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by Simeon Strunsky**

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CHRONICLE ***

POST-IMPRESSIONS

POST-IMPRESSIONS

An Irresponsible Chronicle

BY

SIMEON STRUNSKY

Author of "The Patient Observer," "Through
the Outlooking Glass," etc.



NEW YORK

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1914

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CONTENTS

- I [ALMA MATER BROADWAY](#)
- II [THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE](#)
- III [SUMMER READING](#)
- IV [NOCTURNE](#)
- V [HAROLD'S SOUL, I](#)
- VI [EDUCATIONAL](#)
- VII [MORGAN](#)
- VIII [THE MODERN INQUISITION](#)
- IX [THORNS IN THE CUSHION](#)
- X [LOW-GRADE CITIZENS](#)
- XI [ROMANCE](#)
- XII [WANDERLUST](#)
- XIII [UNREVISED SCHEDULES](#)
- XIV [SOMEWHAT CONFUSED](#)
- XV [HAROLD'S SOUL, II](#)
- XVI [RHETORIC 21](#)
- XVII [REAL PEOPLE](#)
- XVIII [DIFFERENT](#)
- XIX [ACADEMIC FREEDOM](#)
- XX [THE HEAVENLY MAID](#)
- XXI [SHEATH-GOWNS](#)
- XXII [WITH THE EDITOR'S REGRETS](#)
- XXIII [A MAD WORLD](#)
- XXIV [PH.D.](#)
- XXV [TWO AND TWO](#)
- XXVI [BRICK AND MORTAR](#)
- XXVII [INCOHERENT](#)
- XXVIII [REALISM](#)
- XXIX [ART](#)
- XXX [THE PACE OF LIFE](#)
- XXXI [MARCUS AURELIUS, 1914](#)
- XXXII [BY THE TURN OF A HAND](#)
- XXXIII [THE QUARRY SLAVE](#)
- XXXIV [MONOTONY OF THE POLES](#)

POST-IMPRESSIONS

[Pg 1]

I

ALMA MATER BROADWAY

He came in without having himself announced, nodded cheerfully, and dropped into a chair across the desk from where I sat.

"I am not interfering with your work, am I?" he said.

"To tell the truth," I replied, "this is the busiest day in the week for me."

"Fine," he said. "That means your mind is working at its best, brain cells exploding in great shape, and you can follow my argument without the slightest difficulty. What I have to say is of the highest importance. It concerns the present condition of the stage."

"In that case," I said, "you want to see Mr. Smith. He is the editor responsible for our dramatic

page."

"I want to speak to the irresponsible editor," he said. "I asked and they showed me in here. I think I had better begin at the beginning." [Pg 2]

I sighed and looked out of the window. But that made no difference. He, too, looked out of the window and spoke as follows:

"Last night," he said, "I attended the first performance of A. B. Johnson's powerful four-act drama entitled 'H₂O.' It was a remorseless exposure of the phenomena attending the condensation of steam. In the old days before the theatre became perfectly free the general public knew nothing of the consequences that ensue when you bring water to a temperature of 212 degrees Fahrenheit. The public didn't know and didn't care. Those who did know kept the secret to themselves. I am not exaggerating when I say that there was a conspiracy of silence on the subject. A play like 'H₂O' would have been impossible. The public would not have tolerated such thoroughgoing realism as Johnson employs in his first act, for instance. With absolute fidelity to things as they are he puts before us a miniature reciprocating engine, several turbine engines, and the latest British and German models in boilers, piston-rods, and valve-gears. When the curtain rose on the most masterly presentation of a machine shop ever brought before the public, the house rocked with applause. But this was nothing compared to the delirious outburst that marked the climax of the second act, when the hero, with his arm about the woman he loves, proudly declares that saturated steam under a pressure of 200 pounds shows 843.8 units of latent heat and a volume of 2.294 cubic feet to the pound. The curtain was raised eleven times, but the audience would not be content until the author appeared before the footlights escorted by a master plumber and the president of the steamfitters' union. [Pg 3]

"The third act was laid in the reception room of a Tenderloin resort—"

"I don't quite see," I said.

