

<http://www.literaturepage.com/authors/Oscar-Wilde.html>

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OSCAR WILDE QUOTES

A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.



OSCAR WILDE, *The Critic as Artist*

Art never expresses anything but itself.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Decay of Lying*

Everything is dangerous, my dear fellow. If it wasn't so, life wouldn't be worth living.

OSCAR WILDE, *The importance of Being Earnest*

All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.



OSCAR WILDE, *The Critic as Artist*

The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*

Men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious. Both are disappointed.

OSCAR WILDE, *A Woman of No Importance*

Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

OSCAR WILDE, *Lady Windermere's Fan*

The only thing that sustains one through life is the consciousness of the immense inferiority of everybody else, and this is a feeling that I have always cultivated.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Remarkable Rocket*

All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Outcasts always mourn.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*



We live in
an age when
unnecessary things
are our only
necessities

I can resist everything except temptation.

OSCAR WILDE, *Lady Windermere's Fan*

Do you really think ... that it is weakness that yields to temptation? I tell you that there are terrible temptations that it requires strength, strength and courage, to yield to. To stake all one's life on a single moment, to risk everything on one throw, whether the stake be power or pleasure, I care not -- there is no weakness in that.

OSCAR WILDE, *An Ideal Husband*

The basis of optimism is sheer terror.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Pleasure is Nature's test, her sign of approval. When man is happy, he is in harmony with himself and his environment.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

OSCAR WILDE, *Aristotle at Afternoon Tea*

When people agree with me I always feel that I must be wrong.



OSCAR WILDE, *The Critic as Artist*

Better the rule of One, whom all obey,
Than to let clamorous demagogues betray
Our freedom with the kiss of anarchy.

OSCAR WILDE, *Libertatis Sacra Fames*

It is better to be beautiful than to be good. But ... it is better to be good than to be ugly.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

The tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early, or be respectable.



OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*

The fact is, that civilisation requires slaves. The Greeks were quite right there. Unless there are slaves to do the ugly, horrible, uninteresting work, culture and contemplation become almost impossible. Human slavery is wrong, insecure, and demoralizing. On mechanical slavery, on the slavery of the machine, the future of the world depends.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*

There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

The public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything, except what is worth knowing. Journalism,

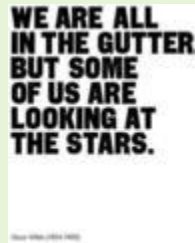
conscious of this, and having tradesman-like habits, supplies their demands.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*

There is much to be said in favour of modern journalism. By giving us the opinions of the uneducated, it keeps us in touch with the ignorance of the community.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Critic as Artist*

The difference between literature and journalism is that journalism is unreadable and literature is not read.



OSCAR WILDE, *The Critic as Artist*

The strength of women comes from the fact that psychology cannot explain us. Men can be analysed, women ... merely adored.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Ideal Husband*

All charming people, I fancy, are spoiled. It is the secret of their attraction.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Portrait of Mr. W.H.*

A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Critic as Artist*

All great ideas are dangerous.



Twenty years of romance make a woman look like a ruin, but twenty years of marriage make her something like a public building.

OSCAR WILDE, *A Woman of No Importance*

Fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable is what other people wear.

OSCAR WILDE, *An Ideal Husband*

I can't help detesting my relations. I suppose it comes from the fact that none of us can stand other people having the same faults as ourselves.

OSCAR WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

OSCAR WILDE, *Lady Windermere's Fan*

Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months.

[The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly - that is what each of us is here for.](#)

[The old believe everything, the middle-aged suspect everything, and the young know everything.](#)

[The only thing to do with good advice is pass it on. It is never any use to oneself.](#)



[The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about.](#)

[The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.](#)

[There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating: people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing.](#)

[To disagree with three-fourths of the British public is one of the first requisites of sanity.](#)

- More quotations on: [[Agreement](#)]

[We live in an age when unnecessary things are our only necessities.](#)

We teach people how to remember, we never teach them how to grow.

Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong.

- More quotations on: [[Agreement](#)]

Why was I born with such contemporaries?

Wisdom comes with winters.

One should absorb the colour of life, but one should never remember its details. Details are always vulgar.

The only thing that sustains one through life is the consciousness of the immense inferiority of everybody else, and this is a feeling that I have always cultivated.

The secret of life is to appreciate the pleasure of being terribly, terribly deceived.

I don't play accurately-any one can play accurately- but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

When the gods wish to punish us, they answer our prayers.

Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast.

Suffering is one very long moment. We cannot divide it by seasons.

Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.

Work is the curse of the drinking classes.

One's real life is often the life that one does not lead.

Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones.

My own business always bores me to death; I prefer other people's.

I can resist anything but temptation.

It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.

Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about.

Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

Scandal is gossip made tedious by morality.

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.

A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.

Oscar Wilde

A gentleman is one who never hurts anyone's feelings unintentionally.

Oscar Wilde

A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.

Oscar Wilde

A man can be happy with any woman, as long as he does not love her.

Oscar Wilde

A man can't be too careful in the choice of his enemies.

Oscar Wilde

A man who does not think for himself does not think at all.

Oscar Wilde

A man's face is his autobiography. A woman's face is her work of fiction.

Oscar Wilde

A poet can survive everything but a misprint.

Oscar Wilde

A thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

Oscar Wilde

A work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament.

Oscar Wilde

Alas, I am dying beyond my means.

Oscar Wilde

All art is quite useless.

Oscar Wilde

All bad poetry springs from genuine feeling.

Oscar Wilde

All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

Oscar Wilde

Always forgive your enemies - nothing annoys them so much.

Oscar Wilde

Ambition is the germ from which all growth of nobleness proceeds.

Oscar Wilde

Ambition is the last refuge of the failure.

Oscar Wilde

America is the only country that went from barbarism to decadence without civilization in between.

Oscar Wilde

An excellent man; he has no enemies; and none of his friends like him.

Oscar Wilde

An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.

Oscar Wilde

Anybody can be good in the country. There are no temptations there.

Oscar Wilde

Arguments are extremely vulgar, for everyone in good society holds exactly the same opinion.

Oscar Wilde

Arguments are to be avoided: they are always vulgar and often convincing.

Oscar Wilde

Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known.

Oscar Wilde

As long as a woman can look ten years younger than her own daughter, she is perfectly satisfied.

Oscar Wilde

As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.

Oscar Wilde

Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship.

Oscar Wilde

Bigamy is having one wife too many. Monogamy is the same.

Oscar Wilde

Biography lends to death a new terror.

Oscar Wilde

By giving us the opinions of the uneducated, journalism keeps us in touch with the ignorance of the community.

Oscar Wilde

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Charity creates a multitude of sins.

Oscar Wilde

Children begin by loving their parents; after a time they judge them; rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.

Oscar Wilde

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

Oscar Wilde

Conversation about the weather is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

Oscar Wilde

Death and vulgarity are the only two facts in the nineteenth century that one cannot explain away.

Oscar Wilde

Deceiving others. That is what the world calls a romance.

Oscar Wilde

Democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people.

Oscar Wilde

Do you really think it is weakness that yields to temptation? I tell you that there are terrible temptations which it requires strength, strength and courage to yield to.

Oscar Wilde

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.

Oscar Wilde

Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter.

Oscar Wilde

Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.

Oscar Wilde

Everybody who is incapable of learning has taken to teaching.

Oscar Wilde

Everything popular is wrong.

Oscar Wilde

Experience is one thing you can't get for nothing.

Oscar Wilde

Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes.

Oscar Wilde

Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months.

Oscar Wilde

Fathers should be neither seen nor heard. That is the only proper basis for family life.

Oscar Wilde

Hatred is blind, as well as love.

Oscar Wilde

He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends.

Oscar Wilde

How can a woman be expected to be happy with a man who insists on treating her as if she

were a perfectly normal human being.

Oscar Wilde

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Oscar Wilde

I always pass on good advice. It is the only thing to do with it. It is never of any use to oneself.

Oscar Wilde

I am not young enough to know everything.

