

## THE REGENERATION OF HILARY VANCE

MR. JOYNER was dining alone at a small restaurant in Soho, when he first made the acquaintance of Miss Paton, whom he had remarked as a prepossessing young lady, evidently accustomed to the less obvious uses of a spoon and fork. When he overheard her ask the waiter for a napkin, he inferred that she must be a gentlewoman. The waiter stared at her for a moment, because, in his experience, customers always asked for a serviette. Having seen better days, he pulled himself together, bowed politely, and fetched the article demanded. Mr. Joyner confessed afterwards—to Miss Paton herself—that he felt impelled to risk a rebuff when he beheld her eating what was set forth on the menu as curried chicken with a spoon and fork, whereas a lady at the next table disposed swiftly of a similar portion with no tool other than a knife. Mr. Joyner, being a man of nice observation, further noticed that the fingers which Miss Paton dipped into a finger bowl were delicately shaped and embellished by pink nails. At this point, knowing that the said fingers were about to be hidden in a pair of carefully mended gloves, Mr. Joyner embarked upon what turned out to be the great adventure of his life. A narrow gangway divided him from the young lady. Picking up her gloves, she caught Mr. Joyner's eye, and noticed that it was mildly blue. To her amazement, he bowed, not so gracefully as the waiter, and said in a low voice :

“ A shocking bad dinner.”

She replied quietly :

“ Do you expect to dine for eighteen pence ? ”

## *Dew of the Sea*

The ice was broken. It may be said here that Miss Paton was not in the habit of encouraging strange males to enter into talk with her. But, during the meal which could hardly be described as dinner, she, on her part, had taken careful note of the young man, deciding that he was a gentleman in every sense of that sorely abused word. Also, she was well able to take care of herself, and indeed had done so for some three long dreary years.

Mr. Joyner laughed pleasantly.

"I can tell you one thing," he said confidentially. "The coffee is really good."

"Is it?"

She raised her brows incredulously.

"Yes; freshly roasted and ground at six p.m. each day. If you would permit me to offer you a cup?"

Miss Paton frowned. A sharp "certainly not" quivered upon her lips. And yet the smile that accompanied the simple invitation was so disarming that she felt it would be churlish to refuse. Swallowing the curt refusal, she said gravely:

"Why not? You are very kind."

Mr. Joyner ordered two black coffees. Miss Paton, as the waiter hurried away, remarked pensively:

"I am glad you don't insult me by asking if I take milk."

"Will you be insulted if I suggest—kümme?"

"A tiny glass," she answered demurely.

When the waiter came back with the coffee, Mr. Joyner was sitting at Miss Paton's table. The waiter, being an Italian, bestowed upon the couple all he had to offer of his own, the benediction of that smile which Saint Michael craved of Omnipotence and duly received. He was of the opinion that so prepossessing a pair ought to have dined together, and shared a bottle of Chianti Vecchio.

## *The Regeneration of Hilary Vance*

Miss Paton declined a preferred cigarette, although she perceived that it was of excellent quality. She begged her companion to light up at once, and he did so.

"My name," said he, "is Joyner."

"And mine," she replied, "is Paton. Miss Paton, Stenographer and Typist."

"I do typing, Miss Paton."

"What a coincidence! Very uninteresting work, isn't it?"

Mr. Joyner hesitated, sipping his coffee.

"That depends," he answered guardedly. "Some of my work is quite exciting."

He spoke with an air which aroused Miss Paton's curiosity. She leaned her head upon one hand and eyed him attentively. His blue eyes were positively sparkling. Being a creature of temperament and imagination, she leapt hot-foot to the conclusion that this young man must be typist to a personage, possibly the Chief Commissioner of Police. In that case, it might be indiscreet to ask questions. Fortunately for her peace of mind, Mr. Paton continued suavely:

"I type short stories and novels."

"Whose?" she asked breathlessly.

"Mr. Hilary Vance's."

"Gracious! You don't say so. What luck! What a privilege! I simply adore his books. My work is in a dull old office, under two dull old men. How I envy you!"

She looked so alive, so young, so intelligent, that Mr. Paton perpetrated a compliment.

"Do you? I find myself envying those two dull old men."

She held up a finger.

"Please! If you pay me compliments, I shall run away."

## *Dew of the Sea*

Mr. Joyner apologized abjectly.

