

slowly, "would make of him a poor silly natural, remembering nothing."

She stared at him with horror-widened eyes, that glazed and lost sense of him even as she looked. It was as if she gazed her destiny in the face. . . .

Then with an effort, as if she shouldered a great burden, she turned away towards the open door.

The Apothecary stepped after her.

"There is surely much happiness in your life, Princess?" he ventured.

She pulled her scarf about her shoulders with a dragging hand.

"He has ever the look of one who seeks," she uttered, and stood still. Then roused herself, and had gone.

*The sturdy might look out. Hello now.
 In making good for...
 Mrs. Bernard...
 XIII*

IN A WALLED GARDEN

There are people who seem to fashion the fabric of their lives as an uninspired but painstaking artist will make a water-colour sketch, working every corner of it very carefully into a state of high finish, slurring no detail that their sensitive ingenuity can embellish, and achieving at last a meticulous perfection of harmonious living stippled delicately with flowers and pretty furniture and slim leather-bound books and comely clothes, all very thoughtfully placed and shining in the sun. In such lives birth has but a little place and death none at all, and the toil and heat of life and the pageant of its triumph and its failure pass by remotely, outside the white curtains that shade its tenderly coloured rooms. If ever a hand from that world without should pull aside the curtain for a moment and the face of Reality look in, it is prudent for the custodian of such a peacefulness to turn away until the intruder has passed, and presently hang up a little clean and spotless curtain in the place of the one that his browned and dusty hand has touched. So tranquillity may be preserved.

But sometimes it happens that Reality, having passed on, has not done with his disturbing. The memory of the shaft of sunlight, the breeze of strong air that came in when he pulled open the curtain so rudely, the memory of the shattering challenge of his glance, may grow more mercifully commanding and appear more clamantly beautiful, the further it has gone beyond recall. The circumspect life within becomes meaningless and without savour; its moral value may have mysteriously evaporated. All the brave and shining things in life, all the worthy things will seem to have slipped out through that chink of freedom into the open world. This escape of virtue from the known to the unknown, from the sheltered and safe to the hazardous and socially adventurous, was what happened in the mind of Rosalind Bray as her youth passed. There came to her moments when she could have found it in herself to run out into the world, with hands outstretched and pleading, for the mere hazard of a few miles along the way with Reality's sunburnt arm about her neck.

Rosalind Bray, or to give her her unmarried name, Ellen Adams, was an only daughter in a small suburban middle-class family. Her father was a solicitor, and with that advantage it was obvious that her only brother should be called to

the Bar. She received the perfunctory education that keeps middle-class girls unspotted by knowledge, and when she left school her parents took no measures whatever to enlarge her horizon of choice, and hopefully expected her to marry. Edgar Bray drifted into her world by the purest accident, and profited by its limits. He was thirty when she was twenty, and thin and dark and solemn in the Scottish manner. His fine dark eyes and the facility with which they expressed humble adoration or wounded dejection, or an anguish of unattainable longings, emotions which were the counters of his courtship, were the chief asset of his passable handsomeness; and their persistent siege, heartily endorsed by parental approval, overcame the immature, soft-hearted girl very easily. The manner of their ensuing marriage was quite beautifully thought out by Bray himself, and every line of the service was given its value by the excellent voice of the old college friend whom he got to officiate.

Her Christian name, as I have said, was really Ellen, but it was only one of the many graceful gifts with which her husband adorned her to select and fasten upon her a name that should better satisfy his ear. She was not more than common tall indeed, though of a slenderness that made her seem so when she stood alone. It may

have been the suggestion of the green forest place they were in that sent the name of Shakespeare's Rosalind to Edgar Bray's mind, to be straightway fitted on his new-made wife. "Baptize me, then," she had said laughing. She lay with her head propped upon her elbow close to a tiny stream of water that slid by among the mossy stones, and she had a frolic idea that he would splash her face and neck with a rain of water drops, cold drops that would run deliciously down her skin. And she would splash him back. But instead he had kissed her very solemnly on the brow in a dedicatory manner, and whispered, "My Rosalind! My queen of the forest!"