Oscar Wilde

I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying.

Oscar Wilde

I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly.

Oscar Wilde

I can resist everything except temptation.

Oscar Wilde

I can stand brute force, but brute reason is quite unbearable. There is something unfair about its use. It is hitting below the intellect.

Oscar Wilde

I choose my friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their intellects. A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies.

Oscar Wilde

I have nothing to declare except my genius.

Oscar Wilde

I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best.

Oscar Wilde

I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world.

Oscar Wilde

I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train.

Oscar Wilde

I put all my genius into my life; I put only my talent into my works.

Oscar Wilde

I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.

Oscar Wilde

I see when men love women. They give them but a little of their lives. But women when they love give everything.

Oscar Wilde

I sometimes think that God in creating man somewhat overestimated his ability.

Oscar Wilde

I suppose society is wonderfully delightful. To be in it is merely a bore. But to be out of it is simply a tragedy.

Oscar Wilde

I think that God, in creating man, somewhat overestimated his ability.

Oscar Wilde

I want my food dead. Not sick, not dying, dead.

Oscar Wilde

If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all.

Oscar Wilde

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If one could only teach the English how to talk, and the Irish how to listen, society here would be quite civilized.

Oscar Wilde

If one plays good music, people don't listen and if one plays bad music people don't talk.

Oscar Wilde

If there was less sympathy in the world, there would be less trouble in the world.

Oscar Wilde

If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life.

Oscar Wilde

If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

Oscar Wilde

Illusion is the first of all pleasures.

Oscar Wilde

In all matters of opinion, our adversaries are insane.

Oscar Wilde

In America the President reigns for four years, and Journalism governs forever and ever.

Oscar Wilde

In America the young are always ready to give to those who are older than themselves the full benefits of their inexperience.

Oscar Wilde

In married life three is company and two none.

Oscar Wilde

In modern life nothing produces such an effect as a good platitude. It makes the whole world kin.

Oscar Wilde

It is a very sad thing that nowadays there is so little useless information.

Oscar Wilde

It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.

Oscar Wilde

It is always the unreadable that occurs.

Oscar Wilde

It is better to be beautiful than to be good. But... it is better to be good than to be ugly.

Oscar Wilde

It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating.

Oscar Wilde

It is only an auctioneer who can equally and impartially admire all schools of art.

Oscar Wilde

It is only by not paying one's bills that one can hope to live in the memory of the commercial classes.

Oscar Wilde

It is only the modern that ever becomes old-fashioned.

Oscar Wilde

It is through art, and through art only, that we can realise our perfection.

Oscar Wilde

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It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it.

Oscar Wilde

Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead.

Oscar Wilde

Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is far the best ending for one.

Oscar Wilde

Life imitates art far more than art imitates Life.

Oscar Wilde

Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about.

Oscar Wilde

Life is never fair, and perhaps it is a good thing for most of us that it is not.

Oscar Wilde

Man can believe the impossible, but man can never believe the improbable.

Oscar Wilde

Man is a rational animal who always loses his temper when he is called upon to act in accordance with the dictates of reason.

Oscar Wilde

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.

Oscar Wilde

Memory... is the diary that we all carry about with us.

Oscar Wilde

Men always want to be a woman's first love - women like to be a man's last romance.

Oscar Wilde

Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious; both are disappointed.

Oscar Wilde

Moderation is a fatal thing. Nothing succeeds like excess.

Oscar Wilde

Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike.

Oscar Wilde

Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.

Oscar Wilde

Most people die of a sort of creeping common sense, and discover when it is too late that the only things one never regrets are one's mistakes.

Oscar Wilde

Mr. Henry James writes fiction as if it were a painful duty.

Oscar Wilde

No great artist ever sees things as they really are. If he did, he would cease to be an artist.

Oscar Wilde

No man is rich enough to buy back his past.

Oscar Wilde

No object is so beautiful that, under certain conditions, it will not look ugly.

Oscar Wilde

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No woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating.

Oscar Wilde

Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul.

Oscar Wilde

Nothing is so aggravating than calmness.

Oscar Wilde

Now that the House of Commons is trying to become useful, it does a great deal of harm.

Oscar Wilde

One can survive everything, nowadays, except death, and live down everything except a good reputation.

Oscar Wilde

One of the many lessons that one learns in prison is, that things are what they are and will be what they will be.

Oscar Wilde

One should always be in love. That is the reason one should never marry.

Oscar Wilde

One should always play fairly when one has the winning cards.

Oscar Wilde

One's past is what one is. It is the only way by which people should be judged.

Oscar Wilde

One's real life is so often the life that one does not lead.

Oscar Wilde

Only the shallow know themselves.

Oscar Wilde

Ordinary riches can be stolen; real riches cannot. In your soul are infinitely precious things that cannot be taken from you.

Oscar Wilde

Our ambition should be to rule ourselves, the true kingdom for each one of us; and true progress is to know more, and be more, and to do more.

Oscar Wilde

Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious.

Oscar Wilde

Perhaps, after all, America never has been discovered. I myself would say that it had merely been detected.

Oscar Wilde

Pessimist: One who, when he has the choice of two evils, chooses both.

Oscar Wilde

Questions are never indiscreet, answers sometimes are.

Oscar Wilde

Quotation is a serviceable substitute for wit.

Oscar Wilde

Ridicule is the tribute paid to the genius by the mediocrities.

Oscar Wilde

Romance should never begin with sentiment. It should begin with science and end with a settlement.

Oscar Wilde

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Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live.

Oscar Wilde

Seriousness is the only refuge of the shallow.

Oscar Wilde

Society exists only as a mental concept; in the real world there are only individuals.

Oscar Wilde

Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go.

Oscar Wilde

Success is a science; if you have the conditions, you get the result.

Oscar Wilde

The advantage of the emotions is that they lead us astray.

Oscar Wilde

The basis of optimism is sheer terror.

Oscar Wilde

The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame.

Oscar Wilde

The critic has to educate the public; the artist has to educate the critic.

Oscar Wilde

The difference between literature and journalism is that journalism is unreadable and literature is not read.

Oscar Wilde

The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what fiction means.

Oscar Wilde

The imagination imitates. It is the critical spirit that creates.

Oscar Wilde

The man who can dominate a London dinner-table can dominate the world.

Oscar Wilde

The moment you think you understand a great work of art, it's dead for you.

Oscar Wilde

The old believe everything, the middle-aged suspect everything, the young know everything.

Oscar Wilde

The one charm about marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties.

Oscar Wilde

The only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on. It is never of any use to oneself.

Oscar Wilde

The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it... I can resist everything but temptation.

Oscar Wilde

The public is wonderfully tolerant. It forgives everything except genius.

Oscar Wilde

The salesman knows nothing of what he is selling save that he is charging a great deal too much for it.

Oscar Wilde

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The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.

Oscar Wilde

The truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Oscar Wilde

The typewriting machine, when played with expression, is no more annoying than the piano when played by a sister or near relation.

Oscar Wilde

The well bred contradict other people. The wise contradict themselves.

Oscar Wilde

The world has grown suspicious of anything that looks like a happily married life.

Oscar Wilde

The world is a stage, but the play is badly cast.

Oscar Wilde

The world is divided into two classes, those who believe the incredible, and those who do the improbable.

Oscar Wilde

There are many things that we would throw away if we were not afraid that others might pick them up.

Oscar Wilde

There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating - people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing.

Oscar Wilde

There are only two tragedies in life: one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.

Oscar Wilde

There is a luxury in self-reproach. When we blame ourselves we feel no one else has a right to blame us.

Oscar Wilde

There is always something infinitely mean about other people's tragedies.

Oscar Wilde

There is always something ridiculous about the emotions of people whom one has ceased to love.

Oscar Wilde

There is no necessity to separate the monarch from the mob; all authority is equally bad.

Oscar Wilde

There is no sin except stupidity.

Oscar Wilde

There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written.

Oscar Wilde

There is nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It is a thing no married man knows anything about.

Oscar Wilde

There is nothing so difficult to marry as a large nose.

