

**DISENCHANTME  
NT**

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Disenchantment by C. E. Montague

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**C. E. MONTAGUE**

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# DISENCHANTMENT

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*By* C. E. MONTAGUE

LONDON  
CHATTO & WINDUS  
1922

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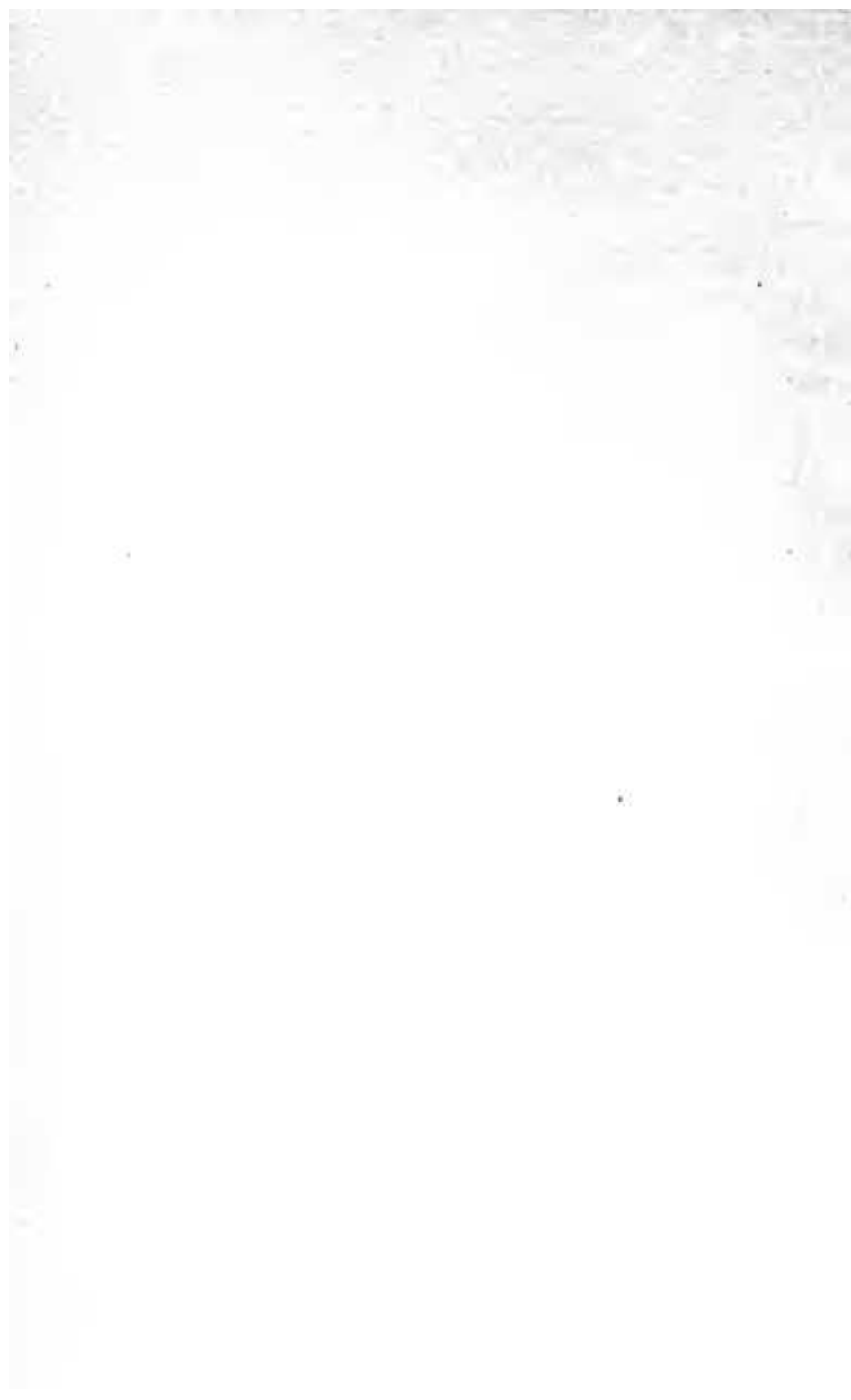
*To*  
AUBREY MONTAGUE  
OF LAUTOKA, FIJI

"We tva hae paidlet i' the burn"

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## CHAPTER I THE VISION

### I

**N**OW that most of our men in the prime of life have been in the army we seem to be in for a goodly literature of disappointment. All the un-gifted young people came back from the war to tell us that they were "fed up." That was their ailment, in outline. The gifted ones are now coming down to detail. They say that a web has been woven over the sky, or that something or other has made a goblin of the sun—about as full details of a pain as you can fairly expect a gifted person to give, although he really may feel it.

No doubt disenchantment has flourished before. About the year 1880 nearly all the best art was wan and querulous; that of Burne-Jones was always in trouble; Matthew Arnold's verse was a well-bred, melodious whine; Rossetti was all disenamourment and displacement. Yet you could feel that their broken-toy view of the world was only their nice little way with the public. Burne-Jones in his home was a red, jovial man; Arnold a diner-out of the first lustre; Rossetti a sworn friend to bacon and eggs and other plain pleasures. The young melancholiasts of to-day are less good at their craft, and yet they do give you a notion that some sort of silver cord really seems to them to have come loose in their insides, or some golden bowl, which mattered to them, to have

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been more or less broken, and that they are feeling honestly sour about it. If they do not know how to take it out of mankind by writing desolatory verses about ashes and dust in the *English Review*, at least they can, if they be workmen, vote for a strike: they thus achieve the same good end and put it beyond any doubt that they don't think all is well with the world.

### II

The higher the wall or the horse from which you have tumbled, the larger, under Nature's iron law, are your bruises and consequent crossness likely to be. Before we try shaking or cuffing the disenraptured young Solomons in our magazines and our pits it would be humane to reflect that some five millions of these, in their turns, have fallen off an extremely high horse. Of course, we have all fallen off something since 1914. Even owners of ships and vendors of heavy woollens might, if all hearts were laid bare, be found to have fallen, not perhaps off a high horse, but at least off some minute metaphysical pony. Still, the record in length of vertical fall, and of proportionate severity of incidence upon an inelastic earth, is probably held by ex-soldiers and, among these, by the volunteers of the first year of the war. We were all, of course, volunteers then, undiluted by indispensable Harry's later success in getting dispensable Johnnie forced to join us in the Low Countries.

Most of those volunteers of the prime were men of handsome and boundless illusions. Each of them quite