It had all been very much like that. Bray made love to her delicately and reverently, and Rosalind, after an interval of puzzled discovery, settled down to her married life with a feeling of faint disappointment that she could hardly justify, seeing how exceptionally suited to one another her family considered her and Bray to be. Her world was so emphatic in declaring her marriage a most happy one that Rosalind fell into accepting it at that value. She wondered what it was she had expected that could possibly be missing. She was never aware that as the years went on they robbed her of her trick of sudden

laughter, and left her utmost responsiveness a smile.

The Brays had no sordid cares to trouble them. Edgar Bray, as a younger son, had inherited about five hundred a year from his father, who had been a prosperous banker, and unsympathetic with the scheme for a quiet life devoted to literary art which Edgar, when he came to maturity, outlined as his purpose. So the bulk of the money had gone to the elder brother. But, by the time he married Rosalind, Bray had achieved a modest position in the world of letters which gave him a yearly increment of another two or three hundred. He was a serious and acceptable, if superfluous, essayist, he wrote and published verse, and the stimulus of foreign travel applied to Bray resulted with the certainty of a reflex in a book which would proclaim short but indisputably friendly reviews, had a charm of manner quite his own. All that came to give Bray, and his home, and his wife, a pleasant distinction, and an unobtrusive but definite place among cultured people. He had an easy way with a piano too, and would sing the love songs of Schubert and Brahms to Rosalind very charmingly, so far as his rather delicate throat would allow him.

The question of just where to make the home that was to enshrine his Rosalind troubled Bray a good deal. They lived for two years in a really idyllic country cottage, but the winters there, and social intercourse consisting almost exclusively of her husband, produced a pallor and thinness in Rosalind that was reluctantly attributed to the gravel soil. So Bray, after a careful and exhaustive search, transferred her to an old and extraordinarily charming little house at Chiswick, whose large and very beautiful garden gave her occupation and a great deal of pleasure. Rosalind had a natural aptitude for colour and arrangement, and a woman's love of prettiness, and with Bray at her elbow planning and appraising, and searching and judiciously purchasing, she set out with immense interest to make her home, a house that it was almost their prime occupation to care for and further embellish. Rosalind furnished, indeed, with all the delicate thought and care and the streaks of happy instinct of a woman making love. She expressed her personality through and through that house and garden, making of it a richly-coloured setting for herself, a sort of extraneous garment, as if she were indeed adorning herself for her lover. And somehow Bray remained indisputably only her humble servitor in the background.

About this house moved Rosalind, a graceful figure of womanhood, dressed in carefully designed dainty garments of an oldworld style that suited her best. That it to say, she dressed like that when she was at home, and within the high old walls of her garden; outside that fastness she wore clothes of the current fashion, for the Brays would have disliked nothing more than to be remarked. Perhaps the necessary change deterred her from taking quite so much exercise as would have been good for her.

It will be seen that the Brays had no children. Indeed, they spent every penny they had upon their pretty life, and the advent of children would have disturbed the delicate balance of their comfort. Not that Bray was insensitive to the emotional value of parentage. Someday, somehow, a child was to come and, as he said, "complete their lives." It was to be, so to speak, their final purchase, the last pretty touch they could give to their home, to add that child. It figured always in Bray's mind as a little girl, fair-haired like her mother, of a stationary age somewhere between two and seven years old.

One year after another passed. It was understood that there was plenty of time for that.

Rosalind acquiesced in that tacit arrangement as she accepted all the other disposals of herself

that life made. She was not given to introspection of a very searching kind, her mind had received no training that should stiffen it to inquiry, and it was only as the presence of a faint discontent that she felt that her years were passing aimlessly, that now the interest of homemaking was over she had nothing whatever to do, that the days stretched before her holding each a large vacant space of time, that Bray was beginning to bore her a good deal and had long silent spells that passed occasionally into melancholia and even into an apathy resembling sulkiness, and that the sort of thing that particularly bored her was to feel as she would on many an early summer morning in her garden, delightfully well and lightlimbed and young, and to spend such a day quite inconsequently just as she had spent innumerable such days before, and see it end like a glorious setting with a cavity of hours that some jewelled memory should have filled. She was perhaps instinctively afraid of such a realization, and so avoided thinking about it. But she could not always be on her guard against accidental glimpses of wider possibilities. Now and again it would happen that something would chance to pierce her seclusion and trouble her with the thought that there were other ways of life more worth the living that might be

achieved outside the little backwater in which she was so safely kept.

