

**Love and Mr. Lewisham**

**By**

**H. G. Wells**

## CONTENTS

- I. INTRODUCES MR. LEWISHAM
- II. "AS THE WIND BLOWS"
- III. THE WONDERFUL DISCOVERY
- IV. RAISED EYEBROWS
- V. HESITATIONS
- VI. THE SCANDALOUS RAMBLE
- VII. THE RECKONING
- VIII. THE CAREER PREVAILS
- IX. ALICE HEYDINGER
- X. IN THE GALLERY OF OLD IRON
- XI. MANIFESTATIONS
- XII. LEWISHAM IS UNACCOUNTABLE
- XIII. LEWISHAM INSISTS
- XIV. MR. LAGUNE'S POINT OF VIEW
- XV. LOVE IN THE STREETS
- XVI. MISS HEYDINGER'S PRIVATE THOUGHTS
- XVII. IN THE RAPHAEL GALLERY
- XVIII. THE FRIENDS OF PROGRESS MEET
- XIX. LEWISHAM'S SOLUTION
- XX. THE CAREER IS SUSPENDED
- XXI. HOME!
- XXII. EPITHALAMY
- XXIII. MR. CHAFFERY AT HOME
- XXIV. THE CAMPAIGN OPENS

- XXV. THE FIRST BATTLE
- XXVI. THE GLAMOUR FADES
- XXVII. CONCERNING A QUARREL
- XXVIII. THE COMING OF THE ROSES
- XXIX. THORNS AND ROSE PETALS
- XXX. A WITHDRAWAL
- XXXI. IN BATTERSEA PARK
- XXXII. THE CROWNING VICTORY

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCES MR. LEWISHAM.

The opening chapter does not concern itself with Love--indeed that antagonist does not certainly appear until the third--and Mr. Lewisham is seen at his studies. It was ten years ago, and in those days he was assistant master in the Whortley Proprietary School, Whortley, Sussex, and his wages were forty pounds a year, out of which he had to afford fifteen shillings a week during term time to lodge with Mrs. Munday, at the little shop in the West Street. He was called "Mr." to distinguish him from the bigger boys, whose duty it was to learn, and it was a matter of stringent regulation that he should be addressed as "Sir."

He wore ready-made clothes, his black jacket of rigid line was dusted about the front and sleeves with scholastic chalk, and his face was downy and his moustache incipient. He was a passable-looking youngster of eighteen, fair-haired, indifferently barbered, and with a quite unnecessary pair of glasses on his fairly prominent nose--he wore these to make himself look older, that discipline might be maintained. At the particular moment when this story begins he was in his bedroom. An attic it was, with lead-framed dormer windows, a slanting ceiling and a bulging wall, covered, as a number of torn places witnessed, with innumerable strata of florid old-fashioned

paper.

To judge by the room Mr. Lewisham thought little of Love but much on Greatness. Over the head of the bed, for example, where good folks hang texts, these truths asserted themselves, written in a clear, bold, youthfully florid hand:--"Knowledge is Power," and "What man has done man can do,"--man in the second instance referring to Mr. Lewisham. Never for a moment were these things to be forgotten. Mr. Lewisham could see them afresh every morning as his head came through his shirt. And over the yellow-painted box upon which--for lack of shelves--Mr. Lewisham's library was arranged, was a "Schema." (Why he should not have headed it "Scheme," the editor of the Church Times, who calls his miscellaneous notes "Varia," is better able to say than I.) In this scheme, 1892 was indicated as the year in which Mr. Lewisham proposed to take his B.A. degree at the London University with "hons. in all subjects," and 1895 as the date of his "gold medal." Subsequently there were to be "pamphlets in the Liberal interest," and such like things duly dated. "Who would control others must first control himself," remarked the wall over the wash-hand stand, and behind the door against the Sunday trousers was a portrait of Carlyle.

