

***LLOYD
C. DOUGLAS***

***DOCTOR
HUDSON'S
SECRET
JOURNAL***

Lloyd C. Douglas

Doctor Hudson's Secret Journal

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

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SHORTLY after the quiet appearance of *Magnificent Obsession*, eleven years ago, the author became aware that he had not completed his task.

The letters which began to pour in were not of the sort usually referred to as "fan mail." Nobody wanted an autograph, a photograph, or a lock of hair. Not many bothered to remark that they had been entertained by the story. But they all asked questions and most of the questions were serious, wistful, and challenging.

The theme of the novel had derived from a little handful of verses midway of the Sermon on the Mount, but all references to the enchanted passage were purposely vague, the author feeling that a treasure hunt in Holy Writ would probably do his customers no harm. Within the first twelve months after publication, more than two thousand people had written to inquire, "What page of the Bible did the sculptor carry in his wallet?" We left off counting these queries, but they have continued to come, all through these intervening years.

Second in importance to this inquiry was a very searching question, phrased in terms ranging all the way from polite hinting to forthright impudence: "Do you honestly believe in this thing—or were you just writing a story?" After a while, letters began to arrive from persons who said they had tried it, and it worked; though they were careful not to be too specific in reporting their adventures,

aware that if they told they would be sorry. A few lamented the cost of unrewarded experiments and denounced the whole idea as a lot of hooey.

The task of dealing sympathetically with this strange correspondence became a grave responsibility. No stock letter, done on a mimeograph, would serve the purpose. It was necessary that individual replies be sent to all earnest inquirers. One dared not risk the accusation that, having advocated an expensive and venturesome technique for generating personal power, the author was thereafter too busy or lazy to care whether anybody benefited by such investments. It was interesting to observe how wide a variety of people came forward with questions. A single post might contain inquiries from a high school boy, a college professor, a farmer's wife, a physician, a pious old lady, an actress, a postman, a preacher, and a sailor. Some of the questions were practically unanswerable, but it wasn't quite fair to limit one's reply to a laconic "I don't know." Frequently one's counsel was pitiably inadequate, but not because it was coolly casual or thoughtlessly composed. I suppose that if all of these letters were compiled and printed they would fill several volumes as large as the novel which evoked them.

A third question, which began to show up promptly, inquired, "Is the complete text of Doctor Hudson's journal available in print?" The correct answer to that was "No." It not only wasn't in print; it had not been written. Occasionally someone would counter, "How were you able to quote from Doctor Hudson's journal, if there never was any such thing?"—an amusingly artless question, to be sure;

but an obviously honest tribute to the realism of a document which had no existence in fact.

Readers of *Magnificent Obsession* will recall that, early in the story, an eminent brain surgeon, Doctor Wayne Hudson, lost his life by drowning. Among his effects there was found a journal containing some amazing memoirs. Because of the singular nature of these experiences, Doctor Hudson had concealed his story in a baffling code, hoping by this means to insure it against a hasty perusal by persons who might view it with careless indifference or a half-contemptuous incredulity.

Throughout the novel, "quotations" from and adversions to this laboriously decoded journal provided the explanation of young Merrick's belief and behaviour as he endeavoured to follow in his mentor's footsteps. And perhaps it is not an unreasonable request if the people who have found a measure of inspiration in those brief and detached fragments from the Hudson journal should want to see the whole of it.

This book is related to *Magnificent Obsession* as an overture rather than a sequel. Therefore it may be read without any bewilderment by persons unacquainted with the novel.

But it is only natural if, during the belated composition of this journal, the author should have visualized an audience largely composed of those to whom Doctor Hudson is no stranger. I find myself surveying this audience—however widely scattered over the earth—as an assembly of people friendly to one another—and to me. I feel that we are somehow related in a common cause, a common quest. In

this audience there are many hundreds of gracious souls to whom I am indebted for confidences and comradeships which have enriched my life and emphasized for me the significance of spiritual forces.

I am particularly hopeful that this book may be approved by my friends of the clergy who were primarily responsible for the wide distribution of the novel. Too frequently one hears discrediting criticism of the ministers on the ground that they are too much occupied with the material success of their own denominations; that they are inhospitable to new evaluations of enduring verities; that they are more concerned with "churchianity" than Christianity. This indictment is, for the most part, unfair.

