

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Melville Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
von Ossietzky May Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Liebermann Korolenko  
Sachs Poe de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



---

The publishing house **tredition** has created the series **TREDITION CLASSICS**. It contains classical literature works from over two thousand years. Most of these titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades.

The book series is intended to preserve the cultural legacy and to promote the timeless works of classical literature. As a reader of a **TREDITION CLASSICS** book, the reader supports the mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion.

The symbol of **TREDITION CLASSICS** is Johannes Gutenberg (1400 – 1468), the inventor of movable type printing.

With the series, **tredition** intends to make thousands of international literature classics available in printed format again – worldwide.

All books are available at book retailers worldwide in paperback and in hardcover. For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)



**tredition** was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, **tredition** offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. **tredition** is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

# **The Dark Forest**

Hugh, Sir Walpole

# Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: Hugh, Sir Walpole

Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)

ISBN: 978-3-8495-1164-7

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

**TO**  
**KONSTANTINE SAMOFF**  
**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED**  
**BY HIS FRIEND THE AUTHOR**



## CONTENTS

### PART ONE

#### CHAPTER

- I. Spring in the Train
- II. The School-House
- III. The Invisible Battle
- IV. Nikitin
- V. First Move to the Enemy
- VI. The Retreat
- VII. One Night

### PART TWO

- I. The Lovers
- II. Marie Ivanovna
- III. The Forest
- IV. Four?
- V. The Door Closes Behind Them



## PART ONE

### CHAPTER I

## SPRING IN THE TRAIN

His was the first figure to catch my eye that evening in Petrograd; he stood under the dusky lamp in the vast gloomy Warsaw station, with exactly the expression that I was afterwards to know so well, impressed not only upon his face but also upon the awkwardness of his arms that hung stiffly at his side, upon the baggy looseness of his trousers at the knees, the unfastened straps of his long black military boots. His face, with its mild blue eyes, straggly fair moustache, expressed anxiety and pride, timidity and happiness, apprehension and confidence. He was in that first moment of my sight of him as helpless, as unpractical, and as anxious to please as any lost dog in the world—and he was also as proud as Lucifer. I knew him at once for an Englishman; his Russian uniform only accented the cathedral-town, small public-school atmosphere of his appearance. He was exactly what I had expected. He was not, however, alone, and that surprised me. By his side stood a girl, obviously Russian, wearing her Sister's uniform with excitement and eager anticipation, her eyes turning restlessly from one part of the platform to another, listening with an impatient smile to the remarks of her companion.

From where I stood I could hear his clumsy, hesitating [12] Russian and her swift, preoccupied replies. I came up to them.

"Mr. Trenchard?" I asked.

He blushed, stammered, held out his hand, missed mine, blushed the more, laughed nervously.

"I'm glad ... I knew ... I hope...."

I could feel that the girl's eyes were upon me with all the excited interest of one who is expecting that every moment of her new wonderful experience will be of a stupendous, even immortal quality.

"I am Sister Marie Ivanovna, and you are, of course, Mr. Durward," she said. "They are all waiting for you—expecting you—you're late, you know!" She laughed and moved forward as though she would accompany me to the group by the train. We went to the train together.

"I should tell you," she said quickly and suddenly with nervousness, "that we are engaged, Mr. Trenchard and I—only last night. We have been working at the same hospital.... I don't know any one," she continued in the same intimate, confiding whisper. "I would be frightened terribly if I were not so excited. Ah! there's Anna Mihailovna.... I know *her*, of course. It was through, her aunt—the one who's on Princess Soboleff's train—that I had the chance of going with you. Oh! I'm so happy that I had the chance—if I hadn't had it...."

We were soon engulfed now. I drew a deep breath and surrendered myself. The tall, energetic figure of Anna Mihailovna, the lady to whose practical business gifts and unlimited capacity for compelling her friends to surrender their last bow and button in her service we owed the existence of our Red Cross unit, was to be seen like a splendid flag waving its followers on to glory and devotion. We *were* devoted, all of us. Even I, whose second departure [13] to the war this was, had after the feeblest resistance surrendered myself to the drama of the occasion. I should have been no gentleman had I done otherwise.