They talked on and on for nearly an hour, each recognizing in the other a kindred spirit, although the talk remained impersonal. Together they discussed literary and dramatic art with whetted appetites. Finally, they agreed to dine together at a better restaurant upon the following evening. But Miss Paton insisted, rather formally, upon paying her share of the prospective bill. At the door of the Soho eating-house—as they agreed to call it—the pair parted.

Mr. Joyner walked home to his modest rooms and smoked three pipes. He was not in love, but he divined that he might be within forty-eight hours.

As he smoked he looked back upon a singularly quiet and blameless existence, which in moments of exhilaration he had never reckoned to be “life.”

He had only lived, as he interpreted the word, in his imagination. Upon the wings of that he had flown wide and far. A poor young man, not too robust in health, with no rich friends or relations, somewhat proud, and on that account slightly bashful and self-conscious, he had isolated himself in these two rooms, working hard in a tiny circle whose radius had grown shorter instead of longer as the years sped by. His father was a country parson in the West Country. Each year, the son returned to the parsonage for a month; and he was not too sorry when his holiday ended. Like Miss Paton he had begun work as stenographer and typist to a dull firm of solicitors. Now, he was a free lance, “on his own,” with plenty of private typing to engross him.

Long ago, he had decided that his name, Nathaniel Joyner, was a serious disability to a seeker after real adventure. Accordingly, he had contented himself with adventures at second hand which he found in books. His small sitting-room held many volumes picked up cheap at the bookshops in the Charing Cross Road.

## The Regeneration of Hilary Vance

Before he went to bed, he examined himself critically in a small shaving-glass. As he did so, he frowned. It seemed to him that Nathaniel Joyner was inscribed in indelible ink upon a pale and insignificant face. His mother was of kin to a famous Devon family; some of his forbears had sailed from Bideford for the Spanish Main. Their blood flowed in his veins. But in looks he was, alas! a Joyner. Probably the first of that ilk had been a cabinet-maker.

All the same, he had found favour in the hazel eyes of Miss Paton.

They met next day, at the appointed hour and place, a restaurant kept by a Breton and his wife, where the cooking was good. The mere smell of the *pot-au-feu* provoked appetite. Mr. Joyner remarked to himself that his companion was wearing a smarter toque. Miss Paton glanced understandingly at a new necktie. Almost furtively, the young man presented the maid with a bunch of violets, which she pinned—without offer of assistance—on to the lapel of her jacket.

Immediately, the talk became personal. Miss Paton heard about the West Country parsonage, and listened with sympathetic attention to the tale of Mr. Joyner's early struggles with fortune and misfortune. And then, in her turn, she told nearly as simple a story. Her father, a man of good family, had squandered his money upon the turf. For three years she had earned her own living.

"But your friends?"

Miss Paton shrugged her shoulders.

"I couldn't sponge on the right sort, and the others didn't interest me."

"Same here," said Mr. Joyner.

Coffee was being served, when the end came to these artless autobiographies.

Miss Paton said gaily:

## *Dew of the Sea*

"And now, tell me about Hilary Vance. I have tried to construct him after reading his books. Do you know him well?"

"Oh, yes, fairly well. He's not a bad chap."

"The faint praise that damns! He knows a lot about life anyhow."

Mr. Joyner, perhaps, would have preferred to talk about himself, but he murmured politely:

"How have you constructed Hilary Vance?"

Miss Paton considered the question. She was not really pretty, but she appeared to be so in the eyes of Mr. Joyner. Her features were irregular; but she had—so the young man decided—an air! She carried a high head finely set upon a slender neck. Her hazel eyes were set well apart, indicating wide vision; her skin had texture although it lacked colour. A charming vitality informed her movements and her speech. Possibly, this vitality, somewhat lacking in himself, constituted itself as charm to a quiet student of books. Also, he admired tremendously her independence, the resolution which had driven her to cut loose from disagreeable family ties.

"How have I constructed Hilary Vance? In speaking of him to you I am afraid of making myself ridiculous."

He reassured her:

"The risk of that is negligible, Miss Paton."

"Thank you. Well, I see him, and envy him, as a bird of passage. He describes things and people panoramically, as if he had flown from north to south, like a swallow. He must be an adventurer."

She paused, looking up for an approving nod. Mr. Joyner remained silent.

She continued swiftly:

"Essentially a man of action. That is what appeals to me."

## *The Regeneration of Hilary Vance*

“Action appeals to you?”

“Naturally. I adore conquerors, the men who win through with the odds against them.”

“The odds have been against Hilary Vance.”