"That followed inevitably from the development of the plot," he replied. "The heroine, you must understand, had been abducted by the president of a rival steamfitters' union and had been sold into a life of shame. She is saved in the nick of time by an explosion of the boiler due to superheated steam. In the old days such a scene would have been impossible and the author's lesson about the effects of condensation and vaporization would have been lost to the world." [Pg 4]

"And the play will be a success?" I said.

"It's a knockout," he replied. "No play of real life with a punch like that has been produced since C. D. Brewster put on his three-act tragi-comedy, 'Ad Valorem.' As the title implies, the play sets out to demonstrate the difference between the Payne-Aldrich tariff law and the Underwood law, item by item. I have rarely seen an audience so deeply stirred as all of us were during the long and pathetic scene toward the end of the first act in which the author deals with the chemical and mineral oil schedule. Are you aware that under the Underwood law the duty on formaldehyde is reduced from twenty-five per cent. to one cent a pound?"

"I hardly ever go to the theatre nowadays," I said. [Pg 5]

He looked at me reproachfully.

"Some day you will find yourself, quite unexpectedly, facing a crisis in which your ignorance of the duty on formaldehyde will cost you dear, and then you will have cause to regret your indifference toward the progress of the modern drama. However, the third act of 'Ad Valorem' is laid in the reception room of a Tenderloin resort."

"What?" I said.

"It was bound to be," he replied. "Freed from all Puritanical restrictions, the playwright of the present day follows wherever his plot leads him in accordance with the truth of life. In 'Ad Valorem,' for instance, the fabulously rich importer of oils and chemicals who is the villain of the piece has succeeded in smuggling an enormously valuable consignment of formaldehyde out of the Government warehouse. What is more natural than that he should conceal the smuggled goods in the Tenderloin? The case is a perfectly simple one. Forbid a playwright to show the interior of a Tenderloin dive and the public will never know the truth about the Underwood bill. You see, there is nothing about the tariff in the newspapers. There is nothing in the magazines. College professors never mention the subject. Campaign speakers ignore it. There is a conspiracy of silence. Only the theatre offers us enlightenment on the subject. Under such conditions would you keep the playwright from telling us what he knows?" [Pg 6]

"Putting it that way—" I said.

"I knew you would agree with me," he went on. "Take, for instance, E. F. Birmingham's realistic drama, 'The Shortest Way,' in which the author has demonstrated with implacable truthfulness and irresistible logic that in any triangle the sum of two sides is greater than the third. In a joint letter to the freshman classes of Columbia University and New York University, the author and the producer of 'The Shortest Way' have pointed out that nowhere have the principles of plane geometry been so clearly formulated as in the second act of the play. The gunman has just shot down his victim on the corner of Broadway and Forty-second Street. He flees northward on Broadway to Forty-third Street and then doubles backward on Seventh Avenue. The hero, who is a professor of mathematics, recalling his Euclid, runs westward on Forty-second Street, and the curtain descends. At the beginning of the next act we find that the gunman has taken refuge in the reception room of a Tender—" [Pg 7]

"I know," I replied. "He was driven there by the irresistible logic of the dramatist's idea."

"Exactly," he said. And so left me.

II

[Pg 8]

THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

From the chapter entitled "My Milkman," in Cooper's volume of "Contemporary Portraits," hitherto unpublished, through no fault of his own, but because one publisher declined to handle anything but typewritten copy, and another suggested that if cut down by half the book might be accepted by the editor of some religious publication, and still another editor thought that if several chapters were expanded and a love story inserted, the thing might do, otherwise there was no market for essays, especially such as failed to take a cheerful view of life, whereupon Cooper insisted that his book was exceptionally cheerful, inasmuch as it showed that life could be tolerable in spite of being so queer, to which the editor replied that serializing a book of humour was quite out of the question. "Then how about Pickwick?" said Cooper—but let us get back to the chapter on the milkman. I quote:

[Pg 9]

Would sleep never come! I shifted the pillow to the foot of the bed and back; threw off the covers; pulled them over my head; discarded them; repeated the multiplication table; counted footsteps in the street beneath my window; lit a cigarette; tried to go to sleep sitting up and embracing my knees the way they bury the dead in Yucatan. No use. I would doze off, and immediately that unfortunate column of figures would appear, demanding to be added up, and I unable to determine whether sums written in Roman numerals could be added up at all. That is the disadvantage of taking conversation seriously, after ten in the evening, or at any time. I had been discussing the immigration problem till nearly midnight, and now I was busy adding up the annual influx from Austria-Hungary during the last twelve years expressed in Roman numerals. Some people are different. Their opinions don't hurt them. I have heard people say the most biting things about the need of abolishing religion and the family, and five minutes later ask for a caviare sandwich. Whereas I take the total immigration from Austria-Hungary for the last twelve years to bed with me and cannot fall asleep.

