



***Philistia: Final Chapter* (1884) by Grant Allen.**

Edited with an Introduction and Note

Scott C. Thompson

Abstract

Grant Allen's *Philistia* (1884) is a naturalist novel that provides a critical commentary on sociopolitical idealism and London's literary scene. The novel's original ending was revised and replaced during the publication process in favor of a happier ending. The original ending is published here in print for the first time, with a contextual introduction and textual note. The manuscript has previously been accessible to scholars only in the Paterno Library in University Park, Pennsylvania.

Keywords

Grant Allen; *Philistia*; late-Victorian Naturalism; idealism; Herbert Spencer

Date of Acceptance: 27 June 2023

Date of Publication: 5 July 2023

Double Blind Peer Reviewed

Recommended Citation:

Thompson, Scott C., ed. 2023. "*Philistia: Final Chapter* (1884) by Grant Allen, edited with an Introduction and Note." *Victorian Popular Fictions*, 5.1: 171-81. ISSN: 2632-4253 (online) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46911/JAYN7052>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



***Philistia*: Final Chapter (1884) by Grant Allen**

Edited with an Introduction and Note by Scott C. Thompson

Introduction

Philistia (1884) is Grant Allen's first full-length novel.¹ Though he would go on to be best known for the New Woman novels *The Woman Who Did* (1895) and *The Type-Writer Girl* (1897), in the mid-1880s Allen was attempting to break into a crowded literary market after spending the first part of his career developing his reputation as one of Britain's leading popular science writers.² *Philistia* was Allen's first and only attempt to write a 'serious' novel and establish himself as an important and intellectual literary author. Written in the naturalist style, *Philistia* contains a biting critique of sociopolitical idealism and London's literary and journalistic scene. Its pessimistic materialism, meditation on individual-social relations, and interest in London's literary scene anticipates the late-Victorian Naturalist movement of the 1890s and prefigures the work of Thomas Hardy, George Moore, and George Gissing. Despite its intellectual density, or perhaps because of it, the novel was a commercial and critical flop. However, the reading public never had a chance to read *Philistia* in its intended form. With the hope of making the novel more broadly appealing, Andrew Chatto, Allen's editor, suggested Allen revise the novel's ending.³ The original ending is sad, concluding with Ernest's impending death and his family impoverished. The published ending concludes on a much happier note, with Ernest recovering his health, writing a successful pamphlet, and earning a respectable salary.⁴ It is in the original ending, though, that Allen brings all of his themes together for their payoff: without it, Allen's full novelistic vision is incomplete. The following transcript presents *Philistia*'s original ending for the first time.

¹ For recent scholarship on Grant Allen's life and work, see Melchiori (2000), Morton (2001; 2005), and Greenslade and Rodgers (2005).

² See Keep (1997), Cameron (2008), and Cameron (2012) for scholarship on Allen's New Woman novels. For more on Allen's science writing, see Cowie (2000), Smith (2004), and Lightman (2007); for discussions of science in Allen's fiction, see Wilhelm (2018) and Mills (2021).

³ Some of the correspondences between Allen and Chatto are in the Letterbooks of Chatto and Windus at the University of Reading.

⁴ Chatto also suggested Allen change the title of the novel from "Born Out of Due Time" to *Philistia*.

Philistia is the story of the Le Breton brothers, Herbert, Ernest, and Ronald. Like *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), each brother embodies a distinctive quality: Herbert is an immoral socialite, Ernest is an idealistic socialist, and Ronald is a spiritually-attuned Christian. Unlike Dostoevsky's novel, *Philistia* is most interested in the middle brother, the politically-minded Ernest. Ernest is an ardent socialist, and his particular brand of socialism is modelled on the political philosophy of the Fabian Society, the socialist club founded in London the same year as *Philistia*'s publication. Both Ernest and the Fabians believe in gradual social reform rather than revolution, and it is this idea of gradual change into which Allen sinks his teeth. Despite Allen's socialist leanings, he was critical of the idealism of the slow political reform model. Over the course of *Philistia*'s narrative, Ernest's political idealism is methodically ground down by the social pressures and material necessities of life. He is ultimately forced to give up his lofty intellectual positions by poor financial, family, and health circumstances.

