

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

### BIOLOGY

#### Part 1

January found Ann Veronica a student in the biological laboratory of the Central Imperial College that towers up from among the back streets in the angle between Euston Road and Great Portland Street. She was working very steadily at the Advanced Course in Comparative Anatomy, wonderfully relieved to have her mind engaged upon one methodically developing theme in the place of the discursive uncertainties of the previous two months, and doing her utmost to keep right in the back of her mind and out of sight the facts, firstly, that she had achieved this haven of satisfactory activity by incurring a debt to Ramage of forty pounds, and, secondly, that her present position was necessarily temporary and her outlook quite uncertain.

The biological laboratory had an atmosphere that was all its own.

It was at the top of the building, and looked clear over a clustering mass of inferior buildings toward Regent's Park. It was long and narrow, a well-lit, well-ventilated, quiet gallery of small tables and sinks, pervaded by a thin smell of methylated spirit and of a mitigated

and sterilized organic decay. Along the inner side was a wonderfully arranged series of displayed specimens that Russell himself had prepared. The supreme effect for Ann Veronica was its surpassing relevance; it made every other atmosphere she knew seem discursive and confused. The whole place and everything in it aimed at one thing--to illustrate, to elaborate, to criticise and illuminate, and make ever plainer and plainer the significance of animal and vegetable structure. It dealt from floor to ceiling and end to end with the Theory of the Forms of Life; the very duster by the blackboard was there to do its share in that work, the very washers in the taps; the room was more simply concentrated in aim even than a church. To that, perhaps, a large part of its satisfyingness was due. Contrasted with the confused movement and presences of a Fabian meeting, or the inexplicable enthusiasm behind the suffrage demand, with the speeches that were partly egotistical displays, partly artful manoeuvres, and partly incoherent cries for unsoundly formulated ends, compared with the comings and goings of audiences and supporters that were like the eddy-driven drift of paper in the street, this long, quiet, methodical chamber shone like a star seen through clouds.

Day after day for a measured hour in the lecture-theatre, with elaborate power and patience, Russell pieced together difficulty and suggestion, instance and counter-instance, in the elaborate construction of the family tree of life. And then the students went into the long laboratory and followed out these facts in almost living tissue with microscope and scalpel, probe and microtome, and the utmost of their skill and care,

making now and then a raid into the compact museum of illustration next door, in which specimens and models and directions stood in disciplined ranks, under the direction of the demonstrator Capes. There was a couple of blackboards at each end of the aisle of tables, and at these Capes, with quick and nervous speech that contrasted vividly with Russell's slow, definitive articulation, directed the dissection and made illuminating comments on the structures under examination. Then he would come along the laboratory, sitting down by each student in turn, checking the work and discussing its difficulties, and answering questions arising out of Russell's lecture.

Ann Veronica had come to the Imperial College obsessed by the great figure of Russell, by the part he had played in the Darwinian controversies, and by the resolute effect of the grim-lipped, yellow, leonine face beneath the mane of silvery hair. Capes was rather a discovery. Capes was something superadded. Russell burned like a beacon, but Capes illuminated by darting flashes and threw light, even if it was but momentary light, into a hundred corners that Russell left steadfastly in the shade.

Capes was an exceptionally fair man of two or three-and-thirty, so ruddily blond that it was a mercy he had escaped light eyelashes, and with a minor but by no means contemptible reputation of his own. He talked at the blackboard in a pleasant, very slightly lisping voice with a curious spontaneity, and was sometimes very clumsy in his exposition, and sometimes very vivid. He dissected rather awkwardly and hurriedly,

but, on the whole, effectively, and drew with an impatient directness that made up in significance what it lacked in precision. Across the blackboard the colored chalks flew like flights of variously tinted rockets as diagram after diagram flickered into being.

There happened that year to be an unusual proportion of girls and women in the advanced laboratory, perhaps because the class as a whole was an exceptionally small one. It numbered nine, and four of these were women students. As a consequence of its small size, it was possible to get along with the work on a much easier and more colloquial footing than a larger class would have permitted. And a custom had grown up of a general tea at four o'clock, under the auspices of a Miss Garvice, a tall and graceful girl of distinguished intellectual incompetence, in whom the hostess instinct seemed to be abnormally developed.

Capes would come to these teas; he evidently liked to come, and he would appear in the doorway of the preparation-room, a pleasing note of shyness in his manner, hovering for an invitation.