[Pg 10]

I heard the rattle of wheels under my window. It was nearing daybreak. I looked at my watch and it was close to five. I got up, washed in cold water, dressed, and went outside. As I walked downstairs I heard the clatter of bottles in the hallway below and some one whistling cheerfully. It was the milkman. His wagon was at the curb, and as I passed down the front steps and stopped to breathe in the sharp, clean, mystic air of dawn, the milkman's horse raised his head, gazed at me for a moment with a curious, friendly scepticism, and sank back into thoughtful contemplation of a spot eighteen inches immediately in front of his fore-legs.

(Here one editor had written in the margin: "Amateurish beginning; should have led off with a crisp phrase or two addressed to the milkman and then proceeded to a psychological analysis of the milkman's horse.")

[Pg 11]

I said to the milkman:

"This life of yours must be wonderfully conducive to seeing things from a new angle. A world of chill and pure half-shadows; the happiest time of the twenty-four hours; the roisterers gone to bed and the factory-workers not stirring for a good hour. I should imagine that men in your line would all be philosophers."

"It does get a bit lonely," he said. "But I always carry an evening paper with me and read a few lines from house to house. Do you think they'll let Thaw off?"

"What do *you* think about it?" I said. "I haven't been following up the case."

"I have read every bit of the story," he said. "He isn't any more crazy than you or me. He's been punished enough; what's the use of persecuting a man like that?"

If Thaw were as sound in mind as my friend the milkman, there would be no doubt that he deserved his freedom. My new acquaintance was so well set up, so clear-eyed, with that ruddy glow which comes from shaving and washing in cold water before dawn, with the quiet air of peace and strength which comes from working in the silent hours. I thought what an upright, independent life a milkman's must be, so free from the petty chaffing and meanness that make up the ordinary tradesman's routine. He has no competition to contend with. He is no one's servant. He deposits his wares at your doorstep and you take them or leave them as you please. He can work in the dark because he does not need the light to study your face and overreach you. With no one to watch him, with no one to criticise him, with leisure and silence in which to work out his problems—I envied him.

[Pg 12]

(Here another editor had written: "Tedious; chance for an excellent bit of characterisation in dialogue entirely missed.")

"You're an early riser," he said.

"Can't fall asleep," I said. "This air will do me good."

"A brisk walk," he suggested.

[Pg 13]

"I'm too tired," I said.

He turned on the wagon step. "Jump in," he said; and when I was seated beside him he clucked to the horse, who raised his drooping head and started off diagonally across the street, apparently confident that he would find another cobblestone to contemplate, eighteen inches in front of his fore-legs.

"A good many more people find it hard to sleep nowadays than ever before," he said. "You can tell by the windows that are lit up. Though very often it's diphtheria or something of the sort. You hear the little things whimper, and sometimes a man will run down the street and pull the night-bell at the drug-store."

"Then you don't read all the time while you are driving?"

"Oh, you notice those things and keep on reading. It isn't very noisy about this time of the day." He laughed.

"I should think you'd be tired," I said.

He said they did not work them too hard in his line. The hours were reasonable. At one time there was an attempt on the part of the dairy companies to make the hours longer; but the milkmen have some union of their own, and there was a strike which ended in the companies agreeing to pay for over-time from 7 to 9 A.M. Their association was more of a social and benefit society than a trade union. Once a month in summer they had an outing with lunch and some kind of a cabaret show and dancing. They were a contented lot. The work was not too exacting. He could read the evening paper when it got light enough, or sometimes he could just sit still and think.

[Pg 14]

Think what?

Again I envied him. What extraordinary facilities this man had for thinking straight, for seeing things clearly in this crisp morning air, and around him silence and everything as fresh, as frank, as fragrant as when the world was still young.