In *Magnificent Obsession* there was no talk about the importance of attending religious services or supporting religious institutions in any manner whatsoever. Nobody in the book ever put his nose inside a church, except on one occasion when Bobby Merrick went to hear his friend, Doctor McLaren, by special and urgent invitation.

This attitude was not intended to convey a feeling of disregard for religious organizations on the part of the author. The Church was conspicuously and wilfully omitted from the story for the reason that in almost all of the "religious" novels the Church serves as the axis on which the plot spins. It was my hope to interest not only the people who rely upon the Church for their moral and spiritual instruction but to suggest a way of life to many others—seldom approached in this manner—who have never looked to the Church for answers to their riddles.

It was with some trepidation that the author adopted this course, for he had spent most of his life in the service of the Church; his closest friends were church people; he hoped they would take no offence; he wondered if they would understand. And they understood.

In spite of the fact that *Magnificent Obsession* had almost nothing to do with the Church, plus the fact that most of the people in the novel were distinctly worldly, and some were addicted to debatable habits, and a few were shockingly profane, it was the clergy of America and the British Empire who carried that novel to success. They may have wished that it contained fewer cuss-words and cocktails, but they had the sportsmanship to overlook the frailties it admitted and approve the faith it upheld. It was well worth the bother of writing a novel—just to find that out.

FACSIMILE OF FIRST PAGE OF THE HUDSON JOURNAL

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TRANSLATION:

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Reader I consider you my friend and commend your perseverance. Having achieved the ability to read this book, you have also the right to possess it. My reasons for doing this in cipher will be made plain as you proceed.

BRIGHTWOOD HOSPITAL, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

October sixth, 1913, 11 p.m.

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THIS has been an eventful day. We formally opened our new hospital this afternoon. The city's medical profession was ably represented and many of our well-to-do philanthropists came for tea and a tour of inspection.

Everybody commented on our astounding luck in disposing of the shabby old building in Cadillac Square for a quarter of a million. Lucky, they said, that our site had been chosen for the new skyscraping office building. And what a lucky dog I was, added the mayor, that this exquisitely landscaped four-acre tract came onto the market just as we had begun to look for a new location.

I nodded an appreciative assent to all of these pleasant comments on my good luck, but felt rather traitorous; for it wasn't luck. Nothing that has happened to me since June of 1905 could be properly called luck. I am in the grip of something that I don't understand; but, whatever it is, there's nothing capricious about it.

But if I had blurted out some such remark to the mayor or good old Mrs. Arlington, or Nick Merrick, there would have been a lot of explaining to do (or dodge) so I cheerfully agreed with them that I was lucky. Had I told them the whole story about our acquirement of the new hospital, they would have thought me stark mad.

Billy Werner called up from New York, about four, to offer congratulations and regret he could not be here. He said, "We're square now, Doc, except for the interest on that loan." And I said, "Don't ever try to pay that back, Billy. It might upset the apple-cart."

Frequently, during these past few years, I have fairly burned with desire to confide in someone. The weight of my secrets has been almost crushing at times. But I have this load to carry alone as long as I live. The strange events which have come to pass through my private investments do not permit of an airing: their good results might be jeopardized. I know a few other people whom I suspect of bearing the same sort of burden, but we can't discuss it. I often wonder if it is not more difficult to suppress a great exaltation than to conceal a secret sorrow.

An hour ago, Nancy Ashford paused at my office door to say good night. She was drooping a little with fatigue from the day's unusual excitements.

"Well," she said, wearily, "you have put over a great project."

I wanted to invite her in and tell her how we got this new hospital. It wouldn't have taken very long. She knows the beginning of the story. I needed only to say, "Nancy, do you remember the woman we had with us for six months, the one with the broken neck?"

And Nancy would have replied, "Of course—Mrs. Werner—and her husband was sore about the bills."

I would have gone on from there. Mrs. Werner had had the best room in the hospital and a deal of extra attention, much of which was unnecessary but expensive. Everybody

assumed that the Werners were wealthy. He had a big store downtown, and they lived in a beautiful home. There was a rumour that they were extravagant. She was always travelling about, and he was reputed a gambler.

It wasn't my job to supervise hospital statements, but Werner's must have been pretty high. When he was billed for the surgery, the amount was not excessive, but it was in the same general bracket with the other expenses of his wife's illness. I was not informed, until some time afterwards, that when he paid the bill he made quite a scene, protesting that he had been overcharged.