From the first, Ann Veronica found him an exceptionally interesting man. To begin with, he struck her as being the most variable person she had ever encountered. At times he was brilliant and masterful, talked round and over every one, and would have been domineering if he had not been extraordinarily kindly; at times he was almost monosyllabic, and defeated Miss Garvice's most skilful attempts to draw him out. Sometimes he was obviously irritable and uncomfortable and unfortunate in his

efforts to seem at ease. And sometimes he overflowed with a peculiarly malignant wit that played, with devastating effect, upon any topics that had the courage to face it. Ann Veronica's experiences of men had been among more stable types--Teddy, who was always absurd; her father, who was always authoritative and sentimental; Manning, who was always Manning. And most of the others she had met had, she felt, the same steadfastness. Goopes, she was sure was always high-browed and slow and Socratic. And Ramage too--about Ramage there would always be that air of avidity, that air of knowledge and inquiry, the mixture of things in his talk that were rather good with things that were rather poor. But one could not count with any confidence upon Capes.

The five men students were a mixed company. There was a very white-faced youngster of eighteen who brushed back his hair exactly in Russell's manner, and was disposed to be uncomfortably silent when he was near her, and to whom she felt it was only Christian kindness to be consistently pleasant; and a lax young man of five-and-twenty in navy blue, who mingled Marx and Bebel with the more orthodox gods of the biological pantheon. There was a short, red-faced, resolute youth who inherited an authoritative attitude upon bacteriology from his father; a Japanese student of unassuming manners who drew beautifully and had an imperfect knowledge of English; and a dark, unwashed Scotchman with complicated spectacles, who would come every morning as a sort of volunteer supplementary demonstrator, look very closely at her work and her, tell her that her dissections were "fairish," or "very fairish indeed," or "high above the normal female standard," hover as if for

some outbreak of passionate gratitude and with admiring retrospects that made the faceted spectacles gleam like diamonds, return to his own place.

The women, Ann Veronica thought, were not quite so interesting as the men. There were two school-mistresses, one of whom--Miss Klegg--might have been a first cousin to Miss Miniver, she had so many Miniver traits; there was a preoccupied girl whose name Ann Veronica never learned, but who worked remarkably well; and Miss Garvice, who began by attracting her very greatly--she moved so beautifully--and ended by giving her the impression that moving beautifully was the beginning and end of her being.

## Part 2

The next few weeks were a time of the very liveliest thought and growth for Ann Veronica. The crowding impressions of the previous weeks seemed to run together directly her mind left the chaotic search for employment and came into touch again with a coherent and systematic development of ideas. The advanced work at the Central Imperial College was in the closest touch with living interests and current controversies; it drew its illustrations and material from Russell's two great researches--upon the relation of the brachiopods to the echinodermata, and upon the

secondary and tertiary mammalian and pseudo-mammalian factors in the free larval forms of various marine organisms. Moreover, a vigorous fire of mutual criticism was going on now between the Imperial College and the Cambridge Mendelians and echoed in the lectures. From beginning to end it was first-hand stuff.

But the influence of the science radiated far beyond its own special field--beyond those beautiful but highly technical problems with which we do not propose for a moment to trouble the naturally terrified reader. Biology is an extraordinarily digestive science. It throws out a number of broad experimental generalizations, and then sets out to bring into harmony or relation with these an infinitely multifarious collection of phenomena. The little streaks upon the germinating area of an egg, the nervous movements of an impatient horse, the trick of a calculating boy, the senses of a fish, the fungus at the root of a garden flower, and the slime upon a sea-wet rock--ten thousand such things bear their witness and are illuminated. And not only did these tentacular generalizations gather all the facts of natural history and comparative anatomy together, but they seemed always stretching out further and further into a world of interests that lay altogether outside their legitimate bounds.

It came to Ann Veronica one night after a long talk with Miss Miniver, as a sudden remarkable thing, as a grotesque, novel aspect, that this slowly elaborating biological scheme had something more than an academic interest for herself. And not only so, but that it was after all, a more

systematic and particular method of examining just the same questions that underlay the discussions of the Fabian Society, the talk of the West Central Arts Club, the chatter of the studios and the deep, the bottomless discussions of the simple-life homes. It was the same Bios whose nature and drift and ways and methods and aspects engaged them all. And she, she in her own person too, was this eternal Bios, beginning again its recurrent journey to selection and multiplication and failure or survival.

But this was but a momentary gleam of personal application, and at this time she followed it up no further.

