

you are holding it in your hand, turning it over and over, feeling how heavy it is, admiring the gay colours and the bright gilding, suddenly the egg breaks open and a shower of sweatmeats falls into your lap, or a tiny doll, or a little dancing soldier, or a harlequin with a feather in his cap, or a thimble and a pair of scissors, or at any rate something which you never expected to find inside what at first looked only like a painted egg.

Well, this chapter is going to be rather like one of these painted eggs. Something will perhaps drop out of it which you did not expect to find; not a doll, or a harlequin, or a dancing soldier, or a pair of scissors, but a little bit of advice which had been lying wrapped up inside the story as comfortably as could be. There is this difference, however, between what I am going to tell you and an allegory. When people are going to make an allegory, they wrap up their meaning first, and then paint the story outside it, to hide what is underneath; but I made this story first—at least, it made itself, for it is quite true—and then, when it was finished, I found out that it meant a great deal more than I thought it did; and as perhaps you might not find