About that time there was a story afloat about town that Werner was in serious straits financially. He had offended the president of his bank and had been unreasonably cocky with almost everybody else. He had no one to turn to in his emergency. Perhaps his irascibility, in his dealings with us, was all of a piece with his other blunders. But—once upon a time he had been able to build up a fine business. Something had happened to him. He needed to be rehabilitated.

One morning, in *The Free Press*, I noticed a conspicuous advertisement of Werner's home for sale at a cruel sacrifice. On impulse, I went down to his office immediately. He was reluctant to see me and greeted me with a glum grunt and a surly scowl. I told him I had come to lend him twenty thousand—the amount he had asked for his house. He could put that into his business, and perhaps save his home. He was suspicious, and wanted to know what rate of interest I expected. I said I didn't want any interest because I

intended to use it for another purpose. He asked me if I was feeling well, and brought me a drink of water.

Of course, that small loan wouldn't have been a drop in his dry bucket, considered as mere dollars and cents. But the fact that I had volunteered to let him have it when he was all but on the rocks, and it seemed like pouring so much money into a rat-hole—and he knew that I knew it—had the effect of a shot of strychnine.

He paced up and down the room, for a minute or two, and then snapped out, "Thanks, Doc. You'll not regret it."

"Not if you keep it a secret," I replied. "This must not be told."

I made no effort to keep track of his activities but it was evident that Werner had gone at it again with tremendous energy. Perhaps he plunged recklessly. I do not know the details of that story. But soon he was enlarging his store and in command of his mercantile field. Three years after that, he organized the company that put up the new office building. Because he had conceived the project, his board of directors deferred to his judgment in many matters including the selection of a site. He urged the purchase of our old hospital.

So—that's the way we got the new hospital. But I couldn't recite any of this even to Nancy, who would have been stirred and mystified by the story. I can hear the way she would have murmured, "Well—of all things!"

I did not detain her. I simply smiled, nodded, and told her to go to bed; that she had earned a good night's rest. A remarkable woman. Sometimes I wonder how much she knows about my odd investments. She has witnessed my

signature, occasionally, on papers that must have excited her curiosity. Perhaps she thinks I am living a double life. I should like to set her mind at ease about that. But it is impossible. My lips are sealed. She will have to draw her own conclusions.

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I suppose I should be content with the rewards of my dynamic discovery, even if not permitted to disclose it to others. It has brought me innumerable satisfactions; an excellent rating in a difficult field of surgery, a position of influence in civic affairs, a comfortable home, and—above all—the enduring gratitude of a large number of persons whose lives have been reconditioned through these investments.

But it is a lonesome sensation, sometimes, to feel that one is in league with a catalytic force as versatile as electricity, prompt as dynamite, stirring as a symphony, warm as a handclasp—but available only on condition that one does not tell. To confide what one has done to achieve this peculiar power might be very costly, not only to oneself but to others whose welfare is integrally related to one's own success.

Not to confide it, especially to one's close and trusted friends, seems unconscionably selfish; yet there is no way—so far as I know—for confiding the theory unless one divulges the practice, which would necessitate a narrative of specific events.

But for a long time I have had it in mind to record at least a few of these facts for the guidance and encouragement of someone who might wish to experiment with this thing after I am gone. To record some of these events in a private journal and deposit the book in my safe would seem entirely feasible, except for the risk that the book might fall into the hands of some person who would read it without imagination or the slightest glimmer of sympathetic understanding. Hence my decision to write the book in cipher. I do not think that anyone will go through the drudgery of decoding it unless he is interested in the contents. Whenever he finds that the job isn't worth the bother, the reader can quit. And the sooner he quits, the safer the secret.

I would give a good deal to know—at this writing—what sort of person will have the time, patience, and disposition to translate this book. I hope he will not be in too much of a hurry to learn the secret. I intend to approach the matter with a deliberation that may exasperate my reader. But if he isn't concerned enough to persevere, he probably would not know how to use the secret even if he discovered it.

If you have got this far, my friend, perhaps you will have decided that I am crazy. This will be incorrect. I have contrived to lay hold upon a principle that has expanded my life and multiplied my normal energies. I have a consuming curiosity to know more about this thing; and if you are still engaged in deciphering this book you share this curiosity. If I am crazy for writing it, you are equally crazy for reading it. I warn you that if you go much farther, it will get you, as it got me. But I am not crazy.