And now Ann Veronica's evenings were also becoming very busy. She pursued her interest in the Socialist movement and in the Suffragist agitation in the company of Miss Miniver. They went to various central and local Fabian gatherings, and to a number of suffrage meetings. Teddy Widgett hovered on the fringe of all these gatherings, blinking at Ann Veronica and occasionally making a wildly friendly dash at her, and carrying her and Miss Miniver off to drink cocoa with a choice diversity of other youthful and congenial Fabians after the meetings. Then Mr. Manning loomed up ever and again into her world, full of a futile solicitude, and almost always declaring she was splendid, splendid, and wishing he could talk things out with her. Teas he contributed to the commissariat of Ann Veronica's campaign--quite a number of teas. He would get her to come to tea with him, usually in a pleasant tea-room over a fruit-shop in Tottenham Court Road, and he would discuss his own



point of view and hint at a thousand devotions were she but to command him. And he would express various artistic sensibilities and aesthetic appreciations in carefully punctuated sentences and a large, clear voice. At Christmas he gave her a set of a small edition of Meredith's novels, very prettily bound in flexible leather, being guided in the choice of an author, as he intimated, rather by her preferences than his own.

There was something markedly and deliberately liberal-minded in his manner in all their encounters. He conveyed not only his sense of the extreme want of correctitude in their unsanctioned meetings, but also that, so far as he was concerned, this irregularity mattered not at all, that he had flung--and kept on flinging--such considerations to the wind.

And, in addition, she was now seeing and talking to Ramage almost weekly, on a theory which she took very gravely, that they were exceptionally friends. He would ask her to come to dinner with him in some little Italian or semi-Bohemian restaurant in the district toward Soho, or in one of the more stylish and magnificent establishments about Piccadilly Circus, and for the most part she did not care to refuse. Nor, indeed, did she want to refuse. These dinners, from their lavish display of ambiguous hors d'oeuvre to their skimpy ices in dishes of frilled paper, with their Chianti flasks and Parmesan dishes and their polyglot waiters and polyglot clientele, were very funny and bright; and she really liked Ramage, and valued his help and advice. It was

interesting to see how different and characteristic his mode of approach was to all sorts of questions that interested her, and it was amusing to discover this other side to the life of a Morningside Park inhabitant. She had thought that all Morningside Park householders came home before seven at the latest, as her father usually did. Ramage talked always about women or some woman's concern, and very much about Ann Veronica's own outlook upon life. He was always drawing contrasts between a woman's lot and a man's, and treating her as a wonderful new departure in this comparison. Ann Veronica liked their relationship all the more because it was an unusual one.

After these dinners they would have a walk, usually to the Thames Embankment to see the two sweeps of river on either side of Waterloo Bridge; and then they would part at Westminster Bridge, perhaps, and he would go on to Waterloo. Once he suggested they should go to a music-hall and see a wonderful new dancer, but Ann Veronica did not feel she cared to see a new dancer. So, instead, they talked of dancing and what it might mean in a human life. Ann Veronica thought it was a spontaneous release of energy expressive of well-being, but Ramage thought that by dancing, men, and such birds and animals as dance, come to feel and think of their bodies.

This intercourse, which had been planned to warm Ann Veronica to a familiar affection with Ramage, was certainly warming Ramage to a constantly deepening interest in Ann Veronica. He felt that he was getting on with her very slowly indeed, but he did not see how he could

get on faster. He had, he felt, to create certain ideas and vivify certain curiosities and feelings in her. Until that was done a certain experience of life assured him that a girl is a locked coldness against a man's approach. She had all the fascination of being absolutely perplexing in this respect. On the one hand, she seemed to think plainly and simply, and would talk serenely and freely about topics that most women have been trained either to avoid or conceal; and on the other she was unconscious, or else she had an air of being unconscious--that was the riddle--to all sorts of personal applications that almost any girl or woman, one might have thought, would have made. He was always doing his best to call her attention to the fact that he was a man of spirit and quality and experience, and she a young and beautiful woman, and that all sorts of constructions upon their relationship were possible, trusting her to go on from that to the idea that all sorts of relationships were possible. She responded with an unfaltering appearance of insensibility, and never as a young and beautiful woman conscious of sex; always in the character of an intelligent girl student.

His perception of her personal beauty deepened and quickened with each encounter. Every now and then her general presence became radiantly dazzling in his eyes; she would appear in the street coming toward him, a surprise, so fine and smiling and welcoming was she, so expanded and illuminated and living, in contrast with his mere expectation. Or he would find something--a wave in her hair, a little line in the contour of her brow or neck, that made an exquisite discovery.

