

He came to a stop and I saw a wave of satisfaction flit across him as his eye fell on Rubens's Silenus; but it soon gave way to one of disappointment. 'No', he broke out, 'it's no good; none of them will quite do. This Silenus here is admirable; yet he has not got the look I saw in the eye of a great stone David which I noticed on my journey from Arabia and which I felt to be essential ~~to any~~ to any really satisfactory appearance.' 'I sympathise with your difficulties,' I said, '~~with most of them~~ some of the appearances ~~do not fit at all~~ are charming but they fit so badly that it would be too great a discomfort to wear them permanently; and others would do well enough at times and yet seem inadequate when one ^{can} ~~must~~ have one suit only and must wear that at all seasons. ~~The~~ The beauty there is too weak; but the statesman next him is too ugly; and the calm and noble figure beyond is really absurdly primitive. I quite agree with you that the search for a ready made appearance is almost hopeless. There is nobody whom one would choose to look like. But you are a powerful grin and you come from Arabia, why should you not be ~~an~~ eclectic? why not pick up a complexion here, a dimple there, a beetling brow from him, an aquiline for the other and the bright eye and smile of that one? why not be beautiful, and charming, full of command and dignity, with intelligence and genius, and appear robed in the spoils of the whole earth, a grin amongst grins!' 'Ah', he replied with a chuckle, 'I well remember a grin in the time of King Solomon who tried that method; there was hardly a brothel, a university or Council Chamber

in all the inhabited world he had not ransacked. I never laughed so much. As King Solomon pointed out at once, appearances are not made that way. 'How then are appearances made?' I broke in 'Are they not built up of thighs, lips and eyebrows?' ~~King Solomon~~ 'According to King Solomon', the grin continued, 'appearances are always woven in one piece, and not only so but they are woven of no material whatever; the thighs, the lips and the eyebrows which you spoke of are the framework upon which the appearance has been woven; without them it cannot be seen, but they do not for that reason constitute it. That is why I am always searching in tubes and picture galleries for the perfect appearance which is woven in one piece of no material whatever.' He sighed. 'I do not believe one word of what you are saying,' I answered, 'but it is already late and I must soon return to my office. Come with me to Simpson's and we will discuss the matter further while I lunch.' 'What is Simpson's?', he asked, 'shall I see fresh faces there? for the thought of those negroes comes upon ~~me~~ ^{me} heavily and I must lose no time.' 'Yes,' I said, 'many faces and some that may please you, scenic faces, fat stock jobbing faces, greasy faces, as greasy as those of the negroes whom your wives love.' We were soon there. ~~was a perfect man in the reaction~~ ~~matter in a sense~~ ~~with the grin~~ ~~was a perfect man~~ ~~and respected.~~ 'Yes,' I continued, 'I can well believe that your remarks date from the time of King Solomon. Were you not saying that it is the character which makes the appearance and that that is everything? I, on the other hand maintain, that the appearance profoundly modifies the

character; but that even allowing for this modification, those two things, the character and the appearance, have very little connexion with one another. Has it not often happened to you to snatch away ~~beauty~~ ^{avigni} on her bridal night, with looks as gentle and modest as they are beautiful, and after an absence to have found her ^{nevertheless} in the embraces of a large and greasy negro? 'To that question, ~~the~~ ^{what King Solomon} ~~grin replied,~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{question} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~character~~ ^{of} ~~and~~ ^{of} ~~appearance~~ ^{of} ~~when~~ ^{when} King Solomon was asked whether he knew the answer to that question, the grin ~~replied~~ ^{replied} ~~replied,~~ ^{replied,} the question of character and appearance, he replied that he knew the answer well and that there was no answer. I clearly remember the stiff logical discussion, ^{which followed, with the queen of sheba} ~~as to whether he could know the answers which do not exist; he~~ ^{do} ~~replied~~ ^{for} ~~that~~ ^{the} ~~answers~~ ^{must know} ~~which~~ ^{those} ~~do~~ ^{which} ~~not~~ ^{do} ~~exist;~~ ^{and} ~~he~~ ^{the} ~~queen~~ ^{queen} ~~held~~ ^{held} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~all~~ ^{all} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~answers~~ ^{answers} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~questions~~ ^{questions} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~which~~ ^{which} ~~there~~ ^{there} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~no~~ ^{no} ~~answer~~ ^{answer} ~~must~~ ^{must} ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~false~~ ^{false} ~~answers,~~ ^{answers,} ~~he~~ ^{he} ~~could~~ ^{could} ~~know~~ ^{know} ~~false~~ ^{false} ~~answers~~ ^{answers} ~~only,~~ ^{only,} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~cannot~~ ^{cannot} ~~know~~ ^{know} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~answer~~ ^{answer} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~a~~ ^a ~~question~~ ^{question} ~~who~~ ^{who} ~~knows~~ ^{knows} ~~only~~ ^{only} ~~false~~ ^{false} ~~answers~~ ^{answers} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~it.~~ ^{it.} But the argument is long and not yet finished and does not belong to the matter in hand. For this, to which you refer, was not what King Solomon had in mind when he spoke of the appearance woven in one piece of no material whatever. He meant that whatever the appearance is, whether the character or not the character (and to that there is no answer), it is not the thighs or the lips or the eyebrows or one of ~~them~~ ^{them} the parts of the body or all of them, but that it is different from these and is woven in one piece of no material whatever; and it would be hard to

deny, he added, that the one woven piece is and is identical with the actually existent person.' 'Did he add that?' I put in quickly, 'then before the piece is woven there can be no person.' 'Alas! alas!' he cried, 'that must be so; then I who have no appearance can be no person. You may be miserable and ^{vainly and absurdly} wish to be yourself with the appearance of another, or even, though that is perhaps impossible, you may wish to be another; but in the meantime you are yourself and with your own appearance. But I, ~~am nothing~~; ~~have no appearance~~ I am ^{seeking} vainly and absurdly for the perfect appearance; for there is no I to wear it, were it found; alas! alas! I have no appearance, I am smoke, I am nothing!' 'Yes' I agreed, really sorry to lose him and ^{anxious} ~~going~~ to know what Solomon ^{would have} ~~replied~~ ^{if the Queen had} ~~asked~~ ^{him} whether it is possible to know someone who does not exist so long as you do not know he does not exist, 'Yes, I suppose if you have no appearance, you can have no existence either.'