Eventually the time may come, though I shall not live to see it, when mental aberrations are regarded with the same sympathy now bestowed upon physical disabilities. As the matter stands at present, while it is no disgrace to have an ailment of the heart, you are viewed with aversion if there is anything wrong with your head. I understand this feeling; and, to a considerable extent, share it myself.

Of course, when I am dealing professionally with a brain tumour, my patient's mental disorder does not offend or annoy me, for I have a scientific interest in his dementia as an inevitable concomitant to the pressure on his brain. Indeed, the phenomena of his lunacy sometimes aid me in defining the field of the pressure.

But—professional curiosity aside—I am very uncomfortable in the society of people whose minds are upset. I dislike hysterics. I have a strong distaste for exhibitionism in any of its manifestations. I have no use for the mentality that hankers to be unique. I have no patience at all with eccentrics who go chasing about after ridiculous isms and fantastic ologies. I like normal people and I should like to be considered normal myself.

When a man tells me that his Aunt Alicia roused suddenly in the middle of the night, dressed, packed a bag, and took a train, at the behest of some esoteric hunch that her bankrupt nephew was on the brink of a tragedy, and arrived at the nick of time to talk him out of his revolver and into a new resolution, I instinctively add this fellow's name to the list of those with whom I shall not be going on a canoe-trip around the world.

I try to avoid the balmy, the monomaniacs, the religious fanatics, the obsessed, except in my hospital where it is my business to see them. I would walk a mile to escape a conversation with somebody who had gone in for spiritualism, astrology, yogism, or an expectation of the return of Christ by a week from Tuesday. I take no stock in magic. Belief in the supernatural comes hard with me. I automatically shy off at reports of miracles, both classic and contemporary.

And the reason I am so tiresomely insistent upon the orderly and conservative nature of my own mind, and my distaste for persons with odd kinks, quirks, maggots, crotchets, hallucinations, and various benign psychoses, is that I want the reader of this journal to believe that I am as sane as anybody he knows. I insist on this, at the outset, my friend, for I shall be documenting some very strange events.

It is broad daylight now, and we are both weary. I have to be in the operating chamber at ten, and I assume that you, too, have something important to do. It is unlikely that an idle person would have access to this book.



AT HOME

October tenth, 1913, 9.30 p.m.

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IT all began on a fine June morning in 1905. Nothing has been the same since. Life took on a new meaning, that day.

It was the first anniversary of my wife's death. I had found it hard to reconcile myself to that loss, and the recurrence of the date revived in sharp detail the whole pitiful story of Joyce's unwilling departure and my unspeakable desolation.

For some time it had been in my mind to order a suitable marker for her grave. I had been tardy about it, hoping that my financial circumstances might improve. But there was no sign of such improvement. My affairs were growing more dismaying.

Restless and lonely, I resolved to visit some concern dealing in memorial stones and see whether I could afford to honour my dear girl's grave with a little monument. It was while engaged in this errand that I came by the secret of personal power.

Joyce and I had been very companionable. Not only were we naturally congenial, but her long illness had bound us together in a tender intimacy hardly to be achieved under any other circumstance. During the last year of her life, which we spent in Tucson, I made no attempt to do anything but keep her comfortable and amused. I tried to stand between her and all the little jars and irks and shocks. When the baby cried, I promptly found out what she wanted and

got it for her. I have been doing that ever since, and if she isn't a spoiled child she has every right to be.

I loved my wife no more for her devotion to me than my own sympathy for her. I think we love best those whom we serve most zealously. It is an ennobling experience to love anyone in need of tender ministries. The time comes when nothing else matters much but the happiness of one's beloved.

There are plenty of afflictions more difficult to deal with than pulmonary tuberculosis. The patient is usually hopeful, cheerful, wistful. As physical vitality ebbs, the psychical forces flow with the strength and speed of a harvest tide.

If it ever becomes your destiny to entertain an invalid over any considerable length of time, it will be to your advantage if the patient's disability has not struck him below the belt. Your heart and lung people are optimists.

Of course I couldn't help knowing that Joyce was doomed. Had she been only one-tenth as sweet and patient, my sense of obligation to her would have kept me by her side. But I sincerely enjoyed that final year with her. We read innumerable books, lounged in the sun, swam in the pool, played together like children; and all this at a period of my career when—under normal conditions—I should have been working eighteen hours of every twenty-four to get a start in my profession.