He was beginning to think about her inordinately. He would sit in his inner office and compose conversations with her, penetrating, illuminating, and nearly conclusive--conversations that never proved to be of the slightest use at all with her when he met her face to face. And he began also at times to wake at night and think about her.

He thought of her and himself, and no longer in that vein of incidental adventure in which he had begun. He thought, too, of the fretful invalid who lay in the next room to his, whose money had created his business and made his position in the world.

"I've had most of the things I wanted," said Ramage, in the stillness of the night.

### Part 3

For a time Ann Veronica's family had desisted from direct offers of a free pardon; they were evidently waiting for her resources to come to an end. Neither father, aunt, nor brothers made a sign, and then one afternoon in early February her aunt came up in a state between expostulation and dignified resentment, but obviously very anxious for Ann Veronica's welfare. "I had a dream in the night," she said. "I saw

you in a sort of sloping, slippery place, holding on by your hands and slipping. You seemed to me to be slipping and slipping, and your face was white. It was really most vivid, most vivid! You seemed to be slipping and just going to tumble and holding on. It made me wake up, and there I lay thinking of you, spending your nights up here all alone, and no one to look after you. I wondered what you could be doing and what might be happening to you. I said to myself at once, 'Either this is a coincidence or the caper sauce.' But I made sure it was you. I felt I MUST do something anyhow, and up I came just as soon as I could to see you."

She had spoken rather rapidly. "I can't help saying it," she said, with the quality of her voice altering, "but I do NOT think it is right for an unprotected girl to be in London alone as you are."

"But I'm quite equal to taking care of myself, aunt."

"It must be most uncomfortable here. It is most uncomfortable for every one concerned."

She spoke with a certain asperity. She felt that Ann Veronica had duped her in that dream, and now that she had come up to London she might as well speak her mind.

"No Christmas dinner," she said, "or anything nice! One doesn't even know what you are doing."

"I'm going on working for my degree."

"Why couldn't you do that at home?"

"I'm working at the Imperial College. You see, aunt, it's the only possible way for me to get a good degree in my subjects, and father won't hear of it. There'd only be endless rows if I was at home. And how could I come home--when he locks me in rooms and all that?"

"I do wish this wasn't going on," said Miss Stanley, after a pause. "I do wish you and your father could come to some agreement."

Ann Veronica responded with conviction: "I wish so, too."

"Can't we arrange something? Can't we make a sort of treaty?"

"He wouldn't keep it. He would get very cross one evening and no one would dare to remind him of it."

"How can you say such things?"

"But he would!"

"Still, it isn't your place to say so."

"It prevents a treaty."

"Couldn't I make a treaty?"

Ann Veronica thought, and could not see any possible treaty that would leave it open for her to have quasi-surreptitious dinners with Ramage or go on walking round the London squares discussing Socialism with Miss Miniver toward the small hours. She had tasted freedom now, and so far she had not felt the need of protection. Still, there certainly was something in the idea of a treaty.

"I don't see at all how you can be managing," said Miss Stanley, and Ann Veronica hastened to reply, "I do on very little." Her mind went back to that treaty.

"And aren't there fees to pay at the Imperial College?" her aunt was saying--a disagreeable question.

"There are a few fees."

"Then how have you managed?"

"Bother!" said Ann Veronica to herself, and tried not to look guilty. "I was able to borrow the money."

"Borrow the money! But who lent you the money?"

"A friend," said Ann Veronica.

She felt herself getting into a corner. She sought hastily in her mind for a plausible answer to an obvious question that didn't come. Her aunt went off at a tangent. "But my dear Ann Veronica, you will be getting into debt!"

Ann Veronica at once, and with a feeling of immense relief, took refuge in her dignity. "I think, aunt," she said, "you might trust to my self-respect to keep me out of that."

For the moment her aunt could not think of any reply to this counterstroke, and Ann Veronica followed up her advantage by a sudden inquiry about her abandoned boots.

But in the train going home her aunt reasoned it out.

"If she is borrowing money," said Miss Stanley, "she **MUST** be getting into debt. It's all nonsense...."

Part 4



It was by imperceptible degrees that Capes became important in Ann Veronica's thoughts. But then he began to take steps, and, at last, strides to something more and more like predominance. She began by being interested in his demonstrations and his biological theory, then she was attracted by his character, and then, in a manner, she fell in love with his mind.