Oscar Wilde

There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor. The poor can think of nothing else.

Oscar Wilde

There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.

Oscar Wilde

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There is something terribly morbid in the modern sympathy with pain. One should sympathise with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life. The less said about life's sores the better.

Oscar Wilde

There's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

Oscar Wilde

This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.

Oscar Wilde

Those whom the gods love grow young.

Oscar Wilde

To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect.

Oscar Wilde

To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness.

Oscar Wilde

To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.

Oscar Wilde

True friends stab you in the front.

Oscar Wilde

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.

Oscar Wilde

What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Oscar Wilde

What we have to do, what at any rate it is our duty to do, is to revive the old art of Lying.

Oscar Wilde

When a man has once loved a woman he will do anything for her except continue to love her.

Oscar Wilde

When good Americans die they go to Paris.

Oscar Wilde

When I was young I thought that money was the most important thing in life; now that I am old I know that it is.

Oscar Wilde

When the gods wish to punish us they answer our prayers.

Oscar Wilde

Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing, it is always from the noblest motives.

Oscar Wilde

Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong.

Oscar Wilde

While we look to the dramatist to give romance to realism, we ask of the actor to give realism to romance.

Oscar Wilde

Who, being loved, is poor?

Oscar Wilde

Why was I born with such contemporaries?

Oscar Wilde

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Woman begins by resisting a man's advances and ends by blocking his retreat.

Oscar Wilde

Women are made to be loved, not understood.

Oscar Wilde

Women are never disarmed by compliments. Men always are. That is the difference between the sexes.

Oscar Wilde

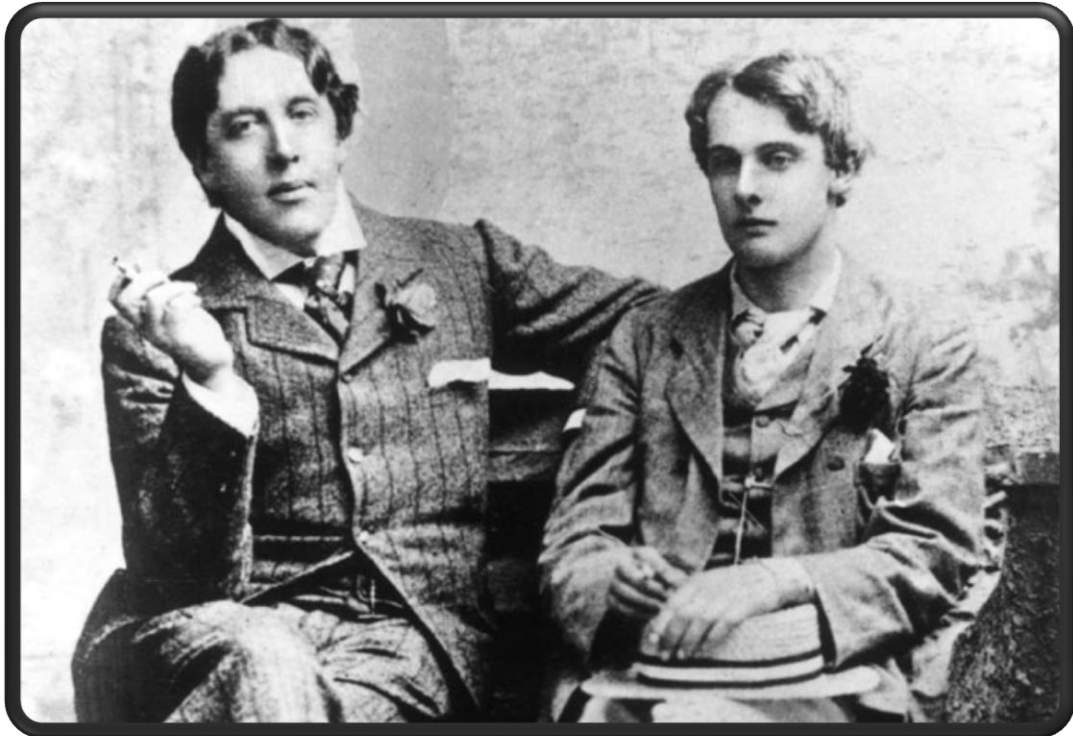
Women love us for our defects. If we have enough of them, they will forgive us everything, even our gigantic intellects.

Oscar Wilde

Work is the curse of the drinking classes.

Oscar Wilde

Children begin by loving their parents; after a time they judge them; rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.



Two Loves, by Lord Alfred Douglas

I dreamed I stood upon a little hill,
And at my feet there lay a ground, that seemed
Like a waste garden, flowering at its will
With buds and blossoms. There were pools that dreamed
Black and unruffled; there were white lilies

A few, and crocuses, and violets
Purple or pale, snake-like fritillaries
Scarce seen for the rank grass, and through green nets
Blue eyes of shy peryenche winked in the sun.
And there were curious flowers, before unknown,
Flowers that were stained with moonlight, or with shades
Of Nature's willful moods; and here a one
That had drunk in the transitory tone
Of one brief moment in a sunset; blades
Of grass that in an hundred springs had been
Slowly but exquisitely nurtured by the stars,
And watered with the scented dew long cupped
In lilies, that for rays of sun had seen
Only God's glory, for never a sunrise mars
The luminous air of Heaven. Beyond, abrupt,
A grey stone wall. o'ergrown with velvet moss
Uprose; and gazing I stood long, all mazed
To see a place so strange, so sweet, so fair.
And as I stood and marvelled, lo! across
The garden came a youth; one hand he raised
To shield him from the sun, his wind-tossed hair
Was twined with flowers, and in his hand he bore
A purple bunch of bursting grapes, his eyes
Were clear as crystal, naked all was he,
White as the snow on pathless mountains frore,
Red were his lips as red wine-spilith that dyes
A marble floor, his brow chalcedony.
And he came near me, with his lips uncurled
And kind, and caught my hand and kissed my mouth,
And gave me grapes to eat, and said, 'Sweet friend,

Come I will show thee shadows of the world
And images of life. See from the South
Comes the pale pageant that hath never an end.'
And lo! within the garden of my dream
I saw two walking on a shining plain
Of golden light. The one did joyous seem
And fair and blooming, and a sweet refrain
Came from his lips; he sang of pretty maids
And joyous love of comely girl and boy,
His eyes were bright, and 'mid the dancing blades
Of golden grass his feet did trip for joy;
And in his hand he held an ivory lute
With strings of gold that were as maidens' hair,
And sang with voice as tuneful as a flute,
And round his neck three chains of roses were.
But he that was his comrade walked aside;
He was full sad and sweet, and his large eyes
Were strange with wondrous brightness, staring wide
With gazing; and he sighed with many sighs
That moved me, and his cheeks were wan and white
Like pallid lilies, and his lips were red
Like poppies, and his hands he clenched tight,
And yet again unclenched, and his head
Was wreathed with moon-flowers pale as lips of death.
A purple robe he wore, o'erwrought in gold
With the device of a great snake, whose breath
Was fiery flame: which when I did behold
I fell a-weeping, and I cried, 'Sweet youth,
Tell me why, sad and sighing, thou dost rove
These pleasant realms? I pray thee speak me sooth

What is thy name?' He said, 'My name is Love.'
Then straight the first did turn himself to me
And cried, 'He lieth, for his name is Shame,
But I am Love, and I was wont to be
Alone in this fair garden, till he came
Unmasked by night; I am true Love, I fill
The hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame.'
Then sighing, said the other, '**Have thy will,
I am the love that dare not speak its name.**'



The Picture Of Dorian Gray



CHAPTER 1:

The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn.

From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as was his custom, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flamelike as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid, jade-faced painters of Tokyo who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion.

The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the dusty gilt horns of the straggling woodbine, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive. The dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ.

In the centre of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stood the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away, was sitting the artist himself, Basil Hallward, whose sudden disappearance some years ago caused, at the time, such public excitement and gave rise to so many strange conjectures.