But this is not *Philistia*'s only critique. Anticipating later works like George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891), *Philistia* is also a cutting commentary on London's writerly world. When Ernest's other options for gainful employment dissipate because of his idealistic sociopolitical beliefs, he turns to journalism to provide for his family. He is commissioned to write on social topics he is passionate about, such as socialism and anti-imperialism, but his editor revises Ernest's writing to fit the magazine's propagandic narrative, which results in articles with Ernest's byline that argue the opposite of Ernest's true beliefs. This is the final stop in Ernest's downward spiral. At first he refuses to accept the payments for these adulterated articles, but his daughter's sickness and his own failing health force him to concede and accept the blood money.

This is the moment in which the two endings of the novel diverge. The published version ends with Ernest's influential friends helping him launch a successful and meaningful magazine titled "Social Reformer" and the appearance of improving health. In this version of the story, Ernest and his family have a happy ending, he is paid for and fulfilled in his work, and no one dies. However, the happy ending clashes with the overarching tone and themes the novel has spent its entire narrative meticulously constructing. *Philistia*'s tone is heart-wrenchingly sad, as the reader watches Ernest wrestle with the pain his idealism has caused his family against the backdrop of his impending death. The novel's thematic arch is one of descent, as Allen slowly brings his critique of Fabian gradualism to the fore through Ernest's personal and sociopolitical failures. In the original manuscript, Allen stays true to the novel's tone and brings his themes to their natural conclusion.

The original ending's plot is simple. Ernest's family lives in poverty, and his illness is getting worse. The chapter centres on a visit to Ernest by Arthur Berkeley, a longtime friend of the family and a professionally and financially successful playwright. After hearing the extent of Ernest's failing health, Arthur decides to reveal to Ernest that he has been in love with Edie, Ernest's wife, since the first time he met her. He stepped back from his romantic pursuit of Edie when Ernest began his relationship with her, but Arthur's love has never waned, and he has quietly been orchestrating from the background small financial successes for the family over the years, such as anonymously purchasing Edie's watercolours. Rather than being jealous or angry, Ernest embraces the news of Arthur's love for Edie in the spirit in which Arthur intended: as reassurance that Edie and Dot would be genuinely loved and well-provided for after Ernest's death. Ernest is noticeably happier around Edie and Dot, though Edie does not know what has inspired his sudden positive outlook on their situation. The novel closes on the sombre note of Ernest's personal and professional failings being punctuated by his imminent death, though there is a seemingly happier future for his family just beyond the final page of the book.

Allen's original ending keeps with the overarching tone of the novel and brings home the critique of idealism. Rather than concluding on an overly positive note and breaking with the tonal trajectory of the rest of the narrative, Allen's original ending provides closure for Ernest, Arthur, and Edie, while still facing the stark reality that Ernest is about to die and his struggle to maintain his personal ideals has ultimately come at a price higher than he is willing to pay. And this latter point is the most important. Without the original ending, Allen's critique is incomplete. Arthur, in response to Ernest's lament over the idea of leaving his family in abject poverty, acknowledges that Ernest has lived his life somewhat quixotically but blames the world rather than his friend:

The fault has not been yours, but the world's that you live in. If you have utterly failed, it has been partly because of your health and your constitution, partly because you have tried to live more righteously than the rest of us. You need have nothing to reproach yourself with, Ernest, dear Ernest: reproach rather those of us who have less earnestness, less Quixotism, or whatever else you choose to call it, then you have.

In response to Arthur's attempt to frame Ernest's idealism in a positive light, Ernest, for the first time in the novel, finally concedes defeat; he admits that at the end of his road he would rather give up his idealistic beliefs in favour of material comfort:

"Ah, yes," he said with a sigh, "that may be so or it may be not: but whichever way it is, it won't relieve me from the terrible thought that I am leaving Edie and Dot to the tender mercies of the unknown – and that's the only thing in heaven or earth I care a pin about now. Perhaps it's treason to the light and the right – I don't know – I hope not: but I should not mind today one jot or tittle for all the theories and ideals Herr Max and I have ever dreamed about, if only I could find a hundred a year, one poor paltry hundred a year, to leave to Edie, to keep her and dear little Dot from abject poverty."