After the waters had closed above my head for, perhaps, five minutes of strangled, half-protesting, half-willing surrender I was suddenly compelled, by what agency I know not, to struggle to the surface, to look around me, and then quite instantly to forget my immersion. The figure of Trenchard, standing exactly as I had left him, his hands uneasily at his sides, a half-anxious, half-confident smile on his lips, his eyes staring straight in front of him, absolutely compelled my attention. I had forgotten him, we had all forgotten him, his own lady had forgotten him. I withdrew from the struggling, noisy group and stepped back to his side. It was then that, as I now most clearly remember, I was conscious of something else, was aware that there was a strange faint blue light in the dark clumsy station, a faint throbbing glow, that, like the reflection of blue

water on a sunlit ceiling, hovered and hung above the ugly shabbiness of the engines and trucks, the rails with scattered pieces of paper here and there, the iron arms that supported the vast glass roof, the hideous funnel that hung with its gaping mouth above the water-tank. The faint blue light was the spring evening—the spring evening that, encouraged by God knows what brave illusion, had penetrated even these desperate fastnesses. A little breeze accompanied it and the dirty pieces of paper blew to and fro; then suddenly a shaft of light quivered upon the blackness, quivered and spread like a golden fan, then flooded the huge cave with trembling ripples of light. There was even, I dare swear, at this safe distance, a smell of flowers in the air. [14]

"It's a most lovely ..." Trenchard said, smiling at me, "spring here ... I find...."

I was compelled by some unexpected sense of fatherly duty to be practical.

"You've got your things?" I said. "You've found your seat?"

"Well, I didn't know ..." he stammered.

"Where are they?" I asked him.

He was not quite sure where they were. He stood, waving his hands, whilst the golden sunlight rippled over his face. I was suddenly irritated.

"But please," I said, "there isn't much time. Four of us men have a compartment together. Just show me where your things are and then I'll introduce you." He seemed reluctant to move, as though the spot that he had chosen was the only safe one in the whole station; but I forced him forward, found his bags, had them placed in their carriage, then turned to introduce him to his companions.

Anna Mihailovna had said to me: "This detachment will be older than the last. Doctor Nikitin—he'll take that other doctor's place, the one who had typhus—and Andrey Vassilievitch—you've known him for years. He talks a great deal but he's sympathetic and such a good business man. He'll be useful. Then there's an Englishman; I don't know much about him, except that he's been working for three months at the English Hospital. He's not a correspondent,

never written a line in his life. I only saw him for a moment, but he seemed sympathetic...."

Anna Mihailovna, as is well known to all of us, finds every one sympathetic simply because she has so much to do and so many people to see that she has no time to go deeply into things. If you have no time for judging character you must have some good common rule to go by. I [15] had known little Andrey Vassilievitch for some years and had found him tiresome. Finally, I did not care about the possibility of an Englishman. Perhaps I had wished (through pride) to remain the only Englishman in our "Otriad." I had made friends with them all, I was at home with them. Another Englishman might transplant me in their affections. Russians transfer, with the greatest ease, their emotions from one place to another; or he might be a failure and so damage my country's reputation. Some such vain and stupid prejudice I had. I know that I looked upon our new additions with disfavour.

There, at any rate, Dr. Nikitin and little Andrey Vassilievitch were, and a strange contrast they made. Nikitin's size would have compelled attention anywhere, even in Russia, which is, of course, a country of big men. It was not only that he was tall and broad; the carriage of his head, the deep blackness of his beard, his eyebrows, his eyes, the sure independence with which he held himself, as though he were indifferent to the whole world (and that I know that he was), must anywhere have made him remarked and remembered. He looked now immensely fine in his uniform, which admirably suited him. He stood, without his greatcoat, his hand on his sword, his eyes half-closed as though he were almost asleep, and a faint half-smile on his face as though he were amused at his thoughts. I remember that my first impression of him was that he was so completely beneath the domination of some idea or remembrance that, at that moment, no human being could touch him. When I took Trenchard up to him I was so conscious of his remoteness that I was embarrassed and apologetic.

And if I was aware of Nikitin's remoteness I was equally conscious of Andrey Vassilievitch's proximity. He was a little man of a round plump figure; he wore a little im [16] perial and sharp, inquisitive moustaches; his hair was light brown and he was im-

mensely proud of it. In Petrograd he was always very smartly dressed. He bought his clothes in London and his plump hands had a movement familiar to all his friends, a flicker of his hands to his coat, his waistcoat, his trousers, to brush off some imaginary speck of dust. It was obvious now that he had given very much thought to his uniform. It fitted him perfectly, his epaulettes glittered, his boots shone, his sword was magnificent, but he looked, in spite of all his efforts, exactly what he was, a rich successful merchant; never was there any one less military. He had dressed up, one might suppose, for some fancy-dress ball.

I could see at once that he was ill at ease, anxious as ever to please every one, to like every one, to be liked in return, but unable, because of some thought that troubled him, to give his whole attention to this business of pleasing.

He greeted me with a warmth that was really genuine although he bestowed it upon his merest acquaintances. His great dream in life was a universal popularity—that every one should love him. At any rate at that time I thought that to be his dream—I know now that there was something else.