As the painter looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skillfully mirrored in his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there. But he suddenly started up, and closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake.

"It is your best work, Basil, the best thing you have ever done," said Lord Henry languidly.

"You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor. The Academy is too large and too vulgar. Whenever I have gone there, there have been either so many people that I have not been able to see the pictures, which was dreadful, or so many pictures that I have not been able to see the people, which was worse. The Grosvenor is really the only place."

"I don't think I shall send it anywhere," he answered, tossing his head back in that odd way that used to make his friends laugh at him at Oxford.

"No, I won't send it anywhere."

Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy, opium-tainted cigarette.

"Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? Have you any reason? What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about. A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion."

"I know you will laugh at me," he replied, "but I really can't exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it."

Lord Henry stretched himself out on the divan and laughed.

"Yes, I knew you would; but it is quite true, all the same.

Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, Basil, I didn't know you were so vain; and I really can't see any resemblance between you, with your

rugged strong face and your coal-black hair, and this young Adonis, who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves."

"Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus, and you-- well, of course you have an intellectual expression and all that. But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face."

"The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are! Except, of course, in the Church. But then in the Church they don't think. A bishop keeps on saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy of eighteen, and as a natural consequence he always looks absolutely delightful."

"Your mysterious young friend, whose name you have never told me, but whose picture really fascinates me, never thinks. I feel quite sure of that. He is some brainless beautiful creature who should be always here in winter when we have no flowers to look at, and always here in summer when we want something to chill our intelligence. Don't flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him."

"You don't understand me, Harry," answered the artist.

"Of course I am not like him. I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. You shrug your shoulders? I am telling you the truth. There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction, the sort of fatality that seems to dog through history the faltering steps of kings. It is better not to be different from one's fellows.

The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit at their ease and gape at the play. If they know nothing of victory,

they are at least spared the knowledge of defeat. They live as we all should live--undisturbed, indifferent, and without disquiet. They neither bring ruin upon others, nor ever receive it from alien hands. Your rank and wealth, Harry; my brains, such as they are--my art, whatever it may be worth; Dorian Gray's good looks--we shall all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer terribly."

"Dorian Gray? Is that his name?"

asked Lord Henry, walking across the studio towards Basil Hallward.

"Yes, that is his name. I didn't intend to tell it to you."

"But why not?"

"Oh, I can't explain. When I like people immensely, I never tell their names to any one. It is like surrendering a part of them. I have grown to love secrecy. It seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious or marvellous to us. The commonest thing is delightful if one only hides it. When I leave town now I never tell my people where I am going. If I did, I would lose all my pleasure. It is a silly habit, I dare say, but somehow it seems to bring a great deal of romance into one's life. I suppose you think me awfully foolish about it?"

"Not at all,"

answered Lord Henry,

"not at all, my dear Basil. You seem to forget that I am married, and the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties. I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing.

"When we meet--we do meet occasionally, when we dine out together, or go down to the Duke's--we tell each other the most absurd stories

with the most serious faces. My wife is very good at it--much better, in fact, than I am. She never gets confused over her dates, and I always do. But when she does find me out, she makes no row at all. I sometimes wish she would; but she merely laughs at me."

"I hate the way you talk about your married life, Harry," said Basil Hallward, strolling towards the door that led into the garden.

"I believe that you are really a very good husband, but that you are thoroughly ashamed of your own virtues. You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose."

"Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know," cried Lord Henry, laughing; and the two young men went out into the garden together and ensconced themselves on a long bamboo seat that stood in the shade of a tall laurel bush. The sunlight slipped over the polished leaves. In the grass, white daisies were tremulous. After a pause, Lord Henry pulled out his watch.

"I am afraid I must be going, Basil," he murmured, "and before I go, I insist on your answering a question I put to you some time ago."

"What is that?" said the painter, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground.

"You know quite well."

"I do not, Harry."

"Well, I will tell you what it is. I want you to explain to me why you won't exhibit Dorian Gray's picture. I want the real reason."

"I told you the real reason."

"No, you did not. You said it was because there was too much of yourself in it. Now, that is childish."

"Harry,"
said Basil Hallward, looking him straight in the face,
"every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul."

Lord Henry laughed.

"And what is that?"
he asked.

"I will tell you,"
said Hallward; but an expression of perplexity came over his face.

"I am all expectation, Basil,"
continued his companion, glancing at him.

"Oh, there is really very little to tell, Harry,"
answered the painter;
"and I am afraid you will hardly understand it. Perhaps you will hardly believe it."

Lord Henry smiled, and leaning down, plucked a pink-petalled daisy from the grass and examined it.

"I am quite sure I shall understand it," he replied, gazing intently at the little golden, white-feathered disk, "and as for believing things, I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible."

The wind shook some blossoms from the trees, and the heavy lilac-blossoms, with their clustering stars, moved to and fro in the languid air. A grasshopper began to chirrup by the wall, and like a blue thread a long thin dragon-fly floated past on its brown gauze wings. Lord Henry felt as if he could hear Basil Hallward's heart beating, and wondered what was coming.

"The story is simply this," said the painter after some time.

"Two months ago I went to a crush at Lady Brandon's. You know we poor artists have to show ourselves in society from time to time, just to remind the public that we are not savages."

"With an evening coat and a white tie, as you told me once, anybody, even a stock-broker, can gain a reputation for being civilized. Well, after I had been in the room about ten minutes, talking to huge overdressed dowagers and tedious academicians, I suddenly became conscious that some one was looking at me. I turned half-way round and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale."

"A curious sensation of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. I did not want any external influence in my life. You know yourself, Harry, how independent I am by nature. I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I

met Dorian Gray."

"Then--but I don't know how to explain it to you. Something seemed to tell me that I was on the verge of a terrible crisis in my life. I had a strange feeling that fate had in store for me exquisite joys and exquisite sorrows. I grew afraid and turned to quit the room. It was not conscience that made me do so: it was a sort of cowardice. I take no credit to myself for trying to escape."

"Conscience and cowardice are really the same things, Basil. Conscience is the trade-name of the firm. That is all."

"I don't believe that, Harry, and I don't believe you do either. However, whatever was my motive--and it may have been pride, for I used to be very proud--I certainly struggled to the door. There, of course, I stumbled against Lady Brandon. 'You are not going to run away so soon, Mr. Hallward?' she screamed out. You know her curiously shrill voice?"

"Yes; she is a peacock in everything but beauty," said Lord Henry, pulling the daisy to bits with his long nervous fingers.

"I could not get rid of her. She brought me up to royalties, and people with stars and garters, and elderly ladies with gigantic tiaras and parrot noses. She spoke of me as her dearest friend. I had only met her once before, but she took it into her head to lionize me. I believe some picture of mine had made a great success at the time, at least had been chattered about in the penny newspapers, which is the nineteenth-century standard of immortality."

"Suddenly I found myself face to face with the young man whose personality had so strangely stirred me. We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again. It was reckless of me, but I asked Lady Brandon to introduce me to him. Perhaps it was not so reckless, after

all. It was simply inevitable. We would have spoken to each other without any introduction. I am sure of that. Dorian told me so afterwards. He, too, felt that we were destined to know each other."

"And how did Lady Brandon describe this wonderful young man?" asked his companion.

"I know she goes in for giving a rapid precis of all her guests. I remember her bringing me up to a truculent and red-faced old gentleman covered all over with orders and ribbons, and hissing into my ear, in a tragic whisper which must have been perfectly audible to everybody in the room, the most astounding details. I simply fled".

"I like to find out people for myself. But Lady Brandon treats her guests exactly as an auctioneer treats his goods. She either explains them entirely away, or tells one everything about them except what one wants to know."

"Poor Lady Brandon!

You are hard on her, Harry!" said Hallward listlessly.

"My dear fellow, she tried to found a salon, and only succeeded in opening a restaurant. How could I admire her? But tell me, what did she say about Mr. Dorian Gray?"

