

# **THE DELECTABLE DUCHY**

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The delectable duchy by A. T. Quiller-Couch

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**A. T. QUILLER-COUCH**

**THE DELECTABLE  
DUCHY**





"Hullo! Do you have a tin?" says the Prince.  
The Regent's Waiver.

THE WAYFARER'S LIBRARY

The  
DELECTABLE DUCHY

  
FIVE  
" " " " " "  
Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch

  
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LONDON

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*The Frontispiece is by Dora Curtis and the Illustrations in  
the Text by Laurie Taylor.*





THE  
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PROLOGUE

A WEEK ago, my friend the Journalist wrote to remind me that once upon a time I had offered him a bed in my cottage at Troy and promised to show him the beauties of the place. He was about (he said) to give himself a fortnight's holiday, and had some notion of using that time to learn what Cornwall was like. He could spare but one day for Troy, and hardly looked to exhaust its attractions; nevertheless, if my promise held good . . . By anticipation he spoke of my home as a "nook." Its windows look down upon a harbour wherein, day by day, vessels of every nation and men of large experience are for ever going and coming; and beyond the harbour, upon leagues of open sea, highway of the vastest traffic in the world: whereas from his own far more expensive house my friend sees

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only a dirty laurel-bush, a high green fence, and the upper half of a suburban lamp-post. Yet he is convinced that I dwell in a nook.

I answered his letter, warmly repeating the invitation; and last week he arrived. The change had bronzed his face, and from his talk I learnt that he had already seen half the Duchy, in seven days. Yet he had been unreasonably delayed in at least a dozen places, and used the strongest language about 'bus and coach communication, local trains, misleading sign-posts, and the like. Our scenery enraptured him—every aspect of it. He had travelled up the Tamar to Launceston, crossed the moors, climbing Roughtor and Brown Willy on his way, plunged down towards Camelford, which he appeared to have reached by following two valleys simultaneously, coached to Boscastle, walked to Tintagel, climbed up to Uther's Castle, diverged inland to St. Nectan's Kieve, driven on to Bedruthan Steps, Mawgan, the Vale of Lanherne, Newquay, taken a train thence to Truro, a steamer from Truro to Falmouth, crossed the ferry to St. Mawes, walked up the coast to Mevagissey, driven from Mevagissey to St. Austell, and at St. Austell taken another train for Troy. This brought half his holiday to a close: the remaining half he meant to devote to the Mining District,

## Prologue

St. Ives, the Land's End, St. Michael's Mount, the Lizard and perhaps the Scilly Isles.

Then I began to feel that I lived in a nook, and to wonder how I could spin out its attractions to cover a whole day: for I could not bear to think of his departing with secret regret for his lavished time. In a flash I saw the truth: that my love for this spot is built up of numberless trivialities, of small memories all incommunicable, or ridiculous when communicated; a scrap of local speech heard at this corner, a pleasant native face remembered in that doorway, a battered vessel dropping anchor—she went out in the spring with her crew singing dolefully; and the grey-bearded man waiting in his boat beneath her counter till the custom-house officers have made their survey is the father of one among the crew, and is waiting to take his son's hand again, after months of absence. Would this interest my friend, if I pointed it out to him? Or, if I walk with him by the path above the creek, what will he care to know that on this particular bank the violets always bloom earliest—that one of a line of yews that top the churchyard wall is remarkable because a pair of missel-thrushes have chosen it to build in for three successive years? The violets are gone. The empty nest has almost dissolved under the late heavy rains, and the yew is so like