"But Ivan Petrovitch!... This is delightful! Here we all are! What pleasure! Thank God, we're all here, no delays, nothing unfortunate. An Englishman?... Indeed, I am very glad! Your friend speaks Russian? Not very much, but enough?... You know Vladimir Stepanovitch? Dr. Nikitin ... my friend Meester Durward. Also Meester?... ah, I beg your pardon, Tronsart. Two Englishmen in our Otriad ... the alliance, yes, delightful!"

Nikitin slowly opened his eyes, shook hands with me and [17] with Trenchard, said that he was glad to see us and was silent again. Trenchard stammered and blushed, said something in very bad Russian, then glanced anxiously, with an eager light in his mild blue eyes, in the direction of the excited crowd that chattered and stirred about the train. There was something, in that look of his, that both touched and irritated me. "What does he come for?" I thought to myself. "With his bad Russian and his English prejudices. Of course he'll be lonely and then he'll be in every one's way."

I could remember, readily enough, some of the loneliness of those first months of my own, when both war and the Russians had dif-

ferred so from my expectations. This fellow looked just the figure for high romantic pictures. He had, doubtless, seen Russia in the colours of the pleasant superficial books of travel that have of late, in England, been so popular, books that see in the Russian a blessed sort of Idiot unable to read or write but vitally conscious of God, and in Russia a land of snow, ikons, mushrooms and pilgrims. Yes, he would be disappointed, unhappy, and tiresome. Upon myself would fall the chief burden of his trouble—I should have enough upon my shoulders without him.

The golden fan had vanished from the station walls. A dim pale glow, with sparkles as of gold dust shining here and there upon that grimy world, faltered and trembled before the rattle and roar that threatened it. Nevertheless, Spring was with us at our departure. As the bells rang, as the ladies of our Committee screamed and laughed, as Anna Mihailovna showered directions and advice upon us, as we crowded backwards into our compartment before the first jolt of the departing train, Spring was with us ... but of course we were all of us too busy to be aware of it. [18]

Nikitin, I remember, reduced us very quickly, for all practical purposes, to a company of three. He lowered one of the upper beds, climbed into it, stretched himself out and lay in silence staring at the carriage-roof. His body was a shadow in the half-light, touched once and again by the gesture of the swinging lamp, that swept him out of darkness and back into it again. The remaining three of us did not during either that evening or the next day make much progress. At times there would of course be tea, and then the two Sisters who were in a compartment close at hand joined us.

Marie Ivanovna, Trenchard's lady, was quieter than she had been before. Her face, which now seemed younger than ever, wore a look of important seriousness as though she were conscious of the indecency of her earlier excitement. She spoke very little, but no one could be in her presence without feeling the force of her vitality like some hammer, silent but of immense power, beating relentlessly upon the atmosphere. Its effect was the stronger in that one realised how utterly at present she was unable to deal with it. Her very helplessness was half of her power—half of her danger too. She was most certainly not beautiful; her nose was too short, her mouth too

large, her forehead, from which her black hair was brushed straight back, too high. Her complexion was pale and when she was confused, excited, or pleased, the colour came into her face in a faint flush that ebbed and flowed but never reached its full glow. Her hands were thin and pale. It was her eyes that made her so young; they were so large and round and credulous, scornful sometimes with the scorn of the very young for all the things in the world that they have not experienced—but young especially in all their urgent capacity for life, in their confidence of carrying through all the demands that [19] the High Gods might make upon them. I knew as I looked at her that at present her eagerness for experience was stronger, by far, than her eagerness for any single human being. I wondered whether Trenchard knew that. He was, beyond discussion, most desperately in love; the love of a shy man who has for so many years wondered and dreamed and finds, when the reality comes to him, that it is more, far more, than he had expected. When she came in to us he sat very quietly by her side and talked, if he talked at all, to the other Sister, a stout comfortable woman with no illusions, no expectations, immense capacity and an intensely serious attitude to food and drink.

Trenchard let his eyes rest upon his lady's face whenever she was unaware, but I could see that he was desperately anxious not to offend her. His attitude to all women, even to Anna Petrovna, the motherly Sister, was that of a man who has always blundered in their company, who has been mocked, perhaps, for his mistakes. I could see, however, that his pride in his new possession, his pride and his happiness, carried with it an absolute assurance of his security. He had no doubts at all. He seemed, in this, even younger than she.