There was, for instance, a little incident, slight in its reality as the brushing of a moth's wing in flight against her cheek, that will do well enough to take as typical. It happened on a summer's morning some seven years after her marriage, and Rosalind was in her garden alone. They had had breakfast in the garden, and Bray, after talking the matter over with her and getting annoyed because the sun dazzled his eyes, had gone into London to arrange with his publisher the colour and texture of the cover of his forthcoming book of poems. Rosalind walked about her garden, stopping here and there and looking at the brilliance of summer flowers which crowded about her in such gallant masses. The garden borders were so high and thick with blossoming growth that her housemaid had some difficulty in finding her, until at last she came upon her worshipping the great white clematis that hung upon the wall by the old greenhouse, and announced that the photographer from Brandon's had arrived.

Rosalind had forgotten all about the photographer from Brandon's. So evidently, she realized, had Bray himself, since he had gone out on the morning appointed for the sitting offered

by that celebrity-hunting firm. Rosalind went indoors to apologize.

When she reached the door of her drawing-room she became aware that the photographer from Brandon's had already extensively unpacked. An immense camera had drawn itself aloft on a massive tripod, and faced her with a vast dark muzzle, plate-carriers of imposing size were piled generously on an adjacent table, and before one of the leather cases that were scattered over the floor knelt a young man with his back to her, and scabbled in its interior. He was half hidden by a chair, and Rosalind saw him merely as brown boots and long legs in leather gaiters and a knickerbockered knee. And chiefly she was looking at the camera.

"Good morning," said Rosalind to the camera and the boots.

The young man shot up to his feet and held himself erect, facing her.

At the sight of him her heart gave a queer little jump. She thought he was the most handsome thing she had ever seen. There was something in the sun tan on his skin that sent her thoughts flying to mountains and the sea.

And the young man saw Rosalind for the pretty creature that she was, her fair-skinned blondness softly outlined against the shadow of

the door, clothed in cool pale blue linen, with little muslin daintinesses around her wrists and throat.

For an instant they stood still face to face, and looked at one another. The first astonishment in his eyes had given place to a look of delight at the sight of her that called the colour into her cheeks. In Rosalind's mind at that moment there was no atom of doubt as to the thought that had leapt into his. She felt the silent air between them as thickly charged with meaning as if he had that instant called aloud to her, "Mate of mine! Found! Found!" Foolishly, irrationally, her heart began to beat fast, and with an automatic resumption of her original intention, she began:

"My husband——"

The young man's head went back with a little jerk, as if he had been lightly struck. Then he swung round to the camera with the gesture of a servant going back to his servitude, as to something he had forgotten, and gave her an indifferent shoulder.

"I'm afraid my husband has forgotten," stammered Rosalind, colouring now hotly with the odd little twist that had been given to her emotions.

He turned again. "Yes?" he inquired curtly.

Rosalind recovered herself. "Mr. Bray has gone

to London to-day," she explained. "I'm afraid—I'm quite sure—he has forgotten you were coming."

"Oh!" said the young man blankly, looking at her again.

She waited.

"I'll pack up then," he said, with formal politeness.

Confused and quite inexplicable sensations were making their tumult in Rosalind still.

"I am so sorry," she said slowly.

Why was it that once that was said it seemed to mean something quite other than her intention? "I am really so very sorry," she faltered. It was ridiculous, it was monstrous, that such things should come into her head, but in a most curious manner she felt that in that simple remark she was apologizing for the absurd blunder she had made in marrying Bray.

"Thank you," he replied, "it doesn't matter," and went on packing up, unscrewing the lens of the great camera with an expert twirl, and clapping together the tripod stand into a bundle of rods.

"If you don't mind," he said, pulling straps and not looking at her, "a boy will call for these traps in about half an hour."

