

# **THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649566143

The Dweller on the Threshold by Robert Hichens

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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ROBERT HICHENS**

**THE DWELLER ON  
THE THRESHOLD**



---

# The Dweller on the Threshold

BY

ROBERT HICHENS

Author of "The Garden of Allah," "Bella Donna," "Egypt and its  
Monuments," "The Holy Land," etc.



NEW YORK  
THE CENTURY CO.

1911



Copyright 1910, 1911, by  
THE CENTURY CO.

---

*Published March, 1911*

00012-1147

THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

341989





## THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

### I

WHEN Evelyn Malling, notorious because of his sustained interest in Psychical Research and his work for Professor Stepton, first met the Rev. Marcus Harding, that well-known clergyman was still in the full flow of his many activities. He had been translated from his labors in Liverpool to a West End church in London. There he had proved hitherto an astonishing success. On Hospital Sundays the total sums collected from his flock were by far the largest that came from the pockets of any congregation in London. The music in St. Joseph's was allowed by connoisseurs, who knew their Elgar as well as their Goss, their Perosi as well as their Bach, and their Wesley, to be remarkable. Critical persons, mostly men, who sat on the fence between Orthodoxy and Atheism, thought highly

## THE DWELLER

of Mr. Harding's sermons, and even sometimes came down on his side. And, of all signs surely the most promising for a West End clergyman's success, smart people flocked to him to be married, and Arum lilies were perpetually being carried in and out of his chancel, which was adorned with Morris windows. He was married to a woman who managed to be admirable without being dull, Lady Sophia, daughter of the late Earl of Mansford, and sister of the present peer. He was comfortably off. His health as a rule was good, though occasionally he suffered from some obscure form of dyspepsia. And he was still comparatively young, just forty-eight.

Nevertheless, as Evelyn Malling immediately perceived, Mr. Harding was not a happy man.

In appearance he was remarkable. Of commanding height, with a big frame, a striking head and countenance, and a pair of keen gray eyes, he looked like a man who was intended by nature to dominate. White threads appeared in his thick brown hair, which he wore parted in the middle. But his face, which was clean-shaven, had not many telltale lines. And he did not look more than his age.

The sadness noted by Malling was at first evasive and fleeting, not indelibly fixed in the

## ON THE THRESHOLD

puckers of a forehead, or in the down-drawn corners of a mouth. It was as a thin, almost impalpable mist, that can scarcely be seen, yet that alters all the features in a landscape ever so faintly. Like a shadow it traveled across the eyes, obscured the forehead, lay about the lips. And as a shadow lifts it lifted. But it soon returned, like a thing uneasy that is becoming determined to discover an abiding-place.

Malling's first meeting with the clergyman took place upon Westminster Bridge on an afternoon in early May, when London seemed, almost like a spirited child, to be flinging itself with abandon into the first gaieties of the season. Malling was alone, coming on foot from Waterloo. Mr. Harding was also on foot, with his senior curate, the Rev. Henry Chichester, who was an acquaintance of Malling, but whom Malling had not seen for a considerable period of time, having been out on his estate in Ceylon. At the moment when Malling arrived upon the bridge the two clergymen were standing by the parapet on the Parliament side, looking out over the river. As he drew near to them the curate glanced suddenly round, saw him, and uttered an involuntary exclamation which attracted Mr. Harding's attention.