She laughed triumphantly.

“Ah! I thought so. Is—is he good-looking?”

“No.”

“What a curt ‘no.’ I have an odd conviction that you don’t like him.”

“Really, you are mistaken. You see I have never tried to construct Vance from an imaginative point of view. That is my fault, I dare say. Can a man be a hero to his typist?”

She smiled ingenuously.

“He might be if his typist happened to be a woman. Do you do all his work?”

“I think so.”

“I’m not trying to poach on your preserves, but if—if you should want assistance, please call on me. I often do outside work after office hours.”

Mr. Joyner gravely pledged himself to call upon her services if they were needed. Whereupon she observed rather testily:

“Of course you mean to keep him to yourself.”

“But I don’t.”

“You are absurdly reserved about your employer. Is that in the bond?”

“Oh, no.”

“I read the other day that he refuses to be interviewed. I like that. Have you his photograph?”

“I haven’t.”

Miss Paton pouted a little, and then smiled. She was sympathetic enough to understand that an employer’s success may not be the favourite theme of his less fortunate amanuensis. Discreetly, she began to talk of the theatre. Mr. Joyner helped her to tear to tatters a

## *Dew of the Sea*

certain vulgar farce. Before they parted they agreed to pass judgment together upon a problem play lately produced. But at the last moment Vance cropped up again.

"Has Mr. Vance written any plays?"

"Half a dozen."

"You don't say so. Where are they?"

"In his desk, and likely to remain there."

"Did you type them?"

He nodded. She asked eagerly:

"And what did you think of them?"

"Um! I thought the managers were justified in refusing to produce them. Good night, Miss Paton, and thank you for a charming evening."

"Good night, Mr. Joyner."

Alone again, in his rooms, Mr. Joyner fell a melancholy prey to certain misgivings. Miss Paton allured him irresistibly, but between himself and her stood Hilary Vance.

Confound the fellow!

Sooner or later, Miss Paton would scrape acquaintance with Vance through Nathaniel Joyner. Why had he mentioned his name? What an idiot he had been! And what idiots even the nicest women were to construct impossible heroes out of books! Already she had set up this conqueror, and bowed the knee before him.

Disgusting——!

He contemplated the expediency of letting Miss Paton meet Vance. And in that case, Vance, he felt assured, would accept such homage as might be offered, and wallow in it. He could envisage him wallowing. Indeed, from his knowledge of the man, Vance would be unable to resist the temptation to "play up," to "make good," by assuming a preposterous pose. For Vance happened to be a bachelor and unattached. Miss Paton was just the sort of girl to catch his fancy.

## *The Regeneration of Hilary Vance*

Mr. Joyner decided ultimately that the moth must be kept away from the candle.

During their next two meetings, friendship established itself firmly. The fact that Mr. Joyner was quite sure that Cupid had nothing to do with the matter proves conclusively that the imp had not been idle.

Ten days later, they spent Sunday afternoon in Kensington Gardens. And beside them stalked the shadow of Hilary Vance. Acutely sensible of this, Mr. Joyner attempted murder. The time had come to dispose of this rival by poison, by henbane dropped into receptive ears. To abandon metaphor, the character of a member of the Incorporated Society of Authors was to be blackened with malicious intent.

"Would you like to meet Mr. Vance?" asked his typist.

"I should just love it."

"Wait, till you hear what I have to say about him. I speak with the greatest reluctance, because I'm his paid servant."

"Servant? A typist is not a servant."

"I have served Mr. Vance very faithfully. You have set him on a pinnacle. He is not at all what you think him to be."

"Please go on. I have known all along, of course, that you disliked him."

"But I give you my word of honour, I don't. I, too, in my time, have set this man upon a pinnacle, and now, when I know him intimately, I still like him because he appeals shamelessly to what is worst in me."

"Good gracious! This is exciting."

"Vance has been pinched by prosperity into a pincher."

"What can you mean?"

"He is close in money matters."

This was a raking shot.

## *Dew of the Sea*

Miss Paton's face expressed what she thought. Mr. Joyner went on placidly :

" I make excuses for him. For many years he was very poor. Success came to him unexpectedly——"

" Yes ; so it did."

" And by that time he had settled down in a narrow groove. He is in it still. Instead of spending his money, he takes a miser's delight in hoarding it."

" I am beginning to detest this man."

" I have seen him gloating over his bank balance, and chortling over favourable Press notices !"