"Certainly," she answered.

He turned to go. She wanted to keep him there, wanted to explain herself to him, and could not think of any possible way to do so that seemed consistent with her dignity. She felt that nothing had happened between them, and yet that everything had happened. She went before him out of the room to the open front door of the house. There was a bicycle tilted against the hedge.

"Good morning," he said; took the bicycle, swung into its saddle, and was gone.

Rosalind stood still for a moment, and then went back into the drawing-room with the queerest feeling of elation lifting her heart. The first sight of the heap of strapped leather cases thrilled her as if she had been kissed. Her eyes were bright and her cheeks hot, her hands were cold, and she pressed them against her cheeks to cool their flush. What had there been in that glance that had lit in her this mysterious fire?

She walked about the room, touching things here and there, still with a flush in her cheeks and a little smile about her lips. She wondered what manner of man he was. She tried to recall his face exactly, and found that her memory played her the trick of giving her no continuous picture of him. He was that tweed-clad, stalwart figure with the light brown hair, and for the rest

his face remained obstinately blurred. And then as she came to the door of the room some disarrangement of the furniture as she looked back to the place where he had stood, recalled his face to her quite vividly, and she felt again that little clutch upon her heart.

She knew what it was that had flashed to her from his eyes. She knew all that it meant, the ultimate demand, the ultimate tribute and homage from a man to a woman. "Beautiful, worshipful thing!" it had said. "You are my mate. You are she, you are she! You are she that should be flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. You are she!"

She began to imagine the response to that demand, the high-spirited, adventurous quality of it, the test it would make of one's courage and one's pluck.

"Ugh!" she said to herself; "am I a decent, sensible woman, or a novelette-reading fool?" And she went out into her garden, disconcerted and ashamed.

But her thoughts, thoughts that she told herself were unworthy of her dignity and self-respect, raced along their way like a team of horses utterly beyond her control. They did but drag her with them, holding on powerlessly to their reins. She could not suppress the feeling

that surged up in her that something extraordinarily sweet and delightful had happened to her, something suddenly awakening and refreshing. There were times indeed when she deliberately allowed herself to sit hidden among drooping leafage on a remote garden seat, and hug to her heart the memory of that glance, like a child that had hidden itself to enjoy forbidden sweets. She told herself that only by thus letting her mind exhaust the thing would it trouble her no more.

But indeed she found that to fatigue out the sharpness of that particular impression was only the beginning of her disturbance.

When Bray came home she put off telling him for a time of the coming of Brandon's photographer, afraid that something in her voice would betray her, and when at last she did tell him she was amazed that she was able to do so quite easily. She marvelled that he did not ask her more questions, and only remarked that he would appoint another day, or go to Brandon's studio himself.

"Don't do that," urged Rosalind, on an impulse that terrified so soon as it had moved her. "It will be much more successful if you have it done here. The atmosphere of a photographer's is so stifening."

Bray agreed. "Do you mind writing to them for me?" he said.

"Very well," answered Rosalind, in a faded voice. She detested herself now for the commonplace manoeuvre. At any rate, she could and would put herself right by being out when he came.

"Rosalind mine!" murmured Bray.

He leant over the table. They had been dining in the verandah.

She started from her abstraction and looked at him. The dim, rosily-flowered globes of paper Japanese lamps glowed on either side before her.

Bray gazed upon her with sombre eyes. "How beautiful you look there!" he said. "Do you know, when I feel the dust and heat of this great toiling city as I did this morning, and contrast the complete, and beautiful life we lead here. . . ." He paused, a little tangled with his sentence.

"Yes?" she asked.

"It seems almost greedy," he said. "As though we had sucked away all its happiness and loveliness and content, and held it prisoner ourselves."

His gaze upon her became abstracted. With a little nursing there would be a lyric in that.

And Rosalind fell back into her own preoccupations.

Five days passed before the fresh appointment fell due. With the best intention in the world Rosalind could not suppress a lifting expectancy as those days went by. It was futile for her to tell herself that nothing more could happen, while some impish hope was going about in her brain insisting that it could. But whatever went on among her rebel thoughts, Rosalind remained heroic mistress of her actions, and when that morning came she set herself a penance for her foolishness and went out.

