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**THE HOUSE ON
THE BORDERLAND**

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON

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The House on the Borderland by William Hope Hodgson.

First published in 1908.

This ebook edition was created and published by Global Grey on the 2nd October 2021.

**The artwork used for the cover is 'Sunset at Sea after a Storm'
painted by Francis Danby.**

This book can be found on the site here:

globalgreyebooks.com/house-on-the-borderland-ebook.html

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And then, one day, a man, a stranger, had ridden through the village, and turned off down the river, in the direction of the House, as it was always termed by the villagers. Some hours afterward, he had ridden back, taking the track by which he had come, toward Ardrahan. Then, for three months or so, nothing was heard. At the end of that time, he reappeared; but now, he was accompanied by an elderly woman, and a large number of donkeys, laden with various articles. They had passed through the village without stopping, and gone straight down the bank of the river, in the direction of the House.

Since that time, no one, save the man whom they had chartered to bring over monthly supplies of necessaries from Ardrahan, had ever seen either of them: and him, none had ever induced to talk; evidently, he had been well paid for his trouble.

The years had moved onward, uneventfully enough, in that little hamlet; the man making his monthly journeys, regularly.

One day, he had appeared as usual on his customary errand. He had passed through the village without exchanging more than a surly nod with the inhabitants and gone on toward the House. Usually, it was evening before he made the return journey. On this occasion, however, he had reappeared in the village, a few hours later, in an extraordinary state of excitement, and with the astounding information, that the House had disappeared bodily, and that a stupendous pit now yawned in the place where it had stood.

This news, it appears, so excited the curiosity of the villagers, that they overcame their fears, and marched *en masse* to the place. There, they found everything, just as described by the carrier.

This was all that we could learn. Of the author of the MS., who he was, and whence he came, we shall never know.

His identity is, as he seems to have desired, buried forever.

That same day, we left the lonely village of Kraithen. We have never been there since.

Sometimes, in my dreams, I see that enormous pit, surrounded, as it is, on all sides by wild trees and bushes. And the noise of the water rises upward, and blends—in my sleep—with other and lower noises; while, over all, hangs the eternal shroud of spray.

Grief¹⁶

Fierce hunger reigns within my breast, I had not dreamt that this whole world,
Crushed in the hand of God, could yield
Such bitter essence of unrest, Such pain as Sorrow now hath hurled
Out of its dreadful heart, unsealed!

Each sobbing breath is but a cry, My heart-strokes knells of agony,
And my whole brain has but one thought
That nevermore through life shall I (Save in the ache of memory)
Touch hands with thee, who now art naught!

Through the whole void of night I search, So dumbly crying out to thee;
But thou are *not*; and night's vast throne

¹⁶ These stanzas I found, in pencil, upon a piece of foolscap gummed in behind the fly-leaf of the MS. They have all the appearance of having been written at an earlier date than the Manuscript.--Ed.

