

**SIX TO ONE, A  
NANTUCKET IDYL**

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Six to One, a Nantucket Idyl by Edward Bellamy

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**EDWARD BELLAMY**

**SIX TO ONE, A  
NANTUCKET IDYL**



SIX TO ONE.

# SIX TO ONE

*A NANTUCKET IDYL*

BY

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"LOOKING BACKWARD," "DR. HEIDENHOFF'S PROCESS,"  
"MISS LUDINGTON'S SISTER," ETC.

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# SIX TO ONE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE ONE.

OPPOSITE each other in the sanctum of Dr. Brainard, one of the most eminent of the younger physicians of New York City, sit the doctor himself, a man of thirty-five, and a younger man, of perhaps thirty. The doctor and Mr. Edgerton, his present caller, are close friends, whose intimacy dates from college days, and many is the hour of social relaxation they have passed together in each other's offices or at their common club. But the motive of this call is not social. Mr. Edgerton is consulting his friend professionally, concerning certain unpleasant symptoms that have been troubling him of late, symptoms the doctor has long since noticed, but has shut his eyes to from a strong repugnance to regarding his friend in anything like a professional light. But now he reproaches himself with not having spoken long ago.

Mr. Edgerton, as he sits, appears to be of medium

height, and is of that brown-haired, grey-eyed type, as common in the temperate zone as the red colour among horses. The face indicates an intellectual temperament, perhaps rather more receptive than self-asserting, but without any suggestion of softness. He would be called fine-looking if the nervous wrinkles could be smoothed out of his cheeks and eyebrows, and the harassed expression banished from his face. He is just now dispirited and gloomy. It is noticeable that his fingers have a way of nervously twitching, and that he is constantly changing his position in the easy chair he occupies. His eyes moreover belie their natural calm and candour of expression by unsteady and shifting glances, and a restless motion. He is saying to the doctor—

“I don't know what's the matter at all, but somehow I can't take any rest lately. I don't refer so much to sleeping, although I find that hard enough, as I've told you, but to the impossibility of lying off, of enjoying recreation and idleness, of taking a waking rest. Somehow my mind will not quit fretting over my work when I leave the office, as it used to. I find it next to impossible to relapse into a passive state, however tired I am, and I feel dreadfully tired all the while. But more excitement instead of less, is the only thing that rests me, and I know that must be wrong.

“And then the last half-hour at the office is terribly long, terribly! longer than all the rest of the day. I

have to use almost a literal spur to get through the last of my work. At times I come so squarely against a stump that it is a simple impossibility to write another line. My brain seems for the nonce as completely dead as a paralyzed arm, and I just have to go home, no matter what is pressing. That is one of the queerest sensations a man ever has, I fancy, and one of the most terrifying. The quality of my work, too, falls off as the difficulty of it increases. I cudgel my brains in vain, and have pretty much made up my mind that I've overrated myself and been overrated, and that I ought to resign my position.

"About the only sign of vigour I have left, if that be one, is a constant fretfulness and crossness. The least thing puts me into an uncontrollable rage. I am often utterly ashamed of myself at the way I abuse my subs, but I can't help it. What on earth has come over me, Harry? Is there any name for it?"

There are few more trying experiences in a doctor's life than when he is called on to make a serious diagnosis for a sick friend. His sympathies would fain becloud the fatal clearness of his perceptions. After a pause the doctor replied, affecting a cheery tone—

"Old boy, your case is perfectly clear. You have overworked yourself, and must stop short off and take a long rest."

"Drop my profession? Leave my place?" asked Edgerton, with a scared, appealing look which cut the doctor to the heart.