" Hateful !"

" He is a *poseur*."

" Help !"

" If he met you, and detected in you the hero-worshipper, he would positively wallow in—in the sunshine of your smiles."

" He would drown, Mr. Joyner, in my tears of disappointment. I am much obliged to you. I have no wish to meet Mr. Vance in the flesh. And I shall read his books again under the searchlights of what you have just told me. I have no doubt he gives himself away in them. I shall ask only one more question : has he behaved badly to any woman ?"

" I don't think he has enough initiative to do that."

" That is the limit. Not enough initiative ! And I have dreamed of Hilary Vance. Well—he is buried."

" *Requiescat in pace*," murmured Mr. Joyner.

They strolled on in silence. Spring was abroad in Kensington Gardens and the elms were just bursting into leaf. A soft breeze blew from the west. Mr. Joyner glanced at other couples, some of whom were disdaining the ordinary conventions as observed in public by the privileged classes.

" Quite warm, isn't it ?" murmured Miss Paton.

## *The Regeneration of Hilary Vance*

Mr. Joyner, with his eyes upon two faces that almost seemed to be one, answered absently :

“ Osculatory.”

“ I beg your pardon ? ”

“ Nothing. I was pursuing a train of thought. Shall we sit down ? ”

They found two chairs, not far from the Round Pond, and pensively watched the passing couples. Mr. Joyner said blandly :

“ I wonder if they are all engaged to be married.”

“ I hope so,” observed Miss Paton.

“ They don't look as if they had much to marry on,” commented Mr. Joyner.

“ Faith, hope, and love.”

“ Unhappily, we want more than that.”

“ We ? ” Miss Paton raised her brows, smiling a little.

“ I meant, of course, persons in our condition. If—if, Miss Paton, the faith and hope and love were forthcoming, what would you consider necessary, in the way of cold cash ? Tell me your irreducible minimum ? ”

“ What an odd question ! ”

“ Perhaps I am an odd man. I ask, as a friend.”

“ I reply as a friend. Four hundred a year would be the irreducible minimum. I have a hundred a year of my own.”

She spoke without any embarrassment. Mr. Joyner rose to the situation. In a sprightly fashion, he outlined what might be achieved on four hundred a year. In essentials Miss Paton agreed with him. They differed and argued about details. An eavesdropper would have been put to it to determine whether or not they were speaking personally or impersonally. When the subject of ways and means was thrashed out, Miss Paton said suddenly :

“ Why did you tell me about Mr. Vance ? ”

## *Dew of the Sea*

He stared at her in some confusion. She continued softly :

“ You told me the truth, I am sure of that ; and you told it with a curious reluctance and yet with a sort of half-savage pleasure.”

Mr. Joyner blushed.

“ Perhaps I was jealous of your interest in him. You are so quick-witted that really I must leave you to guess the rest.”

“ Very well. Now, what did you mean by saying that he appealed to what is worst in you ? ”

Mr. Joyner fidgeted.

“ From what I have seen of you, *you* are not close in money matters ; *you* are not a *poseur* ; and ”—her eyes twinkled—“ *you* have initiative.”

“ I am rather close,” he admitted.

“ But, bless me ! you have to be. An Atlantic lies between thrift and parsimony. I am close, a penny- hoarder, but I have the inherited instincts of a spend-thrift. I should love making the money fly—if I had it.”

Her eyes sparkled at the mere thought. Mr. Joyner laughed, not quite wholeheartedly.

“ All of it ? ” he asked.

“ Not all of it,” she assured him. “ I should never run the horrid risk of being hungry again.”

“ Have you ever been actually hungry ? ”

“ Sometimes. I only came into my small income a year ago. Now, as friends, what is this ‘ worst ’ in you to which Hilary Vance appeals ? ”

He answered in one word : “ Self-absorption.”

Miss Paton looked incredulous.

Deprecatingly, he continued :

“ You know I rather revelled in being alone till I met you.”

“ Till you met me ? ”

He said boldly :

## *The Regeneration of Hilary Vance*

"Till I met you. You have pulled me out of myself. You have rescued me. I was crawling deeper and deeper into a hole of my own making. I spent pleasant hours thinking entirely of myself. Now, I spend much happier hours thinking of you."

His voice faltered a little; the sincerity of his tone touched Miss Paton strangely.

"I am glad," she whispered. "I know what it is to be lonely; I know what it is to think about oneself." She smiled. "And to think that three weeks ago we were strangers. We don't even know each other's Christian names. What is yours?"

