

MALICE IN KULTURLAND

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Malice in Kulturland by Horace Wyatt & W. Tell

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HORACE WYATT & W. TELL

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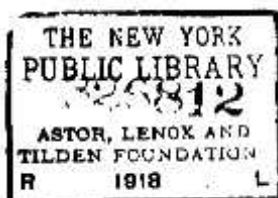
MALICE
IN KULTURLAND

BY
HORACE WYATT

With Illustrations by W. TELL

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CHAPTER I.

THE CHANGE.

OF course, it was very unfortunate that Alice should be ill at all, and it was certainly particularly unlucky that she should have chosen the time when the summer holidays were just going to begin.

It was one lovely day towards the end of July when she first had a bad headache and a hot tongue, and the doctor came and said that she was to stay in her room as "he was not sure," but would come again next day. It was terribly dull, though she had lots of books and papers to read. Alice liked papers best, but really there was nothing much in them just then, except a very long account of a trial in France, and a lot of speeches about "Home Rule" and "Exclusion" and other things that

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she didn't understand. However, she managed to find out that everyone was very concerned about the possibility of civil war in Ireland, the question of whether people in a really good social position ought not to be allowed to shoot editors if they wanted to, and particularly the falling off of gates at county cricket matches, and the difficulty of finding a first-class English heavyweight boxer. It was on account of these last two troubles that most of the papers agreed that the British Empire had begun to decline. There was a general impression that the modern Englishman had no brains and less pluck, and would be quite useless in an emergency. This was a bad look-out in itself, and the papers pointed out that what made things worse was the horrible depravity of our political leaders. Between them, they proved beyond a doubt that our statesmen of all parties were quacks and liars, watching only their own interests, and never for a moment considering those of the nation.

Alice was rather puzzled to know why, in that case, the nation chose such people to look after its affairs, but she felt much too ill to try and think it out. She had a vague recollection of being put to bed, and of someone talking

about "fever," and "delirious," and "very bad." She thought it was silly of them to put her to bed, because she had heard that most people die in their beds. She tried to explain that it would be safer for her to stop up, but nobody took any notice. Then everything began to go round and round, and to turn upside down and inside out, and some things got bigger and others smaller, until it made her head ache to look at them, and she shut her eyes and forgot about everything.

When she woke up again she felt very lazy and couldn't remember just at first what had happened. "I suppose it was because I was ill," she thought, "that everything seemed so queer! Wouldn't it be funny if everything *really* got topsy-turvy, and lost its original proportions! Then everyone, instead of being friendly, would want to fight everyone else! And there would be uncivil wars instead of civil ones! And people we thought were nice would turn out to be horrid! And people we thought were horrid would turn out to be nice! And I *do* wonder how it would all end!"

"Wait and see!" said a solemn voice quite close to her ear. Alice was very startled, and opened her eyes hurriedly. She found she was

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sitting in an easy chair in a big garden with a lot of unfamiliar looking animals in it, and just opposite to her was a queer bird of a sort she had never seen before.

"Did you speak?" asked Alice.

"The answer to the question is in the affirmative," announced the bird very deliberately.

"Might I ask what sort of a bird you are?" Alice inquired.

"You might, and on the other hand you might not," said the Bird very slowly. "As a matter of fact, I am a Dodo. I used to call myself a Liberal, some other people used to call me a Radical, and plenty of others used to call me everything they could lay their tongues to."

"But I thought the Dodo was extinct," said Alice.

"So it is," said the Bird, "for the present, quite extinct. And there's another extinct party somewhere about the garden. He's called a Lory or a Tory, I forget which, and at the present moment he's over there doing spade work. He's busy burying the hatchet. We're *very* friendly, you know?"

"Indeed!" said Alice politely, "I thought you were great enemies."

"So we were, so we were," said the Dodo.