

May 16th 1851:

Dear diary, here's another day in my favorite palace of steel and glass: The Crystal Palace. I'm Willy, the caretaker of this huge place of exhibition where there are the latest inventions of our time. I see a crowd of people each day, dumbfounded, disturbed, staged, almost dribbling in front of all those works. These poor women sometimes get a tissue of silk out of a discreet pocket on their sumptuous dresses to dry a small tear of emotion on the corner of their eyes. Dresses, which, I must confess are all the same. However those resemblances don't stop at their clothes. They are here walking, keeping their heads up, with their haughty manners, always keeping a stiff upper lip. Oh and I was going to forget, men are not worthier than them, wearing on every occasion high black hats, matching their black suits and ties. And I am here, just a shadow, or worst, a ghost among them. I'm pretty sure nobody knows about my existence. I am not part of their world.

Stop William Bryan Collins! Stop! You have nothing to envy to them. Argh, I may be a bit down today, I guess it is enough for tonight. See you tomorrow dear diary.

May 17<sup>th</sup> 1851:

6 o'clock, my clock's ringing. I'm starting a new day, putting my hideous greeny yucky overalls. After having washed every room of the Crystal, I feel really tired and fed up. But it is done, and I am now waiting for the Londoners and other tourists to come. I'm sleeping upright. My night was awful and way too short. My sleep has been agitated for days... just since I've moved here, in this little garret room, where hot water is rare just like the heating is. And where the only useful thing is a thin sprung mattress in the middle of the room. Cosy decoration. Anyway, let's talk about them, it will be way funnier than my shabby life. By the way, I saw something so weird back there. A man is waiting in front of the main doors, he doesn't look like the classy others. He seems to be a pauper. The crowd fusses in front of him and women are outraged and they are doing big movements as if something grave was happening. I'm getting closer to know the point.

So I found out this poor man has just been denied entry because he didn't have the means and his appearance didn't fit with the upper class. That's disgusting.

May 18<sup>th</sup> 1851:

Today I thought it would be a day like any other but something funny made my day, in the hall of the international exhibitions where items of all the nations of the world are exposed. There, the Queen Victoria loaned one of the most world's famous diamond: "The Great Diamond", it looks like a mountain of lights, it's so beautiful - but really too materialistic and showy. But the problem isn't there. An old man plump in order came and talk to me. For the first time, someone was interested in me. It sounded too good to be true. The man asked to buy the legendary diamond of the Queen. A fat rich man who just wants to show off and expose his money. What nerve... He should be ashamed. I try to explain to him it wasn't for sale, but he didn't seem to understand. He insisted a lot and became aggressive to me. I didn't really know how to react with him. So I just shut up and let him calm his nerves on me until he left. If I could only speak, I'd have so many things to say. Unfortunately I can't, I'm nothing here. And I could be sacked from my job... It is the only thing that is still left for me.

May 19<sup>th</sup> 1851:

It's starting again. I preferred to forget the event of yesterday and begin my day on a good note. I am sitting down near the first locomotive of our time. I admire it and it makes me feel so dreamy. I was deep in my thought when I heard something pretty cute for once. A little boy with his mother. She took him by the hands when he stopped neat in front of the huge steam machine. He told his mom that in the future he would conduct trains. His mom interrupted him before the end of his sentence. The woman rattled on him, she irritated me a lot, breaking her son's dream the way she did, telling him that was not possible, that's so cruel! But her answer was worse. She replied that he would be a lawyer like his father and he wouldn't have a choice. I felt sorry for him, but I had not a word to say, it is none of my business. And when I look at myself, I think that I'm not the best suited advice.

Why is society so prudish, austere and self-controlled? There are such dictates...

May 20<sup>th</sup> 1951:

On this day, I am looking at the wonderful ceiling made in Italian mosaic and I am so admiring. All these structures that make the Crystal Palace what it is, people don't realise how complicated it was to build a spectacular place like this.

I am cleaning the toilets this time again with my mop and my yucky overalls, I am looking at everybody, and I realised that people are too ignorant, everything seem simple for them. They enter the Crystal Palace, they look at some inventions, then they go back home and continue their day as if nothing happened. They don't realise their chance, visiting the Crystal Palace is not a trivial thing. People from all around the world come to see this amazing place, but it is as if nobody was really enjoying the journey and the visit. They are like sheep, they follow each other without asking themselves why, and that really proves the ignorance of everybody. I am like lost among everybody, I am the only one enjoying what I am given, and each day, when I wake up, even if I have bad days, I take my chance and I am always hoping for a better day.

May 21<sup>th</sup> 1951:

Today I am down in the dumps, I don't know why but this feeling of loneliness is going worst every day. Yesterday night, on my harsh bed, I was thinking about my life, and I realised that I had lost too much time to try and bring happiness to anybody but me . So this morning again, I got off of my bed and I started my day. Around 3 p.m, I witnessed to a little event that put me out of my routine for a short while. A little girl was fascinated by our big stuffed elephant, so much so that she lost her parents in the Crystal Palace. She was around 6 years old and her name was Malia. I helped her to find her parents but they were nowhere to be found. After having reassured and consoled her for around one hour, we finally found her indifferent parents. They hugged her stiffly and reprimanded her for her carelessness. They should be the ones to blame really. If they were more interested in family and emotions instead of being interested in materialistic things that don't mean a thing, this wouldn't happen... Anyway, when I came with the girl, they stared at me as if I was an animal in a cage a beast that they can't approach. After long minutes, they finally let a little thank you out, not showing any true gratitude, and they left this place as if nothing happened.

This time again, people don't seem to realize that it could be serious, they don't think about the consequences and just don't care of anything. I finally begin to understand that unfortunately I will always be disappointed by everyone. So I continue to live my boring life but to reassure myself, maybe it is better like that, I live well alone and solitude is my routine, I am used to it, and at least I can't be too disappointed...

May 22<sup>th</sup> 1951:

Again a new rainy day. Again, all these prudish people. It is always the same thing, every day is the same day. I'm stuck in a routine that I absolutely hate, but like every time, I am trying to take my chance again. The only thing that keeps me here is my job, I'm like invisible for people, alone with myself so that nobody disturbs me. Today, a special event happened. I was cleaning the floor in front of the main entry, when I heard some people scream and shout. It came from the toilets. I started to run to see what was happening, there were a lot of people running outside, a lot of smoke, and some flames which were coming out of the man's toilets. Everything was burning and everybody was suffocating, I was trying to help people and I indicated where was the exit. At this time, the fire alarm went off. Everyone was panic-stricken, and for the first time, people were finally showing their emotions. The truth is when people are taken by surprise, they have no other choice but to show their "weakness", and for this time I was trying to save the upper class, people that I hate, but my humanity forced me to do it. So why are they acting like ignorant when they see someone in need. They are rich and they give nothing. I am poor and helping people in need is for me a priority.... Where is their humanity? Anyway, so today, the Crystal Palace disappeared in this awful fire. Everything went back to dust. I saved a lot of people from the flames and nobody was grateful. People I saved continued their rich lives as if nothing had happened. They continued to be ignorant, selfish, prudish and all that they were before.

The only thing that I saved from the flames is you, Diary, my only friend in the solitude and ingratitude of this new modern world.