"Nathaniel."

"What an odd name!"

"I hate it. My father, who likes Biblical names, chose it."

"What does it mean?"

"Same as Theodore—a gift of God. What is your name?"

"Psyche!"

Mr. Joyner showed enthusiasm.

"A delightful name! Exactly right! I ought to have guessed it. Everything, yes everything, is explained."

"I don't quite follow you."

"Nobody could. I am simply soaring into the blue. Psyche——! Psyche Paton——! Incomparable!"

"I rather like Nat," said Miss Paton. She glanced at a silver wrist-watch. "Perhaps we ought to be walking back."

"I feel like flying. May I call you Psyche?"

She nodded.

"Will you call me Nat?"

She nodded again.

"Splendid! One more favour, please! Let me give you tea in my rooms. Come and see the hole out of which you have dragged me for ever and ever."

## Dew of the Sea

She nodded for the third time.

Much to her surprise, as they passed out of the Gardens, Mr. Joyner hailed a passing taxi. As she leant back, Miss Paton murmured :

“ Is this thrift ? ”

“ It is life,” replied Mr. Joyner. “ I am beginning to live, dear Psyche, I feel a man of initiative, of action. Shake hands and congratulate me.”

He held her hand longer than was necessary, encouraged, perhaps, by a gentle pressure from her slim fingers.

“ You will dine with me, won't you ? ”

“ No, Nat. Not this evening. Initiative may over-leap itself. Calm yourself ! ”

He replied fervently : “ I will be anything you ask me to be.”

The “ hole ” was situate far from the ground, at the top of a large ugly building in Bloomsbury, *au Paradis*. Miss Paton glanced with approval at the many books and few engravings. Mr. Joyner busied himself in preparing tea, whilst she sat watching him, snug in the big shabby arm-chair. Her heart was beating faster than usual. Because, perhaps, she had climbed many stairs. There was no lift in the building. Her observant eye marked and approved an ordered disorder. All the furnishings were in excellent taste, solidly unpretentious, inexpensive but not cheap. She decided that Nathaniel Joyner, like herself, must be a man of small independent means. So many books could hardly have been bought out of the wage of a typist.

From a cupboard, Mr. Joyner took a small cake, and a plate of *friandises*.

“ Buszard ! ” she exclaimed.

“ Yes.”

“ Then you were expecting me ? ”

“ Does that annoy you ? ”

“ I don't quite know.”

## *The Regeneration of Hilary Vance*

The tea-service was of blue and white pottery, a good pattern. When the preparations were complete, Mr. Joyner invited his guest to make and pour out the tea. She took off her gloves, and officiated. As she drank her first cup, she observed thoughtfully :

“ I like your ‘ hole.’ I can quite understand your liking it too well.”

“ I never liked it as much as I like it now.”

“ Talk to me about your books.”

He obeyed with alacrity. And as he talked, he revealed himself unmistakably, because there is no surer index to a man's character and temperament than the books he really loves. Books had been Mr. Joyner's friends. Now and again he would take down some volume, read a few lines from it, and replace it. He handled each book caressingly, no matter how poor its binding might be. The girl, quietly watching him, decided that the dropping of a book would positively hurt him. She wondered if he would be as tender with a woman.

When he paused she rose to go.

“ You will come again, Psyche ? ”

“ If I am asked.”

“ Surely you know that you are welcome at any time ? ”

She drew on her gloves.

“ Is my hat quite straight ? ” she asked.

“ No. Let me adjust it.”

He did so, with trembling fingers. When she held out her hand, he seized it.

“ I shall be so lonely after you have gone.”

She released her hand gently.

“ Perhaps Mr. Vance will drop in.”

“ Vance ? I thought we had buried him.”

“ So we did, but, all the same, I feel rather sorry for him. If it is true, Nat, that I have helped in any way to lift you out of yourself——”

“ You have done it.”

## *Dew of the Sea*

"Can't you stir up poor Mr. Vance?"

"I'll try, Psyche."

"It's too absurd your being jealous of him."

She laughed and went her way, refusing an escort. But, at the foot of the stairs, she promised to dine with him and "do," a play upon the following Wednesday.

Alone in his arm-chair, Mr. Joyner admitted to himself that he was in love—irrevocably.

On Wednesday evening, at the Breton restaurant, Miss Paton spoke of Vance before the soup was swallowed.

"Are you at work on him?"