One day they were at tea in the laboratory and a discussion sprang up about the question of women's suffrage. The movement was then in its earlier militant phases, and one of the women only, Miss Garvice, opposed it, though Ann Veronica was disposed to be lukewarm. But a man's opposition always inclined her to the suffrage side; she had a curious feeling of loyalty in seeing the more aggressive women through. Capes was irritatingly judicial in the matter, neither absurdly against, in which case one might have smashed him, or hopelessly undecided, but tepidly sceptical. Miss Klegg and the youngest girl made a vigorous attack on Miss Garvice, who had said she thought women lost something infinitely precious by mingling in the conflicts of life. The discussion wandered, and was punctuated with bread and butter. Capes was inclined to support Miss Klegg until Miss Garvice cornered him by quoting him against himself, and citing a recent paper in the *Nineteenth Century*, in which, following Atkinson, he had made a vigorous and damaging attack on Lester Ward's case for the primitive matriarchate and the predominant importance of the female throughout the animal kingdom.

Ann Veronica was not aware of this literary side of her teacher; she had

a little tinge of annoyance at Miss Garvice's advantage. Afterwards she hunted up the article in question, and it seemed to her quite delightfully written and argued. Capes had the gift of easy, unaffected writing, coupled with very clear and logical thinking, and to follow his written thought gave her the sensation of cutting things with a perfectly new, perfectly sharp knife. She found herself anxious to read more of him, and the next Wednesday she went to the British Museum and hunted first among the half-crown magazines for his essays and then through various scientific quarterlies for his research papers. The ordinary research paper, when it is not extravagant theorizing, is apt to be rather sawdusty in texture, and Ann Veronica was delighted to find the same easy and confident luminosity that distinguished his work for the general reader. She returned to these latter, and at the back of her mind, as she looked them over again, was a very distinct resolve to quote them after the manner of Miss Garvice at the very first opportunity.

When she got home to her lodgings that evening she reflected with something like surprise upon her half-day's employment, and decided that it showed nothing more nor less than that Capes was a really very interesting person indeed.

And then she fell into a musing about Capes. She wondered why he was so distinctive, so unlike other men, and it never occurred to her for some time that this might be because she was falling in love with him.

## Part 5

Yet Ann Veronica was thinking a very great deal about love. A dozen shynesses and intellectual barriers were being outflanked or broken down in her mind. All the influences about her worked with her own predisposition and against all the traditions of her home and upbringing to deal with the facts of life in an unabashed manner. Ramage, by a hundred skilful hints had led her to realize that the problem of her own life was inseparably associated with, and indeed only one special case of, the problems of any woman's life, and that the problem of a woman's life is love.

"A young man comes into life asking how best he may place himself," Ramage had said; "a woman comes into life thinking instinctively how best she may give herself."

She noted that as a good saying, and it germinated and spread tentacles of explanation through her brain. The biological laboratory, perpetually viewing life as pairing and breeding and selection, and again pairing and breeding, seemed only a translated generalization of that assertion. And all the talk of the Miniver people and the Widgeott people seemed always to be like a ship in adverse weather on the lee shore of love.

"For seven years," said Ann Veronica, "I have been trying to keep myself

from thinking about love....

"I have been training myself to look askance at beautiful things."

She gave herself permission now to look at this squarely. She made herself a private declaration of liberty. "This is mere nonsense, mere tongue-tied fear!" she said. "This is the slavery of the veiled life. I might as well be at Morningside Park. This business of love is the supreme affair in life, it is the woman's one event and crisis that makes up for all her other restrictions, and I cower--as we all cower--with a blushing and paralyzed mind until it overtakes me!...

"I'll be hanged if I do."

But she could not talk freely about love, she found, for all that manumission.

Ramage seemed always fencing about the forbidden topic, probing for openings, and she wondered why she did not give him them. But something instinctive prevented that, and with the finest resolve not to be "silly" and prudish she found that whenever he became at all bold in this matter she became severely scientific and impersonal, almost entomological indeed, in her method; she killed every remark as he made it and pinned it out for examination. In the biological laboratory that was their invincible tone. But she disapproved more and more of her own mental austerity. Here was an experienced man of the world, her friend,

who evidently took a great interest in this supreme topic and was willing to give her the benefit of his experiences! Why should not she be at her ease with him? Why should not she know things? It is hard enough anyhow for a human being to learn, she decided, but it is a dozen times more difficult than it need be because of all this locking of the lips and thoughts.

