

**THE WISE AND
THE WAYWARD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649377121

The wise and the wayward by G. S. Street

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

G. S. STREET

**THE WISE AND
THE WAYWARD**

THE WISE
AND
THE WAYWARD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BOY. Passages selected by his friend G. S. STREET. With a titlepage designed by C. W. PURSE. *Fifth Edition.* Foolscap 8vo. \$1.25.

A piece of distinguished humour and a piece of reserved and delicate art. The material is novel, the treatment unfalteringly ironical, the execution rarely sober and judicious, and the effect, within its limits, is absolute. . . . A creation in which there appears to be no flaw. — *Pall Mall Gazette*, London.

This little book is pure delight. . . . The conception is excellent and the style perfect. One simmers with laughter from first to last. *Speaker*, London.

The most admirable individual bit of irony that has seen the light for many a long day. . . . Inimitable in originality and reticence. — *World*, London.

There is more observation and art of presentment in this little book than in a wilderness of three-volume novels, even by eminent hands. — *Athenaeum*, London.

A quite priceless treasure. Tubby is indeed a new immortal. — *Academy*, London.

It is admirably done throughout; full of delicate strokes of ironical wit. — *Daily Telegraph*, London.

We cannot recommend this little volume too highly. Mr. Street has accomplished a difficult task to perfection. — *Vanity Fair*, London.

#55465

THE WISE
AND
THE WAYWARD

BY
G. S. STREET



JOHN LANE: THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON AND NEW YORK
1896

CONTENTS



CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A CONVERSATION	1
II. ANOTHER CONVERSATION	8
III. A WOMAN'S REFLECTIONS	18
IV. A LONDON INTERIOR	27
V. THE START	36
VI. NELLY ASHTON AT ROWE	44
VII. AN AFTERNOON IN TOWN	60
VIII. MR. MORRISON	73
IX. A HOUSE PARTY AT ROWE	89
X. AN UNCONSCIOUS CAMPAIGN	102
XI. "LIFE'S A FARCE"	116
XII. OLD FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE	131
XIII. THE END OF A LECTURE	142
XIV. IN FRESHER AIR	149
XV. FOLLY	159
XVI. MR. MORRISON'S WRONGS	170
XVII. THE CHANCES OF EXPLANATIONS	185
XVIII. AN END OF FOLLY	198
XIX. MENDING A MISTAKE	209
XX. A HAPPY ENDING	223

The Wise and the Wayward

CHAPTER I

A CONVERSATION

OLD Mrs. Ashton of Rowe and Mr. Wilmot, her oldest friend, sat and talked after dinner. They sat out of the range of the lamps, but the light of the big fireplace of the big drawing-room of Rowe House shone on Mrs. Ashton's little lace cap and neat white hair and delicate small face as she leaned thoughtfully over the blaze and held her hands to its warmth. She was always cold, and the little shiver visible whenever she moved a yard from a fire seemed consistent with the glance of indefinable inquietude which met an intimation of outside things — outside the quiet house where she read old letters and mused over the fire and thought on future happiness or

2 THE WISE AND THE WAYWARD

devised present comfort for George Ashton, her son. She had been out in the cold in her time, and was come to think the warmth of the fire the thing most desirable for herself and for those who were dear to her, and she shivered when they vaunted the winter weather. A gentle and appealing old lady, fragile, dignified, and loved.

It was a pity, artistic effect considered, that Francis Wilmot was not her husband. He was the complement, in a favourable sense, of her sweet old age. He was tall, straight, and ruddy, and a natural grace alone saved the youthfulness of his sixty-eight years from aggressiveness. His hair, as white as his old friend's, was brushed back in a broad sweep from his forehead, and was an appropriate contrast with his thick eyebrows, still black, and his black keen eyes. He was clean-shaven. He stood with his back to the fire and tapped the hearth-rug with a small, shining pump. A virile, fine old man, who laughed at his own strong prejudices and never questioned them. As he looked down with a quiet, protective affection on the small old lady, he should have been her husband. But her husband had been a subtle-minded fault-finder, a drunkard, and a wayward amonist, and had died

at fifty. It was something that Francis Wilmot was her oldest friend.

They were talking of George Ashton's engagement to marry, announced to Mrs. Ashton on his arrival that afternoon.

"Francis," the old lady said, "tell me; you don't like it?"

"I? I think it's time he married. Thirty, is n't he? And a man with a place like this ought to marry."

"Your place is larger."

Mr. Wilmot looked kindly upon her and spoke gaily: —

"And I have n't even had the sense of duty to marry! A useless old idler!" — The lady smiled softly at him and looked back at the fire. — "But I'm a bad example; neglected every other duty too."

"Except being the best landlord in your county and the best friend in the world."

"Oh, nonsense; I'm what the Socialists call an encumbrance to the community; never done a stroke of work —"

"Francis, I want to talk about my boy."

"With all my heart. You know what I think of him. With his father's brains and your dis-