"In my humble way—yes."

"He responds to treatment, eh?"

"The interest you take in Vance bothers me."

"Oh, Nat, what nonsense! I repeat, you have killed him for me; I don't want to meet him; but since Sunday I've read his two last books again, and I'm sure that he can be saved. What a triumph it would be for you!"

"Wouldn't it? I say, I've ordered a pint of fizz."

"You haven't?"

"You see, this job of regenerating Vance can't be done cheaply."

"There are moments when you puzzle me, Nat."

"We are going to the dress-circle to-night."

"Why not stalls?"

"We aren't in evening dress."

"Have you bought a Rolls-Royce car?"

"Not yet."

The dinner was a success, well-cooked and well-served. Mr. Joyner mentioned this when he bestowed a handsome tip upon the waiter. He took Miss Paton to the theatre in a taxi. As they rolled away from the restaurant, she said lightly:

"Have you ordered supper at the Savoy?"

"No, Shall I?"

## The Regeneration of Hilary Vance

"Don't be silly! You have been criminally extravagant to-night. My little Mary is very grateful, but my conscience protests."

The play provoked some criticism from Mr. Joyner, whose knowledge of stage technique astonished his guest. He pronounced the curtain of the third act to be bad, and suggested, off hand, a much better one. Miss Paton was much impressed.

Between acts, however, her silence rather distressed her companion. He tried to interpret it, and failed. Light was thrown upon it as they parted on the steps of the young lady's boarding-house. Despite more protests from an awakened conscience, they were conveyed thither in another taxi.

"I am worried, Nat."

"I thought you were, Psyche. Now, what is it?"

"I feel that I have egged you on to squander money."

"What an idea!"

"It's not an idea but a conviction. Yes, I am to blame.

I—I feel rather miserable."

"We have had a topping time, the first of many."

"Heavens!"

"Good night, and bless you! Don't worry about Vance too much!"

"I am worrying about you, Nat."

"I believe that I shall drag Vance out of *his* hole. And he will owe it to you, not to me. Bye-bye!"

He strode off whistling, as the front door opened. Miss Paton remarked the length and vigour of his stride.

"No initiative," she thought. "Why he's simply bursting with it."

Upon the following Sunday afternoon, Mr. Joyner proposed marriage to Miss Paton, and was accepted. After the usual things had been said and done, the conqueror said to the conquered:

"I expected a refusal."

## *Dew of the Sea*

"Did you? Really, I was prepared to procrastinate, but I felt that you needed some one to look after you and restrain you."

"I shall take a lot of restraining."

"I don't doubt that. I hope it is understood that I am Chancellor of the Exchequer?"

"Um! I remember your saying that you would make money fly if you had it."

"If I have it, I shall make it fly just as far as you would."

"We shall see about that," said Mr. Joyner. "And now, darling, I want to talk, not about you, but about Vance. I spent this morning with him. I had a heart-to-heart talk with him, B' Jove! I didn't spare him, poor devil! I told him what you had done for me. And I had an astounding success. *He is out of his hole, too.*"

"Nat, you really are wonderful. But I assure you that Mr. Vance doesn't interest me any longer."

"He wants to meet you, and thank you."

"I'll take all that for granted."

"He wants you to do some typing for him."

"Steal bread out of your mouth?"

"I've something to tell you, a pleasant little surprise. I write a bit myself. I can actually sell my stuff. There is quite a nice demand for it. I am justified in chucking typing."

"Nat, dear, I'm not surprised. But I'm delighted. And I shall do all your typing."

"To please me, will you meet Vance, and finish the good work which you, not I, have begun?"

"I will meet him to please you."

"When, my dearest?"

"Oh, whenever you like. Mr. Vance seems to be an obsession with you."

"He is, I mean he was. He knows that we are here, in Feter Pan land. He is quite close. Shall I fetch him?"

## *The Regeneration of Hilary Vance*

"If you like. The sooner it's over the better."

"I feel that way myself. Shut your eyes, Psyche!"

"Whatever for?"

"You shut them, and keep them shut till I cry—  
'Cuckoo.'"

Miss Paton shut her eyes. Mr. Joyner moved crunchingly across the gravel, and returned a-tip-toe on the grass.

"Cuckoo!"

She opened her eyes. She looked at her lover.

"Where is he, Nat?"

Mr. Nathaniel Joyner stood stiffly at attention. He touched his top waistcoat button dramatically.

"He is—here."