He blushed and hesitated, but finally confessed that for more than a year he had been carrying about in his head a scenario for a moving-picture play. His story was naturally interrupted at frequent intervals as he went about the distribution of his milk bottles. But stripped of repetitions and ambiguities the plot he had evolved in the course of more than a year's driving through the silent streets was about as follows:

[Pg 15]

The infant daughter of an extremely wealthy Mexican mine-owner is stolen by the gipsies. When she grows up she is chosen by the gipsy king for his bride. Before the wedding takes place the gipsies plan to rob the house of a Mexican millionaire who is no other than the girl's father. She volunteers to gain entrance into the house by posing as a celebrated Spanish dancer. At night she opens the door to her confederates. Leaving the girl to keep watch over their prisoner, the gipsies go about ransacking the house. The unhappy man groans and cries out, "Ah, if only I could see my little Juanita before I die." Father and daughter recognise each other, she releases him from big bonds, and arming themselves with Browning revolvers they shoot down the gipsy marauders as they enter the room in single file. Juanita marries the young overseer whom the childless old man has designated as his heir.

[Pg 16]

(Here one editor wrote: "An ordinary plot; nothing in it to show that it was written by a milkman instead of a clergyman or a structural iron worker.")

I think the criticism is a fair one.

III

[Pg 17]

SUMMER READING

Our vacation plans last year were of the simplest. Personally, I said to Emmeline, there was just one thing I longed for—to get away to some quiet place where I could lie on my back under the trees and look up at the clouds. To this Emmeline replied that in this posture (1) I always smoke too much; (2) I catch cold and begin to sneeze; (3) I don't look at the clouds at all, but tire my eyes by studying the baseball page in the full glare of the sun. The newspaper habit is one which I regularly forswear every summer on leaving town. I hold to my resolution to this extent that I refrain from going down to the post office in the morning to buy a paper. But toward eleven o'clock the strain becomes unendurable and I borrow a copy of yesterday's paper after peering wistfully over other people's shoulders. Emmeline thinks this habit all the more inexcusable because, working for a newspaper myself, I ought to know there is never anything in them. She can't imagine what drives me on. I told her, perhaps it is the unconscious hope that some day I shall find in the paper something worth while.

[Pg 18]

Actually, one soon discovers that the simple act of lying on one's back on the grass and looking up at the clouds involves an extraordinary amount of preparation. I am inclined to think that there must be correspondence courses which teach in ten lessons how to lie on one's back properly and look up. There must be text-books on how to tell the cumuli from the cirrus. There must be useful hints on how to relax and lose yourself in the immensity of the blue void.

The personal equipment one needs to gaze at the clouds, if you believe the department stores, is

tremendous. English flannels; French shirtings; native khaki; silks; home-spuns; belts with a monogram buckle; flowered cravats in colours to blend with the foliage; safety razors; extra blades for the razors; strops to sharpen the blades; unguents to keep the strops flexible; nicked cases to keep the unguents in; and metal polish for the nicked cases. Arduous labour is involved in going to Maple View Farm from the comparatively simple civilisation of New York. I am not certain whether in the best circles one can properly lie on one's back and look at the clouds without a humidor and a thermos bottle.

[Pg 19]

Emmeline said I must be sure and not forget my fishing-pole, as that trout in the brook behind the barn would probably be expecting me.

It seems absurd for a full-grown man to speak of hating a trout. But why deny it? When I think of the utterly debased creature in the pool behind the barn, the accumulated results of ten thousand years of civilisation drop from me, and my heart is surcharged with venom. It all came about so gradually. My landlord asked me one morning whether I shouldn't like to try my luck with his rod. I said I should. I took his rod and hooked the blackberry bush on the other side of the stream. I did better on my next try. As my hook sank below the surface, a thrill ran along the line, the slender bamboo stem arched forward, and I waited with my heart in my mouth for an enormous trout to emerge and engage me in a life-and-death struggle. But through three long weeks he refused to emerge. Emmeline said it was the bottom of the soap-box whose upper edge is visible above the surface. But that cannot be. No inanimate object could elicit in any one the rage and the sense of frustrated desire—perhaps I had better say no more. All my better instincts corrode with the thought of that fish. It would have been compensation, at least, if I had ever caught any other fish in that brook. It might have been a near relation, a favourite son perhaps, and I should have had my revenge—but there I go again.