These were no mere threats against the universe; operations had begun. Jostling Shakespeare, Emerson's Essays, and the penny Life of Confucius, there were battered and defaced school books, a number of the excellent manuals of the Universal Correspondence Association,

exercise books, ink (red and black) in penny bottles, and an india-rubber stamp with Mr. Lewisham's name. A trophy of bluish green South Kensington certificates for geometrical drawing, astronomy, physiology, physiography, and inorganic chemistry adorned his further wall. And against the Carlyle portrait was a manuscript list of French irregular verbs.

Attached by a drawing-pin to the roof over the wash-hand stand, which--the room being an attic--sloped almost dangerously, dangled a Time-Table. Mr. Lewisham was to rise at five, and that this was no vain boasting, a cheap American alarum clock by the books on the box witnessed. The lumps of mellow chocolate on the papered ledge by the bed-head indorsed that evidence. "French until eight," said the time-table curtly. Breakfast was to be eaten in twenty minutes; then twenty-five minutes of "literature" to be precise, learning extracts (preferably pompous) from the plays of William Shakespeare--and then to school and duty. The time-table further prescribed Latin Composition for the recess and the dinner hour ("literature," however, during the meal), and varied its injunctions for the rest of the twenty-four hours according to the day of the week. Not a moment for Satan and that "mischief still" of his. Only three-score and ten has the confidence, as well as the time, to be idle.

But just think of the admirable quality of such a scheme! Up and busy at five, with all the world about one horizontal, warm, dreamy-brained or stupidly hullish, if roused, roused only to grunt and sigh and roll

over again into oblivion. By eight three hours' clear start, three hours' knowledge ahead of everyone. It takes, I have been told by an eminent scholar, about a thousand hours of sincere work to learn a language completely--after three or four languages much less--which gives you, even at the outset, one each a year before breakfast. The gift of tongues--picked up like mushrooms! Then that "literature"--an astonishing conception! In the afternoon mathematics and the sciences. Could anything be simpler or more magnificent? In six years Mr. Lewisham will have his five or six languages, a sound, all-round education, a habit of tremendous industry, and be still but four-and-twenty. He will already have honour in his university and ampler means. One realises that those pamphlets in the Liberal interests will be no obscure platitudes. Where Mr. Lewisham will be at thirty stirs the imagination. There will be modifications of the Schema, of course, as experience widens. But the spirit of it--the spirit of it is a devouring flame!

He was sitting facing the diamond-framed window, writing, writing fast, on a second yellow box that was turned on end and empty, and the lid was open, and his knees were conveniently stuck into the cavity. The bed was strewn with books and copygraphed sheets of instructions from his remote correspondence tutors. Pursuant to the dangling time-table he was, you would have noticed, translating Latin into English.

Imperceptibly the speed of his writing diminished. "Urit me Glycerae

nitor" lay ahead and troubled him. "Urit me," he murmured, and his eyes travelled from his book out of window to the vicar's roof opposite and its ivied chimneys. His brows were knit at first and then relaxed. "Urit me!" He had put his pen into his mouth and glanced about for his dictionary. Urare?

Suddenly his expression changed. Movement dictionary-ward ceased. He was listening to a light tapping sound--it was a footfall--outside.

He stood up abruptly, and, stretching his neck, peered through his unnecessary glasses and the diamond panes down into the street. Looking acutely downward he could see a hat daintily trimmed with pinkish white blossom, the shoulder of a jacket, and just the tips of nose and chin. Certainly the stranger who sat under the gallery last Sunday next the Frobishers. Then, too, he had seen her only obliquely....

He watched her until she passed beyond the window frame. He strained to see impossibly round the corner....

Then he started, frowned, took his pen from his mouth. "This wandering attention!" he said. "The slightest thing! Where was I? Tcha!" He made a noise with his teeth to express his irritation, sat down, and replaced his knees in the upturned box. "Urit me," he said, biting the end of his pen and looking for his dictionary.