She contrived to break down the barriers of shyness at last in one direction, and talked one night of love and the facts of love with Miss Miniver.

But Miss Miniver was highly unsatisfactory. She repeated phrases of Mrs. Goopes's: "Advanced people," she said, with an air of great elucidation, "tend to GENERALIZE love. 'He prayeth best who loveth best--all things both great and small.' For my own part I go about loving."

"Yes, but men;" said Ann Veronica, plunging; "don't you want the love of men?"

For some seconds they remained silent, both shocked by this question.

Miss Miniver looked over her glasses at her friend almost balefully.

"NO!" she said, at last, with something in her voice that reminded Ann Veronica of a sprung tennis-racket.

"I've been through all that," she went on, after a pause.

She spoke slowly. "I have never yet met a man whose intellect I could respect."

Ann Veronica looked at her thoughtfully for a moment, and decided to persist on principle.

"But if you had?" she said.

"I can't imagine it," said Miss Miniver. "And think, think"--her voice sank--"of the horrible coarseness!"

"What coarseness?" said Ann Veronica.

"My dear Vee!" Her voice became very low. "Don't you know?"

"Oh! I know--"

"Well--" Her face was an unaccustomed pink.

Ann Veronica ignored her friend's confusion.

"Don't we all rather humbug about the coarseness? All we women, I mean," said she. She decided to go on, after a momentary halt. "We pretend bodies are ugly. Really they are the most beautiful things in the world. We pretend we never think of everything that makes us what we are."

"No," cried Miss Miniver, almost vehemently. "You are wrong! I did not think you thought such things. Bodies! Bodies! Horrible things! We are souls. Love lives on a higher plane. We are not animals. If ever I did meet a man I could love, I should love him"--her voice dropped again--"platonically."

She made her glasses glint. "Absolutely platonically," she said.

"Soul to soul."

She turned her face to the fire, gripped her hands upon her elbows, and drew her thin shoulders together in a shrug. "Ugh!" she said.

Ann Veronica watched her and wondered about her.

"We do not want the men," said Miss Miniver; "we do not want them, with their sneers and loud laughter. Empty, silly, coarse brutes. Brutes! They are the brute still with us! Science some day may teach us a way to do without them. It is only the women matter. It is not every sort of creature needs--these males. Some have no males."

"There's green-fly," admitted Ann Veronica. "And even then--"

The conversation hung for a thoughtful moment.

Ann Veronica readjusted her chin on her hand. "I wonder which of us is right," she said. "I haven't a scrap--of this sort of aversion."

"Tolstoy is so good about this," said Miss Miniver, regardless of her friend's attitude. "He sees through it all. The Higher Life and the Lower. He sees men all defiled by coarse thoughts, coarse ways of living cruelties. Simply because they are hardened by--by bestiality, and poisoned by the juices of meat slain in anger and fermented drinks--fancy! drinks that have been swarmed in by thousands and thousands of horrible little bacteria!"

"It's yeast," said Ann Veronica--"a vegetable."

"It's all the same," said Miss Miniver. "And then they are swollen up and inflamed and drunken with matter. They are blinded to all fine and subtle things--they look at life with bloodshot eyes and dilated nostrils. They are arbitrary and unjust and dogmatic and brutish and lustful."

"But do you really think men's minds are altered by the food they eat?"

"I know it," said Miss Miniver. "Experte credo. When I am leading a true life, a pure and simple life free of all stimulants and excitements, I think--I think--oh! with pellucid clearness; but if I so much as take a mouthful of meat--or anything--the mirror is all blurred."



## Part 6

Then, arising she knew not how, like a new-born appetite, came a craving in Ann Veronica for the sight and sound of beauty.

It was as if her aesthetic sense had become inflamed. Her mind turned and accused itself of having been cold and hard. She began to look for beauty and discover it in unexpected aspects and places. Hitherto she had seen it chiefly in pictures and other works of art, incidentally, and as a thing taken out of life. Now the sense of beauty was spreading to a multitude of hitherto unsuspected aspects of the world about her.

The thought of beauty became an obsession. It interwove with her biological work. She found herself asking more and more curiously, "Why, on the principle of the survival of the fittest, have I any sense of beauty at all?" That enabled her to go on thinking about beauty when it seemed to her right that she should be thinking about biology.