"Oh, something like, 'Charming boy--poor dear mother and I absolutely inseparable. Quite forget what he does--afraid he-- doesn't do anything--oh, yes, plays the piano--or is it the violin, dear Mr. Gray?' Neither of us could help laughing, and we became friends at once."

"Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is far the best ending for one," said the young lord, plucking another daisy. Hallward shook his head.

"You don't understand what friendship is, Harry,"

he murmured--

"or what enmity is, for that matter. You like every one; that is to say, you are indifferent to every one."

"How horribly unjust of you!"

cried Lord Henry, tilting his hat back and looking up at the little clouds that, like ravelled skeins of glossy white silk, were drifting across the hollowed turquoise of the summer sky.

"Yes; horribly unjust of you. I make a great difference between people. I choose my friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their good intellects."

"A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies. I have not got one who is a fool. They are all men of some intellectual power, and consequently they all appreciate me. Is that very vain of me? I think it is rather vain."

"I should think it was, Harry. But according to your category I must be merely an acquaintance."

"My dear old Basil, you are much more than an acquaintance."

"And much less than a friend. A sort of brother, I suppose?"

"Oh, brothers! I don't care for brothers. My elder brother won't die, and my younger brothers seem never to do anything else."

"Harry!"

exclaimed Hallward, frowning.

"My dear fellow, I am not quite serious. But I can't help detesting my relations. I suppose it comes from the fact that none of us can stand other people having the same faults as ourselves. I quite sympathize

with the rage of the English democracy against what they call the vices of the upper orders.

The masses feel that drunkenness, stupidity, and immorality should be their own special property, and that if any one of us makes an ass of himself, he is poaching on their preserves. When poor Southwark got into the divorce court, their indignation was quite magnificent. And yet I don't suppose that ten per cent of the proletariat live correctly."

"I don't agree with a single word that you have said, and, what is more, Harry, I feel sure you don't either."

Lord Henry stroked his pointed brown beard and tapped the toe of his patent-leather boot with a tasselled ebony cane.

"How English you are Basil! That is the second time you have made that observation. If one puts forward an idea to a true Englishman--always a rash thing to do--he never dreams of considering whether the idea is right or wrong. The only thing he considers of any importance is whether one believes it oneself.

Now, the value of an idea has nothing whatsoever to do with the sincerity of the man who expresses it. Indeed, the probabilities are that the more insincere the man is, the more purely intellectual will the idea be, as in that case it will not be coloured by either his wants, his desires, or his prejudices.

However, I don't propose to discuss politics, sociology, or metaphysics with you. I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world. Tell me more about Mr. Dorian Gray. How often do you see him?"

"Every day. I couldn't be happy if I didn't see him every day. He is absolutely necessary to me."

"How extraordinary! I thought you would never care for anything but your art."

"He is all my art to me now,"
said the painter gravely.

"I sometimes think, Harry, that there are only two eras of any importance in the world's history. The first is the appearance of a new medium for art, and the second is the appearance of a new personality for art also. What the invention of oil-painting was to the Venetians, the face of Antinous was to late Greek sculpture, and the face of Dorian Gray will some day be to me. It is not merely that I paint from him, draw from him, sketch from him."

"Of course, I have done all that. But he is much more to me than a model or a sitter. I won't tell you that I am dissatisfied with what I have done of him, or that his beauty is such that art cannot express it. There is nothing that art cannot express, and I know that the work I have done, since I met Dorian Gray, is good work, is the best work of my life.

But in some curious way--I wonder will you understand me?--his personality has suggested to me an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style. I see things differently, I think of them differently.

I can now recreate life in a way that was hidden from me before. 'A dream of form in days of thought'--who is it who says that? I forget; but it is what Dorian Gray has been to me. The merely visible presence of this lad--for he seems to me little more than a lad, though he is really over twenty-- his merely visible presence--ah! I wonder can you realize all that that means?"

"Unconsciously he defines for me the lines of a fresh school, a school that is to have in it all the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the spirit that is Greek. The harmony of soul and body-- how much that is! We in our madness have separated the two, and have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideality that is void. Harry! if you only knew what Dorian Gray is to me! You remember that landscape of mine, for which Agnew offered me such a huge price but which I would not part with? It is one of the best things I have ever done. And why is it so?"

"Because, while I was painting it, Dorian Gray sat beside me. Some subtle influence passed from him to me, and for the first time in my life I saw in the plain woodland the wonder I had always looked for and always missed."

"Basil, this is extraordinary! I must see Dorian Gray."
Hallward got up from the seat and walked up and down the garden. After some time he came back.

"Harry," he said, "Dorian Gray is to me simply a motive in art. You might see nothing in him. I see everything in him. He is never more present in my work than when no image of him is there. He is a suggestion, as I have said, of a new manner. I find him in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colours. That is all."

"Then why won't you exhibit his portrait?"
asked Lord Henry.

"Because, without intending it, I have put into it some expression of all this curious artistic idolatry, of which, of course, I have never cared to speak to him. He knows nothing about it. He shall never know anything

about it. But the world might guess it, and I will not bare my soul to their shallow prying eyes."

"My heart shall never be put under their microscope. There is too much of myself in the thing, Harry--too much of myself!" "Poets are not so scrupulous as you are. They know how useful passion is for publication. Nowadays a broken heart will run to many editions."

"I hate them for it,"cried Hallward."An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty. Some day I will show the world what it is; and for that reason the world shall never see my portrait of Dorian Gray."

"I think you are wrong, Basil, but I won't argue with you. It is only the intellectually lost who ever argue. Tell me, is Dorian Gray very fond of you?"

The painter considered for a few moments.

"He likes me," he answered after a pause;

"I know he likes me. Of course I flatter him dreadfully. I find a strange pleasure in saying things to him that I know I shall be sorry for having said. As a rule, he is charming to me, and we sit in the studio and talk of a thousand things.

Now and then, however, he is horribly thoughtless, and seems to take a real delight in giving me pain. Then I feel, Harry, that I have given away my whole soul to some one who treats it as if it were a flower to put in his coat, a bit of decoration to charm his vanity, an ornament for a summer's day."

"Days in summer, Basil, are apt to linger,"murmured Lord Henry.

"Perhaps you will tire sooner than he will. It is a sad thing to think of, but there is no doubt that genius lasts longer than beauty. That accounts for the fact that we all take such pains to over-educate ourselves.

In the wild struggle for existence, we want to have something that endures, and so we fill our minds with rubbish and facts, in the silly hope of keeping our place. The thoroughly well-informed man--that is the modern ideal. And the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man is a dreadful thing. It is like a bric-a-brac shop, all monsters and dust, with everything priced above its proper value. I think you will tire first, all the same."

"Some day you will look at your friend, and he will seem to you to be a little out of drawing, or you won't like his tone of colour, or something. You will bitterly reproach him in your own heart, and seriously think that he has behaved very badly to you. The next time he calls, you will be perfectly cold and indifferent. It will be a great pity, for it will alter you. What you have told me is quite a romance, a romance of art one might call it, and the worst of having a romance of any kind is that it leaves one so unromantic."

"Harry, don't talk like that. As long as I live, the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me. You can't feel what I feel. You change too often."

"Ah, my dear Basil, that is exactly why I can feel it. Those who are faithful know only the trivial side of love: it is the faithless who know love's tragedies."

And Lord Henry struck a light on a dainty silver case and began to smoke a cigarette with a self-conscious and satisfied air, as if he had summed up the world in a phrase.

There was a rustle of chirruping sparrows in the green lacquer leaves

of the ivy, and the blue cloud-shadows chased themselves across the grass like swallows. How pleasant it was in the garden! And how delightful other people's emotions were!-- much more delightful than their ideas, it seemed to him. One's own soul, and the passions of one's friends--those were the fascinating things in life.

He pictured to himself with silent amusement the tedious luncheon that he had missed by staying so long with Basil Hallward. Had he gone to his aunt's, he would have been sure to have met Lord Goodbody there, and the whole conversation would have been about the feeding of the poor and the necessity for model lodging-houses. Each class would have preached the importance of those virtues, for whose exercise there was no necessity in their own lives.