Through all that long Spring day we wandered on—wandering it seemed as the train picked its way through the fields under a sky of blue thin and fine like glass; through a world so quiet and still that birds and children sang and called as though to reassure themselves that they were not alone. Nothing of the war in all this. At the stations there were officers eating "Ztchee" soup and veal and drinking glasses of weak tea, there were endless mountains of hot meat pies; the ikons in the restaurants looked down with benignancy and indifference upon the food and the soldiers and beyond the station

the light green trees blowing in the [20] little wind; the choruses of the soldiers came from their trains as though it were the very voice of Spring itself. It sounded in the distance like –

Barinisha Barinisha – Pop.

Barinisha – Pop.

So – la, la – la ...

Bar ... inisha la.

The bell rang, officers with meat pies in their hands came running across the platform. We swung on again through the green golden day.

Andrey Vassilievitch of course chattered to us all. It was his way, and after a very brief experience of it one trained oneself to regard it as an inevitable background, like the jerking and smoke of the train, the dust, the shrill Russian voices in the next compartment, the blowing of paper to and fro in the corridor. I very quickly discovered that he was intensely conscious of Nikitin, who scarcely throughout the day moved from his upper bunk. Andrey Vassilievitch handed him his tea, brought his meat pies and sandwiches from the station, and offered him newspapers. He did not, however, speak to him and I was aware that throughout that long day he was never once unconscious of him. His chatter, which was always the most irrepressible thing in the world, had, perhaps, to-day some direction behind it. For the first time in my long acquaintance with Andrey Vassilievitch he interested me. The little man was distressed by the heat and dirt; his fingers were always flickering about his clothes. He was intensely polite to every one, especially to Trenchard, paying him many compliments about England and the English. The English were the only "sportsmen" in the world. He had been once in London for a week; it had rained very much, but one afternoon it [21] had been fine, and then what clothes he had seen! But the City! He had been down into the City and was lost in admiration; he had also been lost in practical earnest and had appealed to one of the splendid policemen as to the way to Holborn Viaduct, a name that he was quite unable to pronounce. This incident he told us several times. Meanwhile ... he hoped he might ask without offence ... what was our Navy doing? Why weren't our submarines as

active as the German submarines? And in France ... how many soldiers had we now? He did hope that he was not offending.... He spoke rapidly and indistinctly and much of his conversation Trenchard did not understand; he made some rather stupid replies and Marie Ivanovna laughed.

She spoke English very well, with an accent that was charming. She had had, she said, an English nurse, and then an English governess.

Of course they asked me many questions about the future. Would we be close to the Front? How many versts? Would there be plenty of work, and would we *really* see things? We wanted to be useful, no use going if we were not to be useful. How many Sisters were there then already? Were they "sympathetic"? Was Molozov, the head of the Otriad, an agreeable man? Was he kind, or would he be angry about simply nothing? Who would bandage and who would feed the villagers and who would bathe the soldiers? Were the officers of the Ninth Army pleasant to us? Where? Who? When? The day slipped away, the colours were drawn from the sky, the fields, the hills, the stars came out in their myriads, thickly clustered in ropes, and lakes and coils of light; the air was scented with flowers. The second night passed.

The greater part of the next day was spent in H—, a [22] snug town with a little park like a clean handkerchief, streets with coloured shops, neat and fresh-painted like toys from a toy-shop, little blue trains, statues of bewigged eighteenth-century kings and dukes, and a restaurant, painted Watteau-fashion with bright green groves, ladies in hoops and powder, and long-legged sheep. Here we wandered, five of us. Nikitin told us that he would meet us at the station that evening. He had his own business in the place. The little town was delivered over to the Russian army but seemed happy enough in its deliverance. I have never realised in any place more completely the spirit of bright cheerfulness, and the soldiers who thronged the little streets were as far from alarm and thunder as the painted sheep in the restaurant. Marie Ivanovna was as excited as though she had never been in a town before. She bought a number of things in the little expensive shops—eau-de-Cologne, sweets, an electric lamp, a wrist-watch, and some preserved fruit.

Trenchard made her presents; she thanked him with a gratitude that made him so happy that he stumbled over his sword more than ever, blushing and pushing his cap back from his head. There are some who might have laughed at him, carrying her parcels, his face flushed, his legs knocking against one another, but it was here, at H— —, that, for the first time, I positively began to like him. By the evening when we were assembled in the station again as I looked at him standing, waiting for directions, smiling, hot, untidy and awkward, I knew that I liked him very much indeed....