[Pg 20]

What Emmeline wanted was a chance to catch up in her reading. It had been a hard winter and spring, with the doctor too frequently in the house and books quite out of the question. There were a half-dozen novels Emmeline had in mind, not to mention Mr. Bryce's book on South America, John Masefield, and Strindberg, whom she cordially detests. I do too. I warned her against drawing up too ambitious a list, but she was determined to make a summer of it. She said she felt illiterate and terribly old. All I could do was to mention a few bookshops where she could get the best choice with the least expenditure of energy. Nevertheless she came back from her first day's shopping with a headache.

[Pg 21]

Éponge is a rough, Turkish-towel fabric, selling in many widths, and eminently desirable for out-of-door wear because of its peculiar adaptability to the slim styles which prevent walking. Éponge has this fatal defect, however, that when it is advertised in ready-made gowns at an astounding reduction from \$39.50, all the desirable models sell out some time before ten o'clock in the morning. Hence Emmeline's headache. She took very little supper and expressed the belief that our vacation would be a complete failure. The mountains are always hot and dusty and the crowd is a very mixed one.

[Pg 22]

After a while Emmeline had a cup of tea and felt better. We went over our list of books for the summer and she wondered whether it wouldn't pay to get a seamstress into the house and avoid the exhausting trips downtown. On second thoughts she decided not to. Next morning she was quite well and asked me to remind her not to forget Robert Herrick's new novel. She said she might drop in at the office for lunch if she got through early at the stores, and we might look at books together.

Charmeuse is a shimmering, silk-like material which lends itself admirably to summer wear, because it stains easily. But in its effect on the shopper's nerves, charmeuse is even worse than éponge. In fact, as a preparation for a summer's reading, I don't know what is more exhausting than charmeuse, unless it be crêpe de Chine. Emmeline did not drop in for lunch that day, and when I came home at night, I found her more depressed than ever. There was nothing to be had downtown. Prices were impossible and anything else wasn't fit to be touched. It might be just as well to stay in town for the summer as go away and take the chance of getting typhoid. The situation was somewhat relieved by the arrival at this juncture of several parcels, some long and narrow, and others short and square. One particularly heavy box felt as if it might contain a set of Strindberg, but turned out to be a really handsome coat in blue chinchilla which Emmeline explained would be just the thing for cool nights in the country. She had bought it in despair at obtaining the kind of crêpe de Chine she wanted. The crêpe de Chine came in a smaller box.

[Pg 23]

At breakfast the next day we were tremendously cheerful. I told Emmeline of the handsome raincoat I had bought in preparation for lying on my back on the grass and looking up at the clouds. From that we passed to the new Brieux play. But when Emmeline intimated that she was going downtown soon after breakfast, I grew anxious.

[Pg 24]

"Do you think," I said, "that it will really make any difference to Mr. Galsworthy whether you read him in a voile or in a white cotton ratine?"

"If that is the way you feel about it," said Emmeline, "I can telephone and have them take all these things back. I hate them anyhow."

"What I mean is," I said, "that you don't want to wear yourself out completely before we leave the city. We have a month's reading ahead of us. Let us begin it in peace of mind."

"With nothing to wear?" she said.

Tulle is a partly transparent material, which in the hands of a skilful milliner becomes an invaluable aid to a thorough comprehension of the plays of M. Brieux, especially when studied amid the complexities of life on Maple View Farm. As usual, it is the department stores which have been first to discover this fundamental connection in life. They have everything necessary for the thorough enjoyment of Mr. Bryce's book on South America—blouses, toques, parasols, and tennis shoes. Special bargains in linen crash and batiste are offered on the same day with a cut-rate edition of "Damaged Goods." Reading Brieux in the country is almost as complicated a diversion as lying on one's back and looking up at the clouds.

[Pg 25]

IV

[Pg 26]

NOCTURNE

Once every three months, with fair regularity, she was brought into the Night Court, found guilty, and fined. She came in between eleven o'clock and midnight, when the traffic of the court is at its heaviest, and it would be an hour, perhaps, before she was called to the bar. When her turn came she would rise from her seat at one end of the prisoners' bench and confront the magistrate.

Her eyes did not reach to the level of the magistrate's desk. A policeman in citizens' clothes would mount the witness stand, take oath with a seriousness of mien which was surprising, in view of the frequency with which he was called upon to repeat the formula, and testify in an illiterate drone to a definite infraction of the law of the State, committed in his presence and with his encouragement. While he spoke the magistrate would look at the ceiling. When she was called upon to answer she defended herself with an obvious lie or two, while the magistrate looked over her head. He would then condemn her to pay the sum of ten dollars to the State and let her go.

