

Chapter 1 : Alfred Richard Allinson | Revolv

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A Still Afternoon By D. The clink of the shunting engines is sharp and fine Like savage music striking far off; and away On the uplifted blue Palace, light pools stir and shine Where the glass is domed up the blue, soft day. IV My world is a painted fresco, where coloured shapes Of old ineffectual lives linger blurred and warm: An endless tapestry the past has woven, drapes The halls of my life, and compels my soul to conform. There is something stirs in me from the flow of their limbs as they move Out of the distance, nearer. Here in the subtle, rounded flesh Beats the active ecstasy, suddenly lifting my eyes Into quick response. The fascination of the restless Creator, through the mesh of men Moving, vibrating endlessly in the rounded flesh Challenges me, and is answered. VII The old dreams are beloved, beautiful, soft-toned, and sure But the dream-stuff is molten and moving mysteriously. This is no wistful allure For am I not also dream-stuff, diffusing myself in the pattern, Flowing I know not how, yet seriously Going into my place. Eyes where I can watch the swim of old dreams reflected on the molten metal of dreams, Watch the stir whose rhythm is secret, whose secret is sure and safe: The great activity swelling, through the round flesh pulsing, Impelling, shaping the coming dream ; Visible under the changing eyes, Under the mobile features. As the subtle heat Quickens the hastening, white-hot metal, The power of the melting, fusing force, The great, mysterious One, is swelling and shaping the dreams in the flesh, Is swelling and shaping a bud into blossom, The whole teeming flesh of mankind. The gigantic flesh of the world Is swelling with widespread, labouring concentration Into one bud on the stalk of eternity, Rounded arid swelling towards the fruit of a dream. It is no good, dear, meekness and forbearanceâ€”I endured too long. Far and wide run the easy roots that bear the leaves of pity. Oh I tore them up, though the wistful leaves were fragrant, and soft, and pretty, And I twisted them over the broken leaves into unbreakable ropes. Ah, my Darling, when over the purple horizon shall loom The shrouded Mother of a new idea, men hide their faces, Cry out, and fend her off, as she seeks her procreant groom, Wounding themselves against her, denying her great embraces. And do I not seek to mate my grown, desirous soul With the lusty souls of my boys? The great God spareth not, H e waters our face with tears, our young fruits fills with bitterness. And ripples poise and run, lapping across the water. The sight of their white play among the grass, Is like a little linnet song, winsome, Is like when two white butterflies settle in the arms of one flower For a moment, then away with a flutter of wings. I wait for the baby to wander hither to me, Like a wind-shadow wandering over the water, So she may stand on my knee With her two bare feet on my hands Cool as syringa buds Cool and firm and silken as pink young peony flowers. My sleeping baby hangs upon my life As a silent bee at the end of a shower Draws down the burdened flower. She who has always seemed so light Sways on my arm like sorrowful, storm-heavy boughs, Even her floating hair sinks like storm-bruised young leaves Reaching downwards: As the wings of a drenched, drowned bee Are a heaviness, and a weariness. I have only one, And it was painted by the sun I paid for hers, she paid for mine , On last Whitsunday afternoon. You see the way she wears her curls? Coiled up behind ; then, little whirls In front, to make the forehead coy: You know the way with London girls? I call them curls; but you can see They are not curled so, naturally: She wears a green straw hat instead. I never said her eyes were blue,â€” Those grey, pale pansies, London grew: H e sold the sun, the usurer! For gold ; the rose away he threw. I never said her hands were fine, That all day sell, till eight or nine, The silk and vair that others wear: I only said " Would they were mine! But now wise time has swept the graves away, And new-come April I have seen, Clad in her delicate cloak of white and green, Calling pale children there to come and play. The graves are gone,â€”save one that for some reason, Some marble pride of name and race, Has in that mortal garden kept a place: A lordlier tomb,â€”not subject to disseizin. And there,â€”not April now, for May was come,â€” I saw a sight as we went by, A sight to call down Mary from the sky,â€” I saw a child dance on that prouder tomb. Half babe, half girl, she waved her hands and sleeves, And bent, brown-haired, to see her feet That trod the cool grey stone, and set