Once in a while I would be swept by a surge of dismay over my inability to do anything at all when it was so obvious that I should have been going forward with my vocation. But these misgivings gripped me less frequently and more feebly as the days passed. The sunshine was

genial, the air was sedative, my excuse for indolence was valid. I almost forgot I wanted to be a doctor.

Even now, after more than nine years, I cannot bring myself to the point of relating the events of Joyce's last hours, the sad and all but interminable journey home, the funeral, and—afterwards—the enervating depression; the feeling that life was barely worth the bother; the almost sickening aversion to the thought of resuming the old routine in the clinic.

The people at the hospital were very kind and forbearing. I must have been a dreadful nuisance. It should have been easy enough to see that my heart wasn't in it. But they seemed to understand; Doctor Pyle, especially. Pyle had always been a bit crusty, and I hadn't known him very well. They used to say of Pyle that if you could let him do all the abdominal surgery with the understanding that the patient would never see him again, he might become popular. Next morning after removing a kidney or a gall-bladder, Pyle would call on his uncomfortable victim and offer him some such amenity as, "What in hell are you making so much racket about? Lots of people in this hospital with more pain than you have."

But it was good old Pyle that helped me—roughly—back into the harness. I still hated it, and it galled me, but I wore it. Pyle fitted it on me again, muttering many a what-in-hell, but apparently bent on making something of me—a very unpromising project. One day I told him I believed I had better give it all up and go into business.

"What kind of business?" he growled. "If you went out as grim and glum and licked as you look to-day, you couldn't

sell silver dollars for a nickel apiece. You stick to your job, young fellow."

So—I stuck to the job; but I didn't like it.

It was in that state of mind that I went to look for the little tombstone. I told the manager it would have to be something inexpensive. He was quite obliging, treated me as considerately as he might if I had come to spend a thousand dollars. We agreed upon a small block of granite at what I thought was a merciful price. Then he asked me what I wanted engraved on the stone. I wrote Joyce's name and the dates.

"Would you like a brief epitaph?" he asked.

"Is it necessary?" I wondered.

"It is customary," he replied.

I told him I had nothing in mind, and he suggested that I go out into the production room where many monuments were in process. Perhaps I might see something suitable. It was a good idea.

He opened the door and considerately left me to explore on my own. Several stone-cutters glanced up and nodded as I paused to watch their work. I wasn't very much impressed by the various texts they were carving. None of them sounded much like anything Joyce would have been likely to quote.

Presently I came to the half-open door of a large studio where a man was at work on an amazingly beautiful piece of statuary. High above me on the catwalk of the scaffolding, and intent upon his occupation, the man did not notice me standing there until I had time to survey his creation

deliberately. This fellow was not a mere stonecutter; he was a sculptor, and an uncommonly good one, I surmised.

The piece he was working on seemed to be nearing completion. It was a triumphant angelic figure, heroic size, gracefully poised on a marble pedestal, altar-shaped; an exquisitely modelled hand shading the eyes which gazed into the far horizon, entranced by some distant radiance. It occurred to me that no man could have invested those eyes with such an expression of serenity and certitude unless he himself was convinced, beyond all doubt, that something was to be seen Out There. The statue was august in its simplicity. It had all the combined delicacy and strength of a Canova. On the face of the altar-shaped pedestal there was engraved, in gothic lettering and in high relief, a text which was not decipherable from where I stood. My movement for a better view caught the sculptor's attention. He must have seen that I was impressed.

"Come in," he said, cordially. "My name is Randolph. Anything I can do for you?"

"My name is Hudson. I have been looking about for a suitable epitaph to have engraved on a tombstone."

Randolph leaned over and pointed down with the handle of his mallet.

"How do you like this one?" he asked.

The inscription read, "Thanks Be to God Who Giveth Us the Victory."

"Means nothing to me!" I remarked, rather testily, I fear. "If there is a God, He probably has no more interest in any man's so-called victory, which can always be

circumstantially explained, than in the victory of a cabbage that does well in a favourable soil."