This shift in attitude is monumental for Ernest. The claim not to care "one jot or tittle for all the theories and ideals" is an abandonment of the moral idealism that has defined Ernest throughout most of his life. He has grappled to his idealistic identity throughout all the hardships he has encountered across the novel: the loss of family, friends, fortune, employment, and reputation. But it is here, facing death and the reality that his family is on the verge of starvation, that he finally breaks.

The overarching pessimism of *Philistia* aligns it with the naturalist genre, the literary style that had dominated French literature since the 1860s and was slowly but surely permeating the English market. In his genre-defining essay "Le Roman expérimental" (1880), Zola famously argued for a literature governed by science.⁵ He defined his version of naturalistic writing as experimental fiction by drawing on Claude Bernard's theory of experimental medicine, which sought to transition the practice of medicine from an art to an experimental science. Zola was also influenced by the developments in evolutionary science emerging from England. Referencing Charles Darwin, Zola brought the importance of "surroundings" into the centre of his theory of Naturalism: "Man is not alone; he lives in society, in a social condition; and consequently, for us novelists, this social condition unceasingly modifies the phenomena" ([1880] 1964: 20). Therefore, the ultimate task of the experimental novelist, the "great study," is to track "the reciprocal effect of society on the individual and the individual on society" (20).

⁵ Zola's essay appears at the end of the high-water decades of French Naturalism (the 1860s and 1870s, roughly) and at the beginning of the rise of Naturalism in England.

Allen was also inspired by English evolutionary theorists and had developed a reputation as a populariser of Darwin and Herbert Spencer's theories of evolution. Allen's *Philistia* makes central the tension between individuals and society and incorporates Spencer's social evolutionary theory.

For Spencer, the guiding principle of the universe was evolution. This could be seen at both the individual and social level. In his essay "The Social Organism" (1860), Spencer articulates the similarities between individuals and society through his extended metaphor of the society-as-organism, arguing that society was organic and therefore governed by the laws of evolution. This view of society shaped Spencer's political philosophy as well: he was a staunch individualist and believed that state-sponsored welfare programs, poor laws, and socialist movements interfered with society's evolutionary development toward a perfect civilization.⁶ In his *Social Statics* (1851) he argues "No power on Earth, no cunningly-devised laws of statesmen, no world-rectifying schemes of the humane, no communist panaceas, no reforms that men ever did broach or ever will broach, can diminish [the process of social evolution] one jot" (Spencer [1851] 1910: 80). And Spencer was keenly aware of the harshness of this position. He acknowledges "[i]t seems hard that a labourer incapacitated by sickness from competing with his stronger fellows should have to bear the resulting privations. It seems hard that widows and orphans should be left to struggle for life and death" ([1851] 1910: 79). "Nevertheless," he concludes, "when regarded not separately but in connexion with the interests of universal humanity, these harsh fatalities are seen to be full of beneficence" (79). Allen disagreed with his intellectual mentor on this controversial point, believing that individualism and political socialism could coexist within an overarching system of evolutionary development, and he builds his vision into *Philistia*.

In the original ending, Allen brings together his nuanced consideration of the relationship between individualism and socialism. Almost as if in direct response to Spencer, *Philistia*'s original ending presents the reader with the sick labourer in Ernest and the soon-to-be widow and fatherless child left "to struggle for life and death" once Ernest is gone in Edie and Dot. Ernest's socialist idealism is what led him to the predicament he finds himself in during the final movement of the novel. If he had simply taken advantage of the social and financial opportunities presented to him throughout his life, he would have been a wealthy socialite able to leave his family with means after his death. Instead, Ernest admirably sacrifices his personal success in pursuit of his ideals. However, Ernest also embodies many of the best qualities associated with individualism: even in the face of death and destitution, he refuses to accept handouts and desires to work for what little he has, and he is only able to find contentment with his lot after Arthur reveals his love for Edie and promises to care for her and Dot after Ernest is gone. In other words, Arthur's assistance will not be based on charity for those less fortunate than himself but on genuine love, allowing Ernest to feel as if his family will be provided for on their own merits and not through social philanthropy. Arthur is Ernest's foil in many ways: he comes from the working class and has risen up the social ranks through hard work and financial accumulation. But despite his professional ambition and success, he has retained his humanity and consistently provides emotional and financial support to his family and friends. In these ways, both Ernest and Arthur exemplify the best of both worlds. They display the work ethic and self-reliance that theorists like Spencer associated with individualism and, by extension, social evolution, while also preforming the socialist principles of philanthropy and empathy for those less fortunate.