The rich would have spoken on the value of thrift, and the idle grown eloquent over the dignity of labour. It was charming to have escaped all that! As he thought of his aunt, an idea seemed to strike him. He turned to Hallward and said,

"My dear fellow, I have just remembered."

"Remembered what, Harry?"

"Where I heard the name of Dorian Gray."

"Where was it?"

asked Hallward, with a slight frown.

"Don't look so angry, Basil. It was at my aunt, Lady Agatha's. She told me she had discovered a wonderful young man who was going to help her in the East End, and that his name was Dorian Gray. I am bound to state that she never told me he was good-looking. Women have no appreciation of good looks; at least, good women have not."

"She said that he was very earnest and had a beautiful nature. I at once pictured to myself a creature with spectacles and lank hair, horribly freckled, and tramping about on huge feet. I wish I had known it was your friend."

"I am very glad you didn't, Harry."

"Why?"

"I don't want you to meet him."

"You don't want me to meet him?"

"No."

"Mr. Dorian Gray is in the studio, sir,"
said the butler, coming into the garden.

"You must introduce me now,"
cried Lord Henry, laughing.
The painter turned to his servant, who stood blinking in the sunlight.

"Ask Mr. Gray to wait, Parker: I shall be in in a few moments."
The man bowed and went up the walk.

Then he looked at Lord Henry.

"Dorian Gray is my dearest friend," "He has a simple and a beautiful nature. Your aunt was quite right in what she said of him. Don't spoil him. Don't try to influence him. Your influence would be bad."

"The world is wide, and has many marvellous people in it. Don't take away from me the one person who gives to my art whatever charm it

possesses: my life as an artist depends on him. Mind, Harry, I trust you."

He spoke very slowly, and the words seemed wrung out of him almost against his will.

"What nonsense you talk!"

said Lord Henry, smiling, and taking Hallward by the arm, he almost led him into the house.

CHAPTER 2:

As they entered they saw Dorian Gray. He was seated at the piano, with his back to them, turning over the pages of a volume of Schumann's "Forest Scenes." "You must lend me these, Basil," he cried. "I want to learn them. They are perfectly charming."

"That entirely depends on how you sit to-day, Dorian."

"Oh, I am tired of sitting, and I don't want a life-sized portrait of myself," answered the lad, swinging round on the music-stool in a wilful, petulant manner. When he caught sight of Lord Henry, a faint blush coloured his cheeks for a moment, and he started up. "I beg your pardon, Basil, but I didn't know you had any one with you."

"This is Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian, an old Oxford friend of mine. I have just been telling him what a capital sitter you were, and now you have spoiled everything."

"You have not spoiled my pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Gray," said Lord Henry, stepping forward and extending his hand.

"My aunt has often spoken to me about you. You are one of

her favourites, and, I am afraid, one of her victims also."

"I am in Lady Agatha's black books at present," answered Dorian with a funny look of penitence. "I promised to go to a club in Whitechapel with her last Tuesday, and I really forgot all about it. We were to have played a duet together--three duets, I believe. I don't know what she will say to me. I am far too frightened to call."

"Oh, I will make your peace with my aunt. She is quite devoted to you. And I don't think it really matters about your not being there. The audience probably thought it was a duet. When Aunt Agatha sits down to the piano, she makes quite enough noise for two people."

"That is very horrid to her, and not very nice to me," answered Dorian, laughing.

Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth was there, as well as all youth's passionate purity.

One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world. No wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him.

"You are too charming to go in for philanthropy, Mr. Gray--far too charming."

And Lord Henry flung himself down on the divan and opened his cigarette-case.

The painter had been busy mixing his colours and getting his brushes ready.

He was looking worried, and when he heard Lord Henry's last remark, he glanced at him, hesitated for a moment, and then said, "Harry, I want to finish this picture to-day. Would you think it awfully rude of me if I asked you to go away?"

Lord Henry smiled and looked at Dorian Gray. "Am I to go, Mr. Gray?" he asked.

"Oh, please don't, Lord Henry. I see that Basil is in one of his sulky moods, and I can't bear him when he sulks. Besides, I want you to tell me why I should not go in for philanthropy."

"I don't know that I shall tell you that, Mr. Gray. It is so tedious a subject that one would have to talk seriously about it. But I certainly shall not run away, now that you have asked me to stop.

You don't really mind, Basil, do you? You have often told me that you liked your sitters to have someone to chat to."

Hallward bit his lip. "If Dorian wishes it, of course you must stay. Dorian's whims are laws to everybody, except himself."

Lord Henry took up his hat and gloves. "You are very pressing, Basil, but I am afraid I must go. I have promised to meet a man at the Orleans.

Good-bye, Mr. Gray. Come and see me some afternoon in Curzon Street.

I am nearly always at home at five o'clock. Write to me when you are coming.

I should be sorry to miss you."

"Basil," cried Dorian Gray, "if Lord Henry Wotton goes, I shall go, too."

You never open your lips while you are painting, and it is horribly dull standing on a platform and trying to look pleasant. Ask him to stay. I insist upon it."

"Stay, Harry, to oblige Dorian, and to oblige me," said Hallward, gazing intently at his picture. "It is quite true, I never talk when I am working, and never listen either, and it must be dreadfully tedious for my unfortunate sitters. I beg you to stay."

"But what about my man at the Orleans?"

The painter laughed. "I don't think there will be any difficulty about that.

Sit down again, Harry. And now, Dorian, get up on the platform, and don't move about too much, or pay any attention to what Lord Henry says.

He has a very bad influence over all his friends, with the single exception of myself."

Dorian Gray stepped up on the dais with the air of a young Greek martyr, and made a little moue of discontent to Lord Henry, to whom he had rather taken a fancy. He was so unlike Basil. They made a delightful contrast.

And he had such a beautiful voice. After a few moments he said to him,

"Have you really a very bad influence, Lord Henry? As bad as Basil says?"

"There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr. Gray. All influence is immoral--immoral from the scientific point of view."

"Why?"

"Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions.

His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of some one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him. The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly--that is what each of us is here for. People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self. Of course, they are charitable. They feed the hungry and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked. Courage has gone out of our race. Perhaps we never really had it. The terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion--these are the two things that govern us.

And yet--"

"Just turn your head a little more to the right, Dorian, like a good boy," said the painter, deep in his work and conscious only that a look had come into the lad's face that he had never seen there before.

"And yet," continued Lord Henry, in his low, musical voice, and with that graceful wave of the hand that was always so characteristic of him, and that he had even in his Eton days, "I believe that if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream--I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediaevalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal--to something finer, richer than the Hellenic ideal, it may be. But the bravest man amongst us is afraid of himself.

The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification. Nothing remains then but the recollection of a pleasure, or the luxury of a regret. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful. It has been said that the great events of the world take place in the brain. It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place also. You, Mr. Gray, you yourself, with your rose-red youth and your rose-white boyhood, you have had passions that have made you afraid, thoughts that have fined you with terror, day-dreams and sleeping dreams whose mere memory might stain your cheek with shame--"

"Stop!" faltered Dorian Gray, "stop! you bewilder me. I don't know what to say. There is some answer to you, but I cannot find it. Don't speak. Let me think. Or, rather, let me try not to think."

For nearly ten minutes he stood there, motionless, with parted lips and eyes strangely bright. He was dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him. Yet they seemed to him to have come really from himself. The few words that Basil's friend had said to him--words spoken by chance, no doubt, and with wilful paradox in them--had touched some secret chord that had never been touched before, but that he felt was now vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses.

Music had stirred him like that. Music had troubled him many times.

But music was not articulate. It was not a new world, but rather another chaos, that it created in us. Words! Mere words! How terrible they were! How clear, and vivid, and cruel! One could not escape from them. And yet what a subtle magic there was in them!

They seemed to be able to give a plastic form to formless things, and to have a music of their own as sweet as that of viol or of lute. Mere words! Was there anything so real as words?

Yes; there had been things in his boyhood that he had not understood. He understood them now. Life suddenly became fiery-coloured to him. It seemed to him that he had been walking in fire. Why had he not known it?