Our new train overflowed: with the greatest difficulty we secured a small wooden compartment with seats sharp and narrow and a smell of cabbage, bad tobacco, and dirty clothes. The floor was littered with sunflower seeds and the paper wrappings of cheap sweets. The air came in hot [23] stale gusts down the corridor, met the yet closer air of our carriage, battled with it and retired defeated. We flung open the windows and a cloud of dust rose gaily to meet us. The whole of the Russian army seemed to be surging upon the platform; orderlies were searching for their masters, officers shouting for their orderlies, soldiers staggering along under bundles of clothes and rugs and pillows; here a group standing patiently, each man with his blue-painted kettle and on his face that expression of happy, half-amused, half-inquisitive, wholly amiable tolerance which reveals the Russian soldier's favourite attitude to the world. Two priests with wide dirty black hats, long hair, and soiled grey gowns slowly found their way through the crowd. A bunch of Austrian prisoners in their blue-grey uniform made a strange splash of colour in a corner of the platform, where, very contentedly, they were drinking their tea; some one in the invisible distance was playing the balalaïka and every now and then some church bell in the town rang clearly and sharply above the tumult. The thin films of dust, yellow in the evening sun, hovered like golden smoke under the station roof. At last with a reluctant jerk and shiver the train was slowly persuaded to totter into the evening air; the evening scents were again around us, the balalaïka, now upon the train, hummed behind us, as we pushed out upon her last night's journey.

The two Sisters had the seats by the windows; Nikitin curled up his great length in another corner and Andrey Vassilievitch settled

himself with much grunting and many exclamations beside him. I and Trenchard sat stiffly on the other side.

I had, long ago, accustomed myself to sleep in any position on any occasion, however sudden it might be, and I fancied that I should now, in a moment, be asleep, although [24] I had never, in my long travelling experience, known greater discomfort. I looked at the dim lamp, at the square patch beyond the windows, at Nikitin's long body, which seemed nevertheless so perfectly comfortable, and at Andrey Vassilievitch's short fat one, which was so obviously miserably uncomfortable; I smelt the cabbage, the dust, the sunflower seeds; first one bone then another ached, in the centre of my back there was an intolerable irritation; above all, there was in my brain some strange insistent compulsion, as though some one were forcing me to remember something that I had forgotten, or as though again some one were fore-warning me of some peril or complication. I had, very distinctly, that impression, so familiar to all of us, of passing through some experience already known: I had seen already the dim lamp, the square patch of evening sky, Nikitin, Andrey Vassilievitch.... I knew that in a moment Trenchard.... He did.... He touched my arm.

"Can you sleep?" he whispered.

"No," I answered.

"It's terribly hot, close – smell.... Are you going to sleep?"

"No," I whispered back again.

"Let us move into the corridor. It will be cooler there."

There seemed to me quite a new sound of determination and resolve in his voice. His nervousness had left him with the daylight. He led the way out of the carriage, turned down the little seats in the corridor, provided cigarettes.

"It isn't much better here, but we'll have the window open. It'll get better. This is really war, isn't it, being so uncomfortable as this? I feel as though things were really beginning."

"Well, we shall be there to-morrow night," I answered him. "I hope you're not going to be disappointed." [25]

"Disappointed in what?" His voice was quite sharp as he spoke to me, "You don't know what I want."

"I suppose you're like the rest of us. You want to see what war really is. You want to do some good if you can. You want to be seriously occupied in it to prevent your thinking too much about it. Then, because you're English, you want to see what the Russians are really like. You're curious and sympathetic, inquisitive and, perhaps, a little sentimental about it.... Am I right?"

"No, not quite – there are other things. I'd like to tell you. Do you mind," he said suddenly looking up straight into my face with a confiding smile that was especially his own, "if I talk, if I tell you why I've come? I've no right, I don't know you – but I'm so happy to-night that I *must* talk – I'm so happy that I feel as though I shall never get through the night alive."

Of our conversation after this, or rather of *his* talk, excited, eager, intimate and shy, old and wise and very, very young, I remember now, I think, every word with especial vividness. After events were to fix it all in my brain with peculiar accuracy, but his narration had that night of itself its own individual quality. His was no ordinary personality, or, at any rate, the especial circumstances of the time drove it into no ordinary shape, and I believe that never before in all his days had he spoken freely and eagerly to any one. It was simply to-night his exultation and happiness that impelled him, perhaps also some sense of high adventure that his romantic character would, most inevitably, extract from our expedition and its purposes.

At any rate, I listened, saying a word now and then, whilst the hour grew dark, lit only by the stars, then trembled into a pale dawn overladen with grey dense clouds, [26] which again broke, rolled away, before another shining, glittering morning. I remember that it was broad daylight when we, at last, left the corridor.

"I'm thirty-three," he said. "I don't feel it, of course; I seem to be now only just beginning life. I'm a very unpractical person and in that way, perhaps, I'm younger than my age."

I remember that I said something to him about his, most certainly, appearing younger.