In the published version of *Philistia*, Ernest's idealism is tried but never ultimately ruptures, and it presents Allen's first novel as a feel-good story about a man who triumphs over

⁶ For more on Spencer's theory of evolution and its relationship to socialism, see Lightman (2015).

his social environment and circumstances. Allen's original ending, however, reveals the novel's true form: a serious story that grapples with contemporary sociopolitical issues and follows a man's gradual grinding down by his life circumstances and a commentary on the complexities of the relationship between individualism and socialism. Ultimately, Ernest is a flawed but sympathetic hero whose desire to better the lives of the less fortunate remains unrealised and comes at the cost of his and his family's destitution. The only ray of hope that filters into the novel's finale comes in the form of Arthur, a hard-working individualist whose financial successes have placed him in a position to be useful to those around him. Although commercially and critically unsuccessful upon publication, *Philistia* should be read and considered as it was originally intended by its author. Allen's vision for his first novel was to create a serious work of literature, and, in light of the original ending, it is clear he succeeded.

Works Cited

- Cameron, Brooke. 2008. "Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did*: Spencerian Individualism and Teaching New Women to Be Mothers." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 51.3: 281-301. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.2487/elt.51.3\(2008\)0025](https://doi.org/10.2487/elt.51.3(2008)0025)
- Cameron, Brooke S. 2012. "Sister of the Type: The Feminist Collective in Grant Allen's *The Type-Writer Girl*." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 40: 229-44. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150311000337>
- Cowie, David. 2000. "The Evolutionist at Large: Grant Allen, Scientific Naturalism and Victorian Culture." PhD Thesis, University of Kent.
- Greenslade, William and Terence Rodgers, eds. 2005. *Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.
- Keep, Christopher. 1997. "The Cultural Work of the Type-Writer Girl." *Victorian Studies*, 40.3: 401-26.
- Lightman, Bernard. 2016. "The 'History' of Victorian Scientific Naturalism: Huxley, Spencer, and the 'End' of Natural History." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 58: 17-23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsc.2015.12.004>
- Lightman, Bernard. 2007. *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Melchiori, Barbara Arnett. 2000. *Grant Allen: The Downward Path that Leads to Fiction*. Rome: Bulzoni.
- Mills, Beth. 2021. "'Weird and fantastic realism': Science and Stories in the Work of Grant Allen." *Victorian Popular Fictions*, 3.1: 140-54. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46911/DTMM2898>
- Morton, Peter. 2005. *The Busiest Man in England: Grant Allen and the Writing Trade, 1875-1900*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Morton, Peter. 2001. "Grant Allen 1848-1899: A Centenary Reassessment." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 44.3: 404-40.
- Smith, Jonathan. 2004. "Grant Allen, Physiological Aesthetics, and the Dissemination of Darwin's Botany." In *Science Serialized: Representations of the Sciences in Nineteenth-Century Periodicals*, edited by Geoffrey Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth, 285-305. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Spencer, Herbert. 1860. "The Social Organism." *Westminster Review*, 17.1: 90-121.
- Spencer, Herbert. Spencer [1851] 1910. *Social Statics: Abridged and Revised*. London: Watts & Co.
- Wilhelm, Lindsay. 2018. "Sex in Utopia: The Evolutionary Hedonism of Grant Allen and Oscar Wilde." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 46: 403-24. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150318000074>
- Zola, Émile. [1880] 1964. "The Experimental Novel." In *The Experimental Novel and Other Essays by Émile Zola*. Translated by Belle M. Sherman. New York: Haskell House.