[Pg 27]

She came to look forward to her visits at the Night Court.

The Night Court is no longer a centre of general interest. During the first few months after it was established, two or three years ago, it was one of the great sights of a great city. For the newspapers it was a rich source of human-interest stories. It replaced Chinatown in its appeal to visitors from out of town. It stirred even the languid pulses of the native inhabitant with its offerings of something new in the way of "life." The sociologists, sincere and amateur, crowded the benches and took notes.

To-day the novelty is worn off. The newspapers long ago abandoned the Night Court, clergymen go to it rarely for their texts, and the tango has taken its place. But the sociologists and the casual visitor have not disappeared. Serious people, anxious for an immediate vision of the pity of life, continue to fill the benches comfortably. No session of the court is without its little group of social investigators, among whom the women are in the majority. Many of them are young women, exceedingly sympathetic, handsomely gowned, and very well taken care of.

[Pg 28]

As she sat at one end of the prisoners' bench waiting her turn before the magistrate's desk, she would cast a sidelong glance over the railing that separated her from the handsomely gowned, gently bred, sympathetic young women in the audience. She observed with extraordinary admiration and delight those charming faces softened in pity, the graceful bearing, the admirably constructed yet simple coiffures, the elegance of dress, which she compared with the best that the windows in Sixth Avenue could show. She was amazed to find such gowns actually being worn instead of remaining as an unattainable ideal on smiling lay figures in the shop windows.

[Pg 29]

Occupants of the prisoners' bench are not supposed to stare at the spectators. She had to steal a glance now and then. Her visits to the Night Court had become so much a matter of routine that she would venture a peep over the railing while the case immediately preceding her own was being tried. Once or twice she was surprised by the clerk who called her name. She stood up mechanically and faced the magistrate as Officer Smith, in civilian clothes, mounted the witness stand.

She had no grudge against Officer Smith. She did not visualise him either as a person or as a part of a system. He was merely an incident of her trade. She had neither the training nor the imagination to look behind Officer Smith and see a communal policy which has not the power to suppress, nor the courage to acknowledge, nor the skill to regulate, and so contents itself with sending out full-fed policemen in civilian clothes to work up the evidence that defends society against her kind through the imposition of a ten-dollar fine.

[Pg 30]

To some of the women on the visitors' benches the cruelty of the process came home: this business of setting a two-hundred-pound policeman in citizens' clothes, backed up by magistrates, clerks, court criers, interpreters, and court attendants, to worrying a ten-dollar fine out of a half-grown woman under an enormous imitation ostrich plume. The professional sociologists were chiefly interested in the money cost of this process to the taxpayer, and they took notes on the proportion of first offenders. Yet the Night Court is a remarkable advance in civilisation. Formerly, in addition to her fine, the prisoner would pay a commission to the

professional purveyor of bail.

Sometimes, if the magistrate was young or new to the business, she would be given a chance against Officer Smith. She would be called to the witness chair and under oath be allowed to elaborate on the obvious lies which constituted her usual defence. This would give her the opportunity, between the magistrate's questions, of sweeping the court-room with a full, hungry look for as much as half a minute at a time. She saw the women in the audience only, and their clothes. The pity in their eyes did not move her, because she was not in the least interested in what they thought, but in how they looked and what they wore. They were part of a world which she would read about—she read very little—in the society columns of the Sunday newspaper. They were the women around whom headlines were written and whose pictures were printed frequently on the first page.

[Pg 31]

She could study them with comparative leisure in the Night Court. Outside in the course of her daily routine she might catch an occasional glimpse of these same women, through the windows of a passing taxi, or in the matinée crowds, or going in and out of the fashionable shops. But her work took her seldom into the region of taxicabs and fashionable shops. The nature of her occupation kept her to furtive corners and the dark side of streets. Nor was she at such times in the mood for just appreciation of the beautiful things in life. More than any other walk of life, hers was of an exacting nature, calling for intense powers of concentration both as regards the public and the police. It was different in the Night Court. Here, having nothing to fear and nothing out of the usual to hope for, she might give herself up to the æsthetic contemplation of a beautiful world of which, at any other time, she could catch mere fugitive aspects.