When she started she was very satisfied with herself for that, and when she was half an hour away she was acutely sorry that she had done it. She hurried home, telling herself that the time had passed when he would have come and gone.

She opened the garden gate and met Bray coming out. "I've sat to Brandon's man," he said. "He's just packing up. I'm afraid I can't get home to lunch, Rosa Mundi."

She went into the drawing-room, trembling a little, and found a little old man with a long beard taking a camera to pieces with infinite leisureliness. . . .

That was all, and Rosalind tried to think that she was glad to have escaped an embarrassment. And, none the less, like some little carelessly-dropped seed, this new emotion, and the thoughts

that sprang from it, stirred and grew and spread. There came times when she doubted very thoroughly if that odd encounter of eyes had ever happened outside what she told herself was her own vanity-fed imagination; others when its sudden memory pricked about her heart again with stealthy pleasure. It was months before the stir of it faded from her mind.

And afterwards she had moods when she reproached herself for the idleness that left her a prey to such imaginings, and pondered whether she could not find some kind of work to fill her days. She thought first of one and then of another of the various movements in which she might involve herself, but the idea of artificially-induced occupation, for which she knew she felt not the least real desire, repelled her. "I wonder what it is I am meant for?" she repeated over and over again.

"I am an idle woman, leading an idle, useless life," she announced to herself.

She went a step further. "Am I to go on living like this?"

But if it was not to go on, what could she do to alter it? Women, she thought, have no chance in the world whatever to do serious work once they are married. "Serious work" remained a vague term to her.

One day she happened upon a novel by a writer of the modern school that made some obvious suggestions. "Of course, the right and honorable work, the work that lies naturally to a woman's hand, is to bring up children," she admitted to herself after reading it. "Why have I no children?"

Why had she no children? She had never faced that out before.

Did she, she wondered, want children?

She was standing in the broad gravel path near the boundary of her garden, looking up at the high old wall as if it made a prison for her. "I am young," she said bitterly, "I am young and I am beautiful really, and what is it all for? What is going to be the good of it? Why do I not at least have children? Here are life and youth and opportunity passing by, they are mine now and they are passing, and soon I shall have no more youth and no more opportunity. I am as if I held life's gold between my hands, and let it slip, and slip. Why am I doing that? Soon it will be gone, and mingled in the sand at my feet. Why cannot I take my work, if that is my work, and grip it and make it my own?"

She had a vision of the children she might have. She remembered the fair soft skin of some children she knew, and thought of flaxen hair,

fine and soft and shining, that would presently deepen to ruddy gold. The picture warmed her heart to tender excitement. She saw them adolescent, big-limbed, tall and broad-shouldered, stepping proudly about a world that was their inheritance.

And then it occurred to her a little chillingly that Bray's children would not be like that.

But she dared not go on with that particular train of thought, and indeed she hardly allowed it to come to the surface of her mind again. Perhaps some instinct warned her that it would have led her to an unbearable realization. For over the threshold of that thought, the threshold on which her mind trembled and turned away, lay the knowledge that it was not Bray's child that she desired, but the child of some big fair man, with limbs of a strength that outmatched her strength, and a sun-tanned skin that sent her thoughts flying to mountains and the sea.

Saturday, Nov. 3rd, 1906.
Sept. 20th, 1906.

XIV

THE KNEELING IMAGE

There was a day I remember
And shall remember a long while,
One of those pleasant oases

When hour after hour

Falls to the touch of time
Like a ripe apple.

A day for clear eyes and brisk walking,
With autumn scents, and a pale gold sun,
And a breeze that clutched at the leaves
And scurried them down by the walls
Under the hedge, and piled them there
In the sun, for their last sleep.

We had tea by the fire,

The lamp was lit;

And presently one of my friends read a poem
Of heaven.

He sat by the lamp and I in the dusk
In the firelight,

And the poem had so much beauty that tears
Would stand in my eyes, a shimmering veil
Between me and the golden flames;
For it was a poem of heaven
And that, as we know it,