Textual Note

This document is a transcription of Allen's handwritten draft of the unpublished original ending of *Philistia*. The novel's full manuscript is part of Pennsylvania State University's Eberly Family Special Collections Library Repository, located in the Paterno Library in University Park, Pennsylvania. The manuscript can be found at 02282, in Box 6, series 2, item 5. The manuscript is written on plain paper, and the original ending consists of seven folios. On the recto of the first folio there are two notes that read "to be reconsidered?" and "This portion not published intended as last chapter." It is my assumption that Allen's editor is responsible for the former note and an archivist the latter note. The folios are unnumbered. I have marked where the folios begin with square brackets and "fol.": e.g. [fol. 1].

On the whole, Allen's draft is clean and well-written. There are a few places in which he crossed out words and wrote new words above them, and there are a handful of places in which he added words to lines using a caret. There was only one moment, in the penultimate paragraph, in which he appears to have missed a word; I have included the word I believe makes the most sense in brackets.



Philistia: Final Chapter (1884)

Grant Allen

[fol. 1] It was a bitter cold November afternoon, and Ernest sat craning [?] close over the fire – not too large a one, and carefully heaped up with bits of cinder and small matted lumps of black coal – warming his pale thin hands sedulously by the ruddy glow. Edie was working on her water-colours by the table, when a knock at the door announced a visitor, and Arthur Berkeley entered gently, a roll of music in his hand, and the usual smile of kindness on his hearty face. “Well,” he said, turning to Edie, “and what does Macgillivray report about the patient this morning, Mrs. Le Breton?”

The tears rose in Edie’s eyes too fast for an answer; and it was fortunate for her that just at that moment Dot’s quick cry from the attic nursery called her away at once to attend to her little one. She could not have borne to tell Arthur the real truth about her husband.

“Sit down, Berkeley,” Ernest said, beckoning him to a chair. “I must tell you what Macgillivray thinks about the case. It’s no use disguising the matter any longer, for he has spoken to Edie this morning; and though the outlook is black and blank, I suppose we shall have to face it. He says there is no hope of my living through the winter.”

“No hope,” Berkeley said, pitifully. “No hope. Did he say no hope, Ernest? Poor Mrs. Le Breton!” The tears came quickly into his own eyes, and he did not try to repress them.

Ernest sat looking gloomily at the fire, while Berkeley took the thin hands in his, and quietly soothed them as a woman might have done. “Ernest,” he said, “I know it’s a blank prospect, but not perhaps quite so bad as you think it is. I know what weighs you down: it’s the thought that when you are gone, your wife and Dot will be quite unprovided for. But you have friends, a few friends, my dear, dear fellow, and we will do what we can for them, for your sake – and for her’s also.” He said the last words a little significantly, perhaps, but Ernest was too much absorbed in his trouble to notice the faint shadow of intonation that involuntarily accompanied them.

“Berkeley,” he said, “it is all too dark, too hopeless, too terrible. I would not care one whit what I had to endure, myself: I could live on in poverty and misery for ever without grumbling if that were all: if only I myself were concerned, I could say cheerfully, like a

wholesome pessimist, ‘The universe is all wrong from top to bottom – and it doesn’t matter.’ But it’s the idea of leaving Edie and Dot to fight their own poor way helplessly through this dreadful world that crushes and overwhelms me. What can she ever do for a living? How can she ever save herself from utter starvation? What will she have to look to when I am gone? It’s bad enough, in all con [fol. 2] science, even now while I am here to earn a little money somehow by my pen: but what will it be like, oh Berkeley, what on earth will it be like when she’s left utterly alone without me? And to think, too, that when I married her I only wanted to make her happy! Happy! Happy! Why, what have I ever done, in spite of myself, but make her whole life wretched and miserable! Oh, Arthur, it’s too terrible!”