She was very greatly exercised by the two systems of values--the two series of explanations that her comparative anatomy on the one hand and her sense of beauty on the other, set going in her thoughts. She could not make up her mind which was the finer, more elemental thing, which gave its values to the other. Was it that the struggle of things

to survive produced as a sort of necessary by-product these intense preferences and appreciations, or was it that some mystical outer thing, some great force, drove life beautyward, even in spite of expediency, regardless of survival value and all the manifest discretions of life? She went to Capes with that riddle and put it to him very carefully and clearly, and he talked well--he always talked at some length when she took a difficulty to him--and sent her to a various literature upon the markings of butterflies, the incomprehensible elaboration and splendor of birds of Paradise and humming-birds' plumes, the patterning of tigers, and a leopard's spots. He was interesting and inconclusive, and the original papers to which he referred her discursive were at best only suggestive. Afterward, one afternoon, he hovered about her, and came and sat beside her and talked of beauty and the riddle of beauty for some time. He displayed a quite unprofessional vein of mysticism in the matter. He contrasted with Russell, whose intellectual methods were, so to speak, sceptically dogmatic. Their talk drifted to the beauty of music, and they took that up again at tea-time.

But as the students sat about Miss Garvice's tea-pot and drank tea or smoked cigarettes, the talk got away from Capes. The Scotchman informed Ann Veronica that your view of beauty necessarily depended on your metaphysical premises, and the young man with the Russell-like hair became anxious to distinguish himself by telling the Japanese student that Western art was symmetrical and Eastern art asymmetrical, and that among the higher organisms the tendency was toward an external symmetry veiling an internal want of balance. Ann Veronica decided she would have

to go on with Capes another day, and, looking up, discovered him sitting on a stool with his hands in his pockets and his head a little on one side, regarding her with a thoughtful expression. She met his eye for a moment in curious surprise.

He turned his eyes and stared at Miss Garvice like one who wakes from a reverie, and then got up and strolled down the laboratory toward his refuge, the preparation-room.

## Part 7

Then one day a little thing happened that clothed itself in significance.

She had been working upon a ribbon of microtome sections of the developing salamander, and he came to see what she had made of them. She stood up and he sat down at the microscope, and for a time he was busy scrutinizing one section after another. She looked down at him and saw that the sunlight was gleaming from his cheeks, and that all over his cheeks was a fine golden down of delicate hairs. And at the sight something leaped within her.

Something changed for her.

She became aware of his presence as she had never been aware of any human being in her life before. She became aware of the modelling of his ear, of the muscles of his neck and the textures of the hair that came off his brow, the soft minute curve of eyelid that she could just see beyond his brow; she perceived all these familiar objects as though they were acutely beautiful things. They WERE, she realized, acutely beautiful things. Her sense followed the shoulders under his coat, down to where his flexible, sensitive-looking hand rested lightly upon the table. She felt him as something solid and strong and trustworthy beyond measure. The perception of him flooded her being.

He got up. "Here's something rather good," he said, and with a start and an effort she took his place at the microscope, while he stood beside her and almost leaning over her.

She found she was trembling at his nearness and full of a thrilling dread that he might touch her. She pulled herself together and put her eye to the eye-piece.

"You see the pointer?" he asked.

"I see the pointer," she said.

"It's like this," he said, and dragged a stool beside her and sat down with his elbow four inches from hers and made a sketch. Then he got up

and left her.

She had a feeling at his departure as of an immense cavity, of something enormously gone; she could not tell whether it was infinite regret or infinite relief....

But now Ann Veronica knew what was the matter with her.

## Part 8

And as she sat on her bed that night, musing and half-undressed, she began to run one hand down her arm and scrutinize the soft flow of muscle under her skin. She thought of the marvellous beauty of skin, and all the delightfulness of living texture. Oh the back of her arm she found the faintest down of hair in the world. "Etherialized monkey," she said. She held out her arm straight before her, and turned her hand this way and that.

"Why should one pretend?" she whispered. "Why should one pretend?"

"Think of all the beauty in the world that is covered up and overlaid."

She glanced shyly at the mirror above her dressing-table, and then about

her at the furniture, as though it might penetrate to the thoughts that peeped in her mind.

"I wonder," said Ann Veronica at last, "if I am beautiful? I wonder if I shall ever shine like a light, like a translucent goddess?--

"I wonder--

"I suppose girls and women have prayed for this, have come to this--In Babylon, in Nineveh.

"Why shouldn't one face the facts of one's self?"

She stood up. She posed herself before her mirror and surveyed herself with gravely thoughtful, gravely critical, and yet admiring eyes. "And, after all, I am just one common person!"