With his subtle smile, Lord Henry watched him. He knew the precise psychological moment when to say nothing. He felt intensely interested.

He was amazed at the sudden impression that his words had produced, and, remembering a book that he had read when he was sixteen, a book which had revealed to him much that he had not known before, he wondered whether Dorian Gray was passing through a similar experience.

He had merely shot an arrow into the air. Had it hit the mark? How fascinating the lad was!

Hallward painted away with that marvellous bold touch of his, that had the true refinement and perfect delicacy that in art, at any rate comes only from strength. He was unconscious of the silence.

"Basil, I am tired of standing," cried Dorian Gray suddenly. "I must go out and sit in the garden. The air is stifling here."

"My dear fellow, I am so sorry. When I am painting, I can't think of anything else. But you never sat better. You were perfectly still. And I have caught the effect I wanted-- the half-parted lips and the bright look in the eyes. I don't know what Harry has been saying to you, but he has certainly made you have the most wonderful expression. I suppose he has been paying you compliments. You mustn't believe a word that he says."

"He has certainly not been paying me compliments. Perhaps that is the reason that I don't believe anything he has told me."

"You know you believe it all," said Lord Henry, looking at him with his dreamy languorous eyes. "I will go out to the garden with you. It is horribly hot in the studio. Basil, let us have something iced to drink, something with strawberries in it."

"Certainly, Harry. Just touch the bell, and when Parker comes I will tell him what you want. I have got to work up this background, so I will join you later on. Don't keep Dorian too long. I have never been in better form for painting than I am to-day. This is going to be my masterpiece. It is my masterpiece as it stands."

Lord Henry went out to the garden and found Dorian Gray burying his face in the great cool lilac-blossoms, feverishly drinking in their perfume as if it had been wine. He came close to him and put his hand upon his shoulder.

"You are quite right to do that," he murmured. "Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul."

The lad started and drew back. He was bareheaded, and the leaves had tossed his rebellious curls and tangled all their gilded threads. There was a look of fear in his eyes, such as people have when they are suddenly awakened. His finely chiselled nostrils quivered, and some hidden nerve shook the scarlet of his lips and left them trembling.

"Yes," continued Lord Henry, "that is one of the great secrets of life-- to cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul.

You are a wonderful creation. You know more than you think you know, just as you know less than you want to know."

Dorian Gray frowned and turned his head away. He could not help liking the tall, graceful young man who was standing by him. His romantic, olive-coloured face and worn expression interested him. There was something in his low languid voice that was absolutely fascinating.

His cool, white, flowerlike hands, even, had a curious charm. They moved, as he spoke, like music, and seemed to have a language of their own. But he felt afraid of him, and ashamed of being afraid. Why had it been left for a stranger to reveal him to himself? He had known Basil Hallward for months, but the friendship between them had never altered him. Suddenly there had come some one across his life who seemed to have disclosed to him life's mystery. And, yet, what was here to be afraid of? He was not a schoolboy or a girl. It was absurd to be frightened.

"Let us go and sit in the shade," said Lord Henry. "Parker has brought out the drinks, and if you stay any longer in this glare, you will be quite spoiled, and Basil will never paint you again. You really must not allow yourself to become sunburnt. It would

be unbecoming."

"What can it matter?" cried Dorian Gray, laughing, as he sat down on the seat at the end of the garden.

"It should matter everything to you, Mr. Gray."

"Why?"

"Because you have the most marvellous youth, and youth is the one thing worth having."

"I don't feel that, Lord Henry."

"No, you don't feel it now. Some day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it, you will feel it terribly. Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so? . . . You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. Don't frown. You have. And beauty is a form of genius-- is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it. You smile? Ah! when you have lost it you won't smile. . . . People say sometimes that beauty is only superficial. That may be so, but at least it is not so superficial as thought is. To me, beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.

. . . Yes, Mr. Gray, the gods have been good to you.
But what the gods give they quickly take away. You have only
a few years in which to live really, perfectly, and fully.
When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it, and then you
will suddenly discover that there are no triumphs left for you,
or have to content yourself with those mean triumphs that
the memory of your past will make more bitter than defeats.
Every month as it wanes brings you nearer to something dreadful.
Time is jealous of you, and wars against your lilies and your roses.
You will become sallow, and hollow-cheeked, and dull-eyed.
You will suffer horribly.... Ah! realize your youth
while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days,
listening to the tedious, trying to improve the hopeless failure,
or giving away your life to the ignorant, the common,
and the vulgar. These are the sickly aims, the false ideals,
of our age. Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you!
Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for
new sensations. Be afraid of nothing. . . . A new Hedonism--
that is what our century wants. You might be its visible symbol.
With your personality there is nothing you could not do.
The world belongs to you for a season. . . . The moment I met
you I saw that you were quite unconscious of what you really are,
of what you really might be. There was so much in you that
charmed me that I felt I must tell you something about yourself.
I thought how tragic it would be if you were wasted. For there is
such a little time that your youth will last--such a little time.
The common hill-flowers wither, but they blossom again.
The laburnum will be as yellow next June as it is now.
In a month there will be purple stars on the clematis, and year
after year the green night of its leaves will hold its purple stars.
But we never get back our youth. The pulse of joy that beats in us
at twenty becomes sluggish. Our limbs fail, our senses rot.
We degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by the memory

of the passions of which we were too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations that we had not the courage to yield to. Youth! Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the world but youth!"

Dorian Gray listened, open-eyed and wondering. The spray of lilac fell from his hand upon the gravel. A furry bee came and buzzed round it for a moment. Then it began to scramble all over the oval stellated globe of the tiny blossoms. He watched it with that strange interest in trivial things that we try to develop when things of high import make us afraid, or when we are stirred by some new emotion for which we cannot find expression, or when some thought that terrifies us lays sudden siege to the brain and calls on us to yield. After a time the bee flew away. He saw it creeping into the stained trumpet of a Tyrian convolvulus. The flower seemed to quiver, and then swayed gently to and fro.

Suddenly the painter appeared at the door of the studio and made staccato signs for them to come in. They turned to each other and smiled.

"I am waiting," he cried. "Do come in. The light is quite perfect, and you can bring your drinks."

They rose up and sauntered down the walk together. Two green-and-white butterflies fluttered past them, and in the pear-tree at the corner of the garden a thrush began to sing.

"You are glad you have met me, Mr. Gray," said Lord Henry, looking at him.

"Yes, I am glad now. I wonder shall I always be glad?"

"Always! That is a dreadful word. It makes me shudder when I hear it. Women are so fond of using it. They spoil every romance by trying to make it last for ever. It is a meaningless word, too. The only difference between a caprice and a lifelong passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer."

As they entered the studio, Dorian Gray put his hand upon Lord Henry's arm.

"In that case, let our friendship be a caprice," he murmured, flushing at his own boldness, then stepped up on the platform and resumed his pose.

Lord Henry flung himself into a large wicker arm-chair and watched him.

The sweep and dash of the brush on the canvas made the only sound that broke the stillness, except when, now and then, Hallward stepped back to look at his work from a distance. In the slanting beams that streamed through the open doorway the dust danced and was golden.

The heavy scent of the roses seemed to brood over everything.

After about a quarter of an hour Hallward stopped painting, looked for a long time at Dorian Gray, and then for a long time at the picture, biting the end of one of his huge brushes and frowning. "It is quite finished," he cried at last, and stooping down he wrote his name in long vermilion letters on the left-hand corner of the canvas.

Lord Henry came over and examined the picture. It was certainly a wonderful work of art, and a wonderful likeness as well.

"My dear fellow, I congratulate you most warmly," he said.

"It is the finest portrait of modern times. Mr. Gray, come over and look at yourself."

The lad started, as if awakened from some dream.

"Is it really finished?" he murmured, stepping down from the platform.

"Quite finished," said the painter. "And you have sat splendidly to-day. I am awfully obliged to you."

"That is entirely due to me," broke in Lord Henry. "Isn't it, Mr. Gray?"