It was a Wednesday half-holiday late in March, a spring day glorious in amber light, dazzling white clouds and the intensest blue, casting a powder of wonderful green hither and thither among the trees and rousing all the birds to tumultuous rejoicings, a rousing day, a clamatory insistent day, a veritable herald of summer. The stir of that anticipation was in the air, the warm earth was parting above the swelling seeds, and all the pine-woods were full of the minute crepitation of opening bud scales. And not only was the stir of Mother Nature's awakening in the earth and the air and the trees, but also in Mr. Lewisham's youthful blood, bidding him rouse himself to live--live in a sense quite other than that the Schema indicated.

He saw the dictionary peeping from under a paper, looked up "Urit me," appreciated the shining "nitor" of Glycera's shoulders, and so fell idle again to rouse himself abruptly.

"I can't fix my attention," said Mr. Lewisham. He took off the needless glasses, wiped them, and blinked his eyes. This confounded Horace and his stimulating epithets! A walk?

"I won't be beat," he said--incorrectly--replaced his glasses, brought his elbows down on either side of his box with resonant violence, and clutched the hair over his ears with both hands....

In five minutes' time he found himself watching the swallows curving through the blue over the vicarage garden.

"Did ever man have such a bother with himself as me?" he asked vaguely but vehemently. "It's self-indulgence does it--sitting down's the beginning of laziness."

So he stood up to his work, and came into permanent view of the village street. "If she has gone round the corner by the post office, she will come in sight over the palings above the allotments," suggested the unexplored and undisciplined region of Mr. Lewisham's mind....

She did not come into sight. Apparently she had not gone round by the post office after all. It made one wonder where she had gone. Did she go up through the town to the avenue on these occasions?... Then abruptly a cloud drove across the sunlight, the glowing street went cold and Mr. Lewisham's imagination submitted to control. So "Mater saeva cupidinum," "The untamable mother of desires,"--Horace (Book II. of the Odes) was the author appointed by the university for Mr. Lewisham's matriculation--was, after all, translated to its prophetic end.

Precisely as the church clock struck five Mr. Lewisham, with a punctuality that was indeed almost too prompt for a really earnest student, shut his Horace, took up his Shakespeare, and descended the narrow, curved, uncarpeted staircase that led from his garret to the living room in which he had his tea with his landlady, Mrs.

Munday. That good lady was alone, and after a few civilities Mr. Lewisham opened his Shakespeare and read from a mark onward--that mark, by-the-bye, was in the middle of a scene--while he consumed mechanically a number of slices of bread and whort jam.

Mrs. Munday watched him over her spectacles and thought how bad so much reading must be for the eyes, until the tinkling of her shop-bell called her away to a customer. At twenty-five minutes to six he put the book back in the window-sill, dashed a few crumbs from his jacket, assumed a mortar-board cap that was lying on the tea-caddy, and went forth to his evening "preparation duty."

The West Street was empty and shining golden with the sunset. Its beauty seized upon him, and he forgot to repeat the passage from Henry VIII. that should have occupied him down the street. Instead he was presently thinking of that insubordinate glance from his window and of little chins and nose-tips. His eyes became remote in their expression....

The school door was opened by an obsequious little boy with "lines" to be examined.

Mr. Lewisham felt a curious change of atmosphere on his entry. The door slammed behind him. The hall with its insistent scholastic suggestions, its yellow marbled paper, its long rows of hat-pegs, its disreputable array of umbrellas, a broken mortar-board and a tattered

and scattered Principia, seemed dim and dull in contrast with the luminous stir of the early March evening outside. An unusual sense of the greyness of a teacher's life, of the greyness indeed of the life of all studious souls came, and went in his mind. He took the "lines," written painfully over three pages of exercise book, and obliterated them with a huge G.E.L., scrawled monstrously across each page. He heard the familiar mingled noises of the playground drifting in to him through the open schoolroom door.