She watched the throb of the arteries in the stem of her neck, and put her hand at last gently and almost timidly to where her heart beat beneath her breast.

Part 9

The realization that she was in love flooded Ann Veronica's mind, and altered the quality of all its topics.

She began to think persistently of Capes, and it seemed to her now that for some weeks at least she must have been thinking persistently of him unawares. She was surprised to find how stored her mind was with impressions and memories of him, how vividly she remembered his gestures and little things that he had said. It occurred to her that it was absurd and wrong to be so continuously thinking of one engrossing topic, and she made a strenuous effort to force her mind to other questions.

But it was extraordinary what seemingly irrelevant things could restore her to the thought of Capes again. And when she went to sleep, then always Capes became the novel and wonderful guest of her dreams.

For a time it really seemed all-sufficient to her that she should love. That Capes should love her seemed beyond the compass of her imagination. Indeed, she did not want to think of him as loving her. She wanted to think of him as her beloved person, to be near him and watch him, to have him going about, doing this and that, saying this and that, unconscious of her, while she too remained unconscious of herself. To think of him as loving her would make all that different. Then he would turn his face to her, and she would have to think of herself in his eyes. She would become defensive--what she did would be the thing that mattered. He would require things of her, and she would be passionately concerned to meet his requirements. Loving was better than that. Loving

was self-forgetfulness, pure delighting in another human being. She felt that with Capes near to her she would be content always to go on loving.

She went next day to the schools, and her world seemed all made of happiness just worked up roughly into shapes and occasions and duties. She found she could do her microscope work all the better for being in love. She winced when first she heard the preparation-room door open and Capes came down the laboratory; but when at last he reached her she was self-possessed. She put a stool for him at a little distance from her own, and after he had seen the day's work he hesitated, and then plunged into a resumption of their discussion about beauty.

"I think," he said, "I was a little too mystical about beauty the other day."

"I like the mystical way," she said.

"Our business here is the right way. I've been thinking, you know--I'm not sure that primarily the perception of beauty isn't just intensity of feeling free from pain; intensity of perception without any tissue destruction."

"I like the mystical way better," said Ann Veronica, and thought.

"A number of beautiful things are not intense."



"But delicacy, for example, may be intensely perceived."

"But why is one face beautiful and another not?" objected Ann Veronica; "on your theory any two faces side by side in the sunlight ought to be equally beautiful. One must get them with exactly the same intensity."

He did not agree with that. "I don't mean simply intensity of sensation. I said intensity of perception. You may perceive harmony, proportion, rhythm, intensely. They are things faint and slight in themselves, as physical facts, but they are like the detonator of a bomb: they let loose the explosive. There's the internal factor as well as the external.... I don't know if I express myself clearly. I mean that the point is that vividness of perception is the essential factor of beauty; but, of course, vividness may be created by a whisper."

"That brings us back," said Ann Veronica, "to the mystery. Why should some things and not others open the deeps?"

"Well, that might, after all, be an outcome of selection--like the preference for blue flowers, which are not nearly so bright as yellow, of some insects."

"That doesn't explain sunsets."

"Not quite so easily as it explains an insect alighting on colored paper. But perhaps if people didn't like clear, bright, healthy

eyes--which is biologically understandable--they couldn't like precious stones. One thing may be a necessary collateral of the others. And, after all, a fine clear sky of bright colors is the signal to come out of hiding and rejoice and go on with life."

"H'm!" said Ann Veronica, and shook her head.

Capes smiled cheerfully with his eyes meeting hers. "I throw it out in passing," he said. "What I am after is that beauty isn't a special inserted sort of thing; that's my idea. It's just life, pure life, life nascent, running clear and strong."

He stood up to go on to the next student.

"There's morbid beauty," said Ann Veronica.

"I wonder if there is!" said Capes, and paused, and then bent down over the boy who wore his hair like Russell.

Ann Veronica surveyed his sloping back for a moment, and then drew her microscope toward her. Then for a time she sat very still. She felt that she had passed a difficult corner, and that now she could go on talking with him again, just as she had been used to do before she understood what was the matter with her....

She had one idea, she found, very clear in her mind--that she would get

a Research Scholarship, and so contrive another year in the laboratory.

"Now I see what everything means," said Ann Veronica to herself; and it really felt for some days as though the secret of the universe, that had been wrapped and hidden from her so obstinately, was at last altogether displayed.