"Then you're related to God same as a cabbage," chuckled Randolph. "That's good." He resumed his work, deftly tapping his chisel. "I used to think that," he went on, talking half to himself. "Made a little experiment, and changed my mind about it." He put down the mallet, leaned far forward; and, cupping his mouth with both hands, confided, in a mysterious tone, "*I've been on the line!*"

He did not have the tone or stance of a fanatic; spoke quietly; had none of the usual tricks by which aberrations are readily identified; talked well, with absolute self-containment. "Victory? Well—rather! I now have everything I want and can do anything I wish! So can you! So can anybody! All you have to do is follow the rules! There's a formula, you know. I came upon it by accident!" He took up his chisel again.

He was a queer one. I felt shy and embarrassed. Clearly, he was cracked, but his manner denied it. I tried to remember that he was an artist, with permission to be eccentric; but this was more than an eccentricity. He made me shivery. I wanted away. So—I was backing through his doorway when he called, "Doctor—do you have victory?"

"Victory over what?" I demanded, impatiently. I had not told him I was discouraged; hadn't mentioned I was a doctor... I never did find out how he guessed that—the question being eclipsed by more important mysteries.

"Oh—over anything—everything! Listen!" He climbed swiftly down from his scaffolding, and gliding stealthily toward me as if he had some great secret to impart he

whispered into my ear—his hand firmly gripping my coat-lapel, somewhat to my own anxiety—"Would you like to be the best doctor in this town?"

So—then I knew he was crazy, and I began tugging myself loose.

"Come to my house, to-night, about nine o'clock," he said, handing me his card, "and I'll tell you what you want to know!"

I must have looked dazed, for he laughed hilariously, as he climbed up again. I laughed too as I reached the street—the epitaph matter having completely left my mind for the time. I had never heard so much nonsense in my life. "Like hell," I growled, as I started my car, "will I waste an evening with that fool!"

AT HOME

October nineteenth, 1913, 8.30 p.m.

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AT nine o'clock I was at Randolph's door... When these words are read I shall be unable to answer any queries as to my motive in going there that night. And that will be fortunate; for I have no explanation further than to say (and this will unquestionably be regarded with distrust and disappointment) that I was propelled there against my wishes. I had no thought of going; went in response to some urge over which I had no control... I was downtown to dinner, that evening; returned home at eight; went immediately to bed—quite contrary to my custom, for I never retired before midnight—and began reading a book, unable to concentrate on a line of it. I could not keep my eyes off the clock. It ticked louder and louder and my heart beat faster and faster until the two of them seemed synchronized. At length, becoming so nervous I could no longer contain myself, I rose, dressed hastily, dashed out for my car, and drove to Randolph's address without regard to boulevard stops or angry traffic officers. My mouth was dry, my heart thumping.

"You had not intended to come, had you?" inquired Randolph, taking my hat.

"No!" I replied, sourly.

"That's what I feared," he said, gently, "but I felt so sure you needed to have a talk with me that I—"

"That is what I want to know!" I demanded. "*What did you do?*"

He grinned slyly, rubbed his hands together softly, satisfiedly, and said, "Well—I earnestly wanted you here; and, as I told you, this morning, whatever I earnestly want—*it comes! I wanted you here! You came!*"

He motioned me to a seat—I was glad enough to accept it for my knees were wobbly—in a living-room furnished in exquisite taste. His daughter, whom he had gracefully presented, promptly excused herself, and left us alone. Offering me a cigar, he leisurely filled a long-stemmed churchwarden pipe for himself, and drew his chair closer. In his velvet jacket, at his ease, he was all artist; quite grizzled, wore a short Van Dyke beard; had a clear, clean, gray eye that came at you a bit shyly and tentatively, but left you no way of escape.

He lost no time in preliminary manoeuvres. Reaching to a small book-table, at his elbow, he took up a limp-leather Bible. I knew then that I was in for it. Impetuously, I resolved upon an immediate, if inglorious exit. Savagely, I put up a protesting hand and said firmly, "Now—if it's that, I don't care to hear about it!"

To my surprise, he put the book back on the table, and calmly puffed at his pipe, thoughtfully, for a while; then replied, "Well—neither do I—except as it's really an important history of a great religious system. Quite useful, I presume; but I'm not specially interested in it—except one page—" He blew a few smoke rings, his head tilted far back against his tall chair, "—And I have cut that page out... I just wanted you to see this particular copy of the Bible. I was about to say—when you plunged in with your impatient