“No, not wretched and miserable, Ernest,” Arthur Berkeley put in soothingly, as Ernest buried his face in his hands: “not wretched, Ernest: never that. You have given her love and care that she, if any woman, could appreciate, and you have done your best for her with all your might. The fault has not been yours, but the world’s that you live in. If you have utterly failed, it has been partly because of your health and your constitution, partly because you have tried to live more righteously than the rest of us. You need have nothing to reproach yourself with, Ernest, dear Ernest: reproach rather those of us who have less earnestness, less Quixotism, or whatever else you choose to call it, then you have.”

Ernest looked up at him with the dull sadness of utter despondency. “Ah, yes,” he said with a sigh, “that may be so or it may be not: but whichever way it is, it won’t relieve me from the terrible thought that I am leaving Edie and Dot to the tender mercies of the unknown – and that’s the only thing in heaven or earth I care a pin about now. Perhaps it’s treason to the light and the right – I don’t know – I hope not: but I should not mind today one jot or tittle for all the theories and ideals Herr Max and I have ever dreamed about, if only I could find a hundred a year, one poor paltry hundred a year, to leave to Edie, to keep her and dear little Dot from abject poverty.”

Arthur Berkeley looked at him with a woman’s pity. If only he dare make up his mind to tell him everything! Ernest Le Breton was a doomed man; his case was utterly hopeless; it might give him a little consolation, some hope for the future, before he died! But Arthur shrank from the disclosure, as well he might; he feared that even with his delicate handling, it might seem too cold-blooded and strangely unconventional to a dying husband. So he held his peace, and only said once more, “But you have friends, dear Ernest, you have friends who will be eager and honoured to help them. There’s myself, for instance: I’m a rich man now; and you know that anything I can ever do for you or them will be gladly done.”

Ernest only rocked himself sadly and desperately to and fro. “It’s a tragedy,” he said, gloomily, “a horrid tragedy. Poor Edie! She began her little bright life with a brother she was [fol. 3] proud of, and a husband she loved; and now the brother is dead, and the husband is dying, and she’s to be left alone to the proffered charity of kind-hearted strangers.”

“Not strangers, Ernest; oh, don’t say strangers,” Arthur Berkeley pleaded almost passionately. “You’ll hurt and grieve me to the heart if you call me a stranger – me, who have always felt towards you and your wife like a real brother and sister. I have loved you, Ernest, better than I ever loved anybody, except my dear Father – and one other person. Let me help you now and always: we have both been workers: your work has been unfortunate; mine has been lucky; why shouldn’t we share together for good or for evil? You would have shared with me, I know, and that willingly, if the cases had been exactly opposite. Oh, Ernest, do let me send you or go with you, as a last chance, to some warm climate, Egypt, or Madeira, or the Mediterranean! I could easily pay the cost without ever feeling it: and you know, it was you who befriended me first when I was a poor and struggling undergraduate at Magdalen!”

Ernest shook his head again. "It's no use," he said bitterly: "you're the kindest and most generous man on earth, dear Berkeley, dear, good, kind Arthur; but it's no use; Macgillivray told me so himself this morning. Edie asked him – a shot at a venture, for she knew we couldn't go – Edie asked him whether a winter on the Nile might possibly save me, and he said, no, I should most likely die before I reached the Mediterranean. Too ill to be moved; nothing for it but leaving me here to face it. Besides, what would be the use of it, even if I could go? It would only help me to drag out another wretched year, giving Edie another twelve months of misery, and then to die after all, and leave her as penniless as ever. No, no, Arthur: you're the best and kindest of men; but it's a tragedy, I tell you, and you can't help it!"

Arthur Berkeley looked at him again keenly. "Even a tragedy," he said in a very grave tone, "may have its last scene at least lightened a little. I believe I could tell you something, if I dared, Ernest, that might help you to die a little happier."