Dorian made no answer, but passed listlessly in front of his picture and turned towards it. When he saw it he drew back, and his cheeks flushed for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time. He stood there motionless and in wonder, dimly conscious that Hallward was speaking to him, but not catching the meaning of his words.

The sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation. He had never felt it before. Basil Hallward's compliments had seemed to him to be merely the charming exaggeration of friendship. He had listened to them, laughed at them, forgotten them. They had not influenced his nature. Then had come Lord Henry Wotton with his strange panegyric on youth, his terrible warning of its brevity. That had stirred him at the time, and now, as he stood gazing at the shadow of his own loveliness, the full reality of the description flashed across him. Yes, there would be a day when his face would be wrinkled and wizen, his eyes dim and colourless, the grace of his figure broken and deformed.

The scarlet would pass away from his lips and the gold steal from his hair. The life that was to make his soul would mar his body. He would become dreadful, hideous, and uncouth.

As he thought of it, a sharp pang of pain struck through him like a knife and made each delicate fibre of his nature quiver. His eyes deepened into amethyst, and across them came a mist of tears. He felt as if a hand of ice had been laid upon his heart.

"Don't you like it?" cried Hallward at last, stung a little by the lad's silence, not understanding what it meant.

"Of course he likes it," said Lord Henry. "Who wouldn't like it? It is one of the greatest things in modern art. I will give you anything you like to ask for it. I must have it."

"It is not my property, Harry."

"Whose property is it?"

"Dorian's, of course," answered the painter.

"He is a very lucky fellow."

"How sad it is!" murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. . . . If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that--for that--I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul

for that!"

"You would hardly care for such an arrangement, Basil," cried Lord Henry, laughing. "It would be rather hard lines on your work."

"I should object very strongly, Harry," said Hallward.

Dorian Gray turned and looked at him. "I believe you would, Basil. You like your art better than your friends. I am no more to you than a green bronze figure. Hardly as much, I dare say."

The painter stared in amazement. It was so unlike Dorian to speak like that.

What had happened? He seemed quite angry. His face was flushed and his cheeks burning.

"Yes," he continued, "I am less to you than your ivory Hermes or your silver Faun. You will like them always. How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose. I know, now, that when one loses one's good looks, whatever they may be, one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that. Lord Henry Wotton is perfectly right. Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself."

Hallward turned pale and caught his hand. "Dorian! Dorian!" he cried, "don't talk like that. I have never had such a friend as you, and I shall never have such another. You are not jealous of material things, are you?-- you who are finer than any of them!"

"I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die."

I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If the picture could change, and I could be always what I am now! Why did you paint it? It will mock me some day--mock me horribly!" The hot tears welled into his eyes; he tore his hand away and, flinging himself on the divan, he buried his face in the cushions, as though he was praying.

"This is your doing, Harry," said the painter bitterly.

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. "It is the real Dorian Gray--that is all."

"It is not."

"If it is not, what have I to do with it?"

"You should have gone away when I asked you," he muttered.

"I stayed when you asked me," was Lord Henry's answer.

"Harry, I can't quarrel with my two best friends at once, but between you both you have made me hate the finest piece of work I have ever done, and I will destroy it. What is it but canvas and colour? I will not let it come across our three lives and mar them."

Dorian Gray lifted his golden head from the pillow, and with pallid face and tear-stained eyes, looked at him as he walked over to the deal painting-table

that was set beneath the high curtained window. What was he doing there?

His fingers were straying about among the litter of tin tubes and dry brushes, seeking for something. Yes, it was for the long palette-knife, with its thin blade of lithe steel. He had found it at last. He was going to rip up the canvas.

With a stifled sob the lad leaped from the couch, and, rushing over to Hallward, tore the knife out of his hand, and flung it to the end of the studio. "Don't, Basil, don't!" he cried. "It would be murder!"

"I am glad you appreciate my work at last, Dorian," said the painter coldly when he had recovered from his surprise. "I never thought you would."

"Appreciate it? I am in love with it, Basil. It is part of myself. I feel that."

"Well, as soon as you are dry, you shall be varnished, and framed, and sent home. Then you can do what you like with yourself." And he walked across the room and rang the bell for tea. "You will have tea, of course, Dorian? And so will you, Harry? Or do you object to such simple pleasures?"

"I adore simple pleasures," said Lord Henry. "They are the last refuge of the complex. But I don't like scenes, except on the stage. What absurd fellows you are, both of you! I wonder who it was defined man as a rational animal. It was the most premature definition ever given. Man is many things, but he is not rational. I am glad he is not, after all-- though I wish you chaps would not squabble over the picture."

You had much better let me have it, Basil. This silly boy doesn't really want it, and I really do."

"If you let any one have it but me, Basil, I shall never forgive you!" cried Dorian Gray; "and I don't allow people to call me a silly boy."

"You know the picture is yours, Dorian. I gave it to you before it existed."

"And you know you have been a little silly, Mr. Gray, and that you don't really object to being reminded that you are extremely young."

"I should have objected very strongly this morning, Lord Henry."

"Ah! this morning! You have lived since then."

There came a knock at the door, and the butler entered with a laden tea-tray and set it down upon a small Japanese table. There was a rattle of cups and saucers and the hissing of a fluted Georgian urn. Two globe-shaped china dishes were brought in by a page. Dorian Gray went over and poured out the tea. The two men sauntered languidly to the table and examined what was under the covers.

"Let us go to the theatre to-night," said Lord Henry.

"There is sure to be something on, somewhere. I have promised to dine at White's, but it is only with an old friend, so I can send him a wire to say that I am ill, or that I am prevented from coming in consequence of a subsequent engagement. I think that would be a rather nice excuse: it would have all the surprise of candour."

"It is such a bore putting on one's dress-clothes," muttered Hallward.

"And, when one has them on, they are so horrid."

"Yes," answered Lord Henry dreamily, "the costume of the nineteenth century is detestable. It is so sombre, so depressing. Sin is the only real colour-element left in modern life."

"You really must not say things like that before Dorian, Harry."

"Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?"

"Before either."

"I should like to come to the theatre with you, Lord Henry," said the lad.

"Then you shall come; and you will come, too, Basil, won't you?"

"I can't, really. I would sooner not. I have a lot of work to do."

"Well, then, you and I will go alone, Mr. Gray."

"I should like that awfully."

The painter bit his lip and walked over, cup in hand, to the picture. "I shall stay with the real Dorian," he said, sadly.

"Is it the real Dorian?" cried the original of the portrait, strolling across to him. "Am I really like that?"

"Yes; you are just like that."

"How wonderful, Basil!"

"At least you are like it in appearance. But it will never alter," sighed Hallward. "That is something."

"What a fuss people make about fidelity!" exclaimed Lord Henry. "Why, even in love it is purely a question for physiology. It has nothing to do with our own will. Young men want to be faithful, and are not; old men want to be faithless, and cannot: that is all one can say."

"Don't go to the theatre to-night, Dorian," said Hallward. "Stop and dine with me."

"I can't, Basil."

"Why?"

"Because I have promised Lord Henry Wotton to go with him."

"He won't like you the better for keeping your promises. He always breaks his own. I beg you not to go."

Dorian Gray laughed and shook his head.

"I entreat you."

The lad hesitated, and looked over at Lord Henry, who was watching them from the tea-table with an amused smile.

"I must go, Basil," he answered.

"Very well," said Hallward, and he went over and laid down his cup on the tray. "It is rather late, and, as you have to dress,

you had better lose no time. Good-bye, Harry. Good-bye, Dorian. Come and see me soon. Come to-morrow."

"Certainly."

"You won't forget?"

"No, of course not," cried Dorian.

"And ... Harry!"

"Yes, Basil?"

"Remember what I asked you, when we were in the garden this morning."

"I have forgotten it."

"I trust you."

"I wish I could trust myself," said Lord Henry, laughing. "Come, Mr. Gray, my hansom is outside, and I can drop you at your own place. Good-bye, Basil. It has been a most interesting afternoon."

