enthroned beside him in a theatre-box, gazing at the stage, but inwardly far away. Then he remembered a passionate creature who welcomed him with unexpected warmth on his return from a long journey. Swiftly again his thoughts turned to a nervous tearful being, with greenish heavy eyes, who had poisoned his days with all manner of evil humours. Next he saw an alarmed, affectionate mother, in a light morning frock, watching by the bedside of a sick child who, none the less, died. Last of all, he saw a pale, outstretched creature in a room reeking of ether, her mouth so pitifully drawn down at the corners, and cold beads of sweat on her forehead, who had shaken his very soul with pity. He knew that all these pictures, and a hundred others, that flashed past his mind's eye with incredible speed, were of one and the same

being who had been lowered into the grave two years ago, over whom he had wept, and after whose death he had felt freed from bondage. It seemed to him he must choose one out of all these pictures to reach some definite reaction; for at present he was tossed by shame and anger, groping in the void. He stood there irresolute, and gazed across at the houses in their gardens, shimmering faintly red and yellow in the moonlight and looking like pale painted walls with only air behind them. "Good-night," said the doctor and got up.

The merchant turned towards him and said: "There's nothing more for me to do here either."

The author had picked up the letter, stuffed it unobtrusively into his coat pocket, and opened the door into the adjoining room. Slowly he walked up to the death-bed, and the others watched him looking down silently at the corpse, his hands behind his back. Then they turned away.

In the hall the merchant said to the servant: "As regards the funeral, it is possible that the will in possession of the lawyers may contain some further instructions."

"And don't forget," pursued the doctor, "to telegraph to your master's sister in London."

"To be sure, sir," replied the servant, as he opened the front door.

The author overlooked them on the doorstep. "I can take you both with me," said the doctor, whose carriage was waiting. "Thank you, no," said the merchant. "I shall walk."

He shook hands with both of them and walked down the road towards the city, glad to feel the soft night air upon his face.

The author got into the carriage with the doctor. The birds were beginning to sing in the garden. The carriage drove past the merchant, and the three men raised their hats, ironically polite, each with an identical expression on his face. "Shall we soon see another play of yours?" the doctor asked the author in his usual voice.

The latter launched into an account of the extraordinary difficulties involved in the production of his latest drama which, he had to confess, contained the most sweeping attacks on everything generally held to be sacred. The doctor nodded and did not listen. Nor did the author, for the familiar sentences fell from his lips as though he had learned them by heart. Both men got out at the doctor's house, and the carriage drove away.

The doctor rang. They both stood and said nothing. As the footsteps of the porter approached, the author said, "Good-night, my dear doctor"; and he added slowly, with a twitch of his nostrils, "I shan't mention this to my wife, you know."



The doctor threw a sidelong glance at him and smiled his charming smile. The door opened, they shook each other by the hand, the doctor disappeared into the passage, and the door slammed. The author went.

He felt in his breast pocket. Yes, the letter was there. His wife would find it sealed and secure among his papers. And with that strange power of imagination that was peculiarly his own, he could already hear her whispering over his grave, "Oh, how splendid of you . . . how noble!"

Scattered, hilly, and with several short, steep slopes, the hills were a pleasant surprise. The view from the top of the hill was magnificent. It was a view that had been seen by many of the world's great men. It was a view that had been seen by many of the world's great men. It was a view that had been seen by many of the world's great men.

"While people who the habit of saying 'I am sorry' is a sign of a weak character. It is a sign of a weak character. It is a sign of a weak character."

George Milburn