"Would it help Edie to live afterwards?" Ernest asked with feverish eagerness. "It's not myself I care about: – what does it matter to the world whether one useless head like mine is in it or out of it? – it's Edie, Edie, Edie! I've wrecked her bright little life for her, at its very onset, all unwillingly; and if only I could do something for her now, something to save her from beggary and despair when I am gone, I feel as if I should positively die laughing! Oh, Arthur, just think that there are boatloads of rich men, selfish idle rich men, with their hundreds and their thousands, who are running about from Nice to Algeria and from Vichy to Alexandria, puling and grumbling all the while, just to lengthen out their own wretched unhealthy lives a few more years or so; and yet they might lie down quietly and die tomorrow, leaving their wives and children not only safe but splendidly provided for! What a luxury! If only I could do that, I should feel as if a whole ton weight [fol. 4] of anxiety was taken off my poor thin shoulders. But it's no use, it's no use crying over it, and we must face the unutterable!"

"Ernest," Arthur Berkeley began again, "the end is going to come, I know, and so I will tell you all; I *must* tell you all; and I believe you will not misunderstand me. There is one person who will make it the first duty of his life, when you are gone, to take care of your wife and Dot: and that's myself. Do you remember, Ernest, dear Ernest" – and he took the thin white hand once more caressingly in his – "how you came to lunch at my rooms in Magdalen once, when Miss Oswald was paying her first visit to Oxford? Well, that time, you know, you fell in love with her, and shortly after, you asked her to be your wife. But at that same time, there was somebody else who fell in love with her – I know you will let me tell you now – and that was me. From the moment I saw her, I said to myself, 'I shall live for her and work for her until I die.' I made up my mind that if she would listen to me I should try to deserve her for my wife. So it happened that one day at Magdalen I had said to myself, 'Tomorrow I shall go to Calcombe Pomeroy, and ask her whether she can love me as I love her.' On that very day, a letter came from poor Harry to tell me that you had proposed to her, Ernest, and that she had accepted you. It was a blow to me, a terrible blow; but I did not recoil from it: I determined in my own heart that I should act loyally to her and to you, and I've tried to do so ever since. I said with my heart, 'Though she is not to be mine, I can still work for her and watch over her. Whatever I earn shall be hers, even if she never knows it: whatever I do shall be for her, and for her husband.' For I loved you too, Ernest, though you were my rival; I have never ceased to feel towards you and regard you as a brother. Now, whatever is mine is yours and hers, dear old friend and brother: and when you are gone, it shall all be hers still. Dot shall be mine: and I shall take care of them both as precious and tenderly as you yourself could do if you were still living." He watched Ernest's face narrowly as he spoke, and he saw by the light in Ernest's eyes that Ernest's heart did not misunderstand him.

They both looked vacantly into the fire place for a few seconds, and then Ernest in a low voice broke the silence. "How strange," he said, "Arthur, that I never thought of that

before! It's a difficult thing to talk about it – an impossible thing to talk about: and yet I see it now quite clearly. You have always kept your feelings in reserve, but I can see them now, and see how much they have always led you to do for us. Dear Arthur, it's better so. Don't let us say anything more about it: only, how much better for her it would have been, if it could have been so from the beginning! You could have made her so much happier than I have done! But it doesn't matter, now, Arthur; it doesn't matter now: I see the future growing clearer, and the darkness breaking, oh, so unexpectedly! Arthur, Arthur, dear Arthur, [fol. 5] perhaps it's wrong and unmanly of me to say so, but, oh, you have made me so much happier!" And he put down his face between his hands once more, and sobbed deep sobs of relief and almost of pleasure. So long as Edie and Dot were safe, what did he care about himself or the future?

Yes, it was all quite plain and clear to him now; and he knew enough of Arthur and enough of Edie to feel confident that though sorrow might last for a night, joy would surely come with the morning. Arthur was really better suited to her – at least he thought so then – than he himself had been: and Arthur's genius could make her rich and happy, while he could only have made her.... well, well, he couldn't bear to think of that in this moment of joyful reaction. Edie was saved, Edie, Edie! Oh, thank heaven for Arthur, who could take care of Dot and Edie.

