

**PIONEER SERIES:
PAPIER MACHÉ**

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Pioneer Series: Papier Maché by Charles Allen

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CHARLES ALLEN

**PIONEER SERIES:
PAPIER MACHÉ**

Pioneer Series

Papier Mâché

By

Charles Allen

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Edward Arnold
70 Fifth Avenue
1896

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Papier Mâché

I

AT SAFINGTON PARK

A BEAUTIFUL place strictly locked up. No eyes save the owner's and those of his few acquaintances ever penetrated to the park glades, lawns, parterres, or glass-houses. To all intents and purposes the deer frisked unadmired; elms, oaks, and beeches spread themselves wide across turf and bracken, angling for appreciation in barren waters, whilst colours and scents made the garden rich with wealth that no one wanted. Even on company days, for the noble guests brought with them no force of contrast, no sharp-set appetite for wonder, no exuberance of holiday-making even, these every-day objects could awaken nothing in them but cool comparisons set in a rayless halo of duty

balanced to date. What Sir Peter Parkley had accepted at their hands they were bound to accept at his, and decorate his table with faces as the gardener decorated it with flowers.

As for Sir Peter himself, he avowedly cared no more for his ancestral home than he did for the utter strangers who would gladly have supplied it with admiration. Neither, truth to confess, did he care much for county neighbours tacked to him by a question of reciprocity. His hospitalities were forced, and his show of interest matched well with the show of costly exotics over which it was periodically unfurled; for had any person present ventured to raise the one topic really indigenous to the head of the table, Sir Peter himself must have been the first to take offence.

Through this we may read, beneath all the gilding of his circumstances, that Sir Peter was nevertheless their victim.

He had been a younger son and a celebrated physician, devoted to his profession,

idolising his profession. Arms, Law, and Church he had laughed to scorn when compared with the allurements of physic; for where would you find such interest, such active progression — in the barracks, or the law-court? Even in matters of life or death the bench was mere wood beside points of law discussed with Nature herself.

Dr. Parkley, in those days, was an enthusiast. Then his elder brother, the representative of family honours and selfishness, left him the title, and Safington, the representative of family embarrassments. As Dr. Parkley, the new head of the family had been a very thriving man, but as Sir Peter he was a miserably poor one. Besides — *Sir Peter!* — the last link of a long chain of faces who glumly inhabited their walls — how could Sir Peter retain his practice in one hand when that chain was riveted to the other! A rolling mountain of incongruity broke over him, deluging him with disgust that chilled all his medical ardour. In spite of heroic efforts Sir Peter proved too