their beat T o drop as light as raindrop on green leaves. Below, the dust,â€”the dead one, dead for years, Must surely feel some darts of spring Strike down, I thought, at her young revelling, And find a string start in his moulded ears. The dancing child,â€”she did not know he slept; That left me sad for joy and glad for sorrow. The dancing child knew nothing,â€”nor did he There, in his deep sleep, hear the dance: Now God be thanked for that great ignorance! Youth knows no death ; Death, no lost ecstasy. There is no land of Elim, Leftâ€”children of the Lord, For you to find and fly to: For the curse of Pharaoh keeps you In this accursed country, This land of Christ and Rothschild ;Shall keep you too, till death. When moonlight floods the patch of moorland in the very centre of the triangle between the little towns of Hartland, Torrington, and Holsworthy, a pagan spirit steals forth through the wan gorse ; gliding round the stems of the lonely gibbetlike fir-trees, peeping out amongst the reeds of the white marsh. That spirit has the eyes of a borderer, who perceives in every man a possible foe. And in fact, this high corner of the land has remained border to this day, where the masterful, acquisitive invader from the North dwells side by side with the unstable, proud, quick-blooded Celt-Iberian. In two cottages crowning some fallow land two families used to live side by side. That long white dwelling seemed all one, till the eye, peering through the sweetbrier smothering the righthand half, perceived the rude, weather-beaten presentment of a Running Horse, denoting the presence of intoxicating liquors; and in a window of the left-hand half that strange conglomeration of edibles and shoe-leather which proclaims the one shop o f a primitive hamlet. These married couples were by name Sandford at the eastern, and Leman at the western end ; and he who saw them for the first time thought: Leman was lean and lathy, a regular Celt, with an amiable, shadowy, humorous face. The two women were as different as the men. Those accustomed to their appearance soon noted the qualifications of their splendour. In Sandford, whom neither sun nor wind ever tanned, there was a look as if nothing would ever turn him from acquisition of what he had set his heart on ; his eyes had the idealism of the worshipper of property, ever marching towards a heaven of great possessions. Followed by his cowering spaniel, he walked to his fields for he farmed as well as kept the inn with a tread that seemed to shake the lanes, disengaging an air of such heavy and complete insulation that even the birds were still. He was not popular. He was feared, no one quite knew why. Sandford, for all her pink and white, sometimes girlish look, he had set the mark of his slow, heavy domination. Her voice was seldom heard. Once in a while, however, her reserve would yield to garrulity, as of water flowing through a broken dam. In these outbursts she usually spoke of her neighbours the Lemans, deploring the state of their marital relations. She had not broken, but she had chipped ; her edges had become jagged, sharp. T h e consciousness that she herself had been beaten to the earth seemed to inspire in her that waspish feeling towards Mrs. He spoke slowly, his tongue seemed thickening ; he no longer worked ; his humorous, amiable face had grown hangdog and clouded. All the village knew of his passionate outbreaks, and bursts of desperate weeping; and of two occasions when Sandford had been compelled to wrest a razor from him. But Sandfordâ€”that blond, ashy-looking Teutonâ€”was not easy of approach, and no one cared to remonstrate with him ; his taciturnity was too impressive, too impenetrable. Leman, too, never complained. To see this black-haired woman, with her stoical, alluring face, come out for a breath of air, and stand in the sunlight, her baby in her arms, was to have looked on a very woman of the Britons. In conquering races the men, they say, are superior to the women, in conquered races, the women to the men. She was certainly superior to Leman. That woman might be bent and mangled, she could not be broken ; her pride was too simple, too much a physical part of her. No one ever saw a word pass between her and Sandford. It was almost as if the old racial feelings of this borderland were pursuing in these two their unending conflict. For there they lived, side by side under the long, thatched roof, this great primitive, invading male, and that black-haired, lithe-limbed woman of older race, avoiding each other, never speakingâ€”as much too much for their own mates as they were, perhaps, worthy of each other. In this lonely parish houses stood far apart, yet news travelled down the May-scented lanes and over the whin-covered moor with a strange speed ; blown perhaps by the west wind, whispered by the pagan genius of the place in his wanderings, or conveyed by small boys on large farm horses. On Whit-Monday it was known that Leman had been drinking all Sunday ; for he had been heard on Sunday night shouting out that his wife had robbed him, and that her children were not his. All next day he was seen sitting in the bar of the inn soaking steadily. Yet on Tuesday morning Mrs. Leman was serving in her

shop as usualâ€”a really noble figure, with that lustreless black hair of hers,â€”very silent, and ever sweetening her eyes to her customers. Sandford, in one of her bursts of garrulity, complained bitterly of the way her neighbours had gone on the night before. But unmoved, ashy, stolid as ever, Sandford worked in the most stony of his fields. That hot, magnificent day wore to its e n d ; a night of extraordinary beauty fell. In the gold moonlight the shadows of the lime-tree leaves lay, blacker than any velvet, piled one on the other at the foot of the little green. It was very warm. A cuckoo sang on till nearly midnight. Where that marvellous moonlight spread out across the moor it was all pale witchery ; only the three pine-trees had strength to resist the wan gold of their fair visitor, and brooded over the scene like the ghosts of three great gallows. The long white dwelling of " t h e neighbours " bathed in that vibrating glow seemed to be exuding a refulgence of its own. Beyond the stream a night-jar hunted, whose fluttering harsh call tore the garment of the scent-laden still air. It was long before sleep folded her wings. The dead bodies of Sandford and Mrs. Sandford, in a state of collapse, was being nursed at a neighbouring cottage. T h e Leman children had been taken to the Rectory. It was vaguely known that Leman had " done for mun " ; of the how, the why, the when, all was conjecture. When I came up to bed that evening I was far gone in liquor, and so had been for two days off and on, which Sandford knows. My wife was in bed.

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