He sat there sobbing long and quietly, without saying a word to Arthur; and Arthur merely laid his hand on his friend's arm in tremulous fear lest his words might have been half misinterpreted. But Ernest was far too full of Edie, and Edie's deliverance, to think of that other selfish aspect of the question. "Arthur," he said at last, feeling the tremulous hand quivering upon his shoulder, and guessing the reason instinctively, "Arthur, dear good Arthur, don't fancy you have hurt me in any way by what you have been saying: I know you far too well not to know why you have told me this now: and I love Edie far too well not to be perfectly content and happy now that I know it. Oh, Arthur, you have taken the load off my heart, and I feel now as light as feather!"

Arthur grasped his hand fervently, and said only "Thank you, Ernest."

There was another long pause, and then Ernest began once more: "We must never say another word about this, Arthur, even to one another; and of course I shan't be able to tell Edie why I am so happy: but she will find out that I *am* happy, and that in itself will help to lighten her sorrows a little, even though she will never be able to guess the reason: for the present, I mean; because some day of course you will tell her, Arthur. But a light begins to dawn upon me now, that I never saw before. It was you, Arthur, who ordered Edie's watercolours."

Arthur nodded his head unwillingly.

Ernest gave a deep sigh. Again he waited a moment. Then he said with a deeper sigh still, "And it was you who asked for the letters for the Sydney Weekly Mercury."

Arthur nodded a second time. "I didn't mean ever to tell you that," he whispered, "but if you ask me point blank I can't deny it." The tears came thicker still into Ernest's eyes. "Oh, Arthur, Arthur," he said, clasping his friend's hand feverishly once more, "we owe you too much: you have been too good to us. And yet it is [fol. 6] hard to think that even the little we fancied we earned ourselves was not really of our own earning."

As they sat there, gazing intently at one another, Edie came down from the attic, bearing little Dot poised lightly upon her shoulder. Arthur looked at her for a second, and then turned away his eyes at once: he would not let Ernest see him looking at her. How different, he thought, from that half forgotten Miss Butterfly, who flitted so daintily around the Magdalen walks that far October term in the dear past years; that little Miss Butterfly who spread her bright wings so joyously to the sunshine, and seemed all made for gaiety and airiness! And yet, how beautiful still, how much more beautiful than ever, with her bright eyes made tenderer by sorrow, and

the beauty of holiness speaking eloquently from her silent lips! “Oh little Miss Butterfly,” he thought to himself, in the old daydream phraseology, “what would I not give if only I could save this dying husband of yours for you; if only, by sacrificing all I have, I could spare your sweet tired eyes one day more of weeping and anxiety! Not for myself, dear little Miss Butterfly, not for myself have I ever cared for you, but for your own dear sake!”

He rose to go; and as he went, he grasped Ernest’s hand with a speaking pressure, and Ernest grasped his in return with grateful fervour. Dot smiled gaily when he waved his hand to her; and Dot’s father, seeing the child smile with the unconscious gaiety of babyhood, smiled at her in return as he had not done for many a sad long day. Even Edie, who did not know the reason why, noticed the unwonted brightness of that smile, and felt a little gladder in her heart for a moment than she had often felt lately.

That night, Edie could not imagine why Ernest went to bed in such a strangely happy humour, or why he slept more soundly than she had ever known him sleep since the first beginning of his illness. At seven o’clock next morning, he was sleeping still; and when she turned from him to Dot, it was hard to say which of the two slumbers was the most profoundly childlike and unbroken. She knew in her heart that Arthur Berkeley must have been saying something to Ernest which had wonderfully lightened the greatness of his burden.

Next day, when Arthur called in the morning, Edie ran out upon the staircase to meet him. “Ernest has had a splendid night, Mr. Berkeley,” she said anxiously: “but though he’s in excellent spirits this morning – extraordinary spirits, indeed, and as light-hearted as a boy – I’m afraid he’s really dreadfully feverish. He says he doesn’t mind dying now, though he won’t tell me why: and I’m afraid, oh Mr. Berkeley, I’m terribly afraid it won’t be very [long] before he does die now.”

[fol. 7] Arthur would have given the world to take her hand in his and press it sympathetically in his friendship: but he only listened in serious silence to her weeping words, and followed Edie with bated breath into the little sitting room.

The End.