[Pg 32]

Sometimes I wonder why people think that life is only what they see and hear, and not what they read of. Take the Night Court. The visitor really sees nothing and hears nothing that he has not read a thousand times in his newspaper and had it described in greater detail and with better-trained powers of observation than he can bring to bear in person. What new phase of life is revealed by seeing in the body, say, a dozen practitioners of a trade of whom we know there are several tens of thousands in New York? They have been described by the human-interest reporters, analysed by the statisticians, defended by the social revolutionaries, and explained away by the optimists. For that matter, to the faithful reader of the newspapers, daily and Sunday, what can there be new in this world from the Pyramids by moonlight to the habits of the night prowler? Can the upper classes really acquire for themselves, through slumming parties and visits to the Night Court, anything like the knowledge that books and newspapers can furnish them? Can the lower classes ever hope to obtain that complete view of the Fifth Avenue set which the Sunday columns offer them? And yet there the case stands: only by seeing and hearing for ourselves, however imperfectly, do we get the sense of reality.

[Pg 33]

That is why our criminal courts are probably our most influential schools of democracy. More than our settlement houses, more than our subsidised dancing-schools for shop-girls, they encourage the get-together process through which one-half the world learns how the other half lives. On either side of the railing of the prisoners' cage is an audience and a stage.

[Pg 34]

That is why she would look forward to her regular visits at the Night Court. She saw life there.

V

[Pg 35]

HAROLD'S SOUL, I

I agree with the publishers of Miss Amarylis Pater's book, "The New Motherhood," that the subject is one which cannot possibly be ignored. I have not only read the book, but I have discussed it with Mrs. Hogan, and with my eldest son Harold, who will be seven next June. As a result I am confronted with certain remarkable differences of opinion.

Twenty years ago, as I plainly recall, the Sacred Function of Motherhood was not a topic of popular interest. There were a great many mothers then, of course, and there were unquestionably many more children than there are to-day. People, as a rule, spoke of their mothers with fondness, and sometimes even with reverence. The habit had been forming for several thousand years, in the course of which poets and painters never grew tired of describing mothers who were engaged in such highly useful occupations as bending over cradles, watching by sick-beds, baking, mending, teaching, laughing in play-rooms, weeping at the Cross, manipulating with equal dexterity the precious vials of love and sacrifice and the carpet slipper of justice. But though people had thus got into the way of accepting their mothers as an essential part in the scheme of things, they rarely thought it necessary to write to the editor about the Sacred Function of Motherhood. I mean in the impersonal, scientific sense in which Amarylis Pater uses the phrase.

[Pg 36]

Life in general was a pitifully unorganised, rule-of-thumb affair in those days. People fell in love because every one was doing it and without any expressed intention to advance the purposes of Evolution. They did not marry because they were anxious to render social service; but waited only till they had saved up enough to furnish a home. They bore children without regard to the future of the race. When the child came it was not a sociological event. The family did not consider the occurrence sacred, as Miss Vivian Holborn insists on calling it in her frequent communications to the press. The family contented itself with wishing the mother well and

[Pg 37]

hoping the baby would not look too much like its father.

Here I thought it would be well to confirm my own impressions by the testimony of a competent witness. So I turned and called through the open door into the dining-room.

"Mrs. Hogan," I said, "what do you think of the Sacred Function of Motherhood?"

"What do I think of what?" said Mrs. Hogan.

"Of the Sacred Function of Motherhood," I repeated, rather timidly.

She looked at me with a distrustful eye, her broom suspended in midair.

Mrs. Hogan comes in once a week to help out. Distrust is her chronic attitude toward me. She has all of the busy woman's aversion for a man about the house while domestic operations are under way. But besides, she cannot quite understand why a full-grown and able-bodied man should be lolling at his desk, pen in hand, when he ought to be downtown working for his family. She is aware, of course, that all the members of my family are well-nourished, decently dressed, and apparently quite happy. But that only renders the source of my income all the more dubious. When any one asks Mrs. Hogan how many children she has, she stares for some time at the ceiling before replying. From which I gather that there must be several.

[Pg 38]

"I refer to the business of being a mother, Mrs. Hogan. Have you never felt what a sacred thing that is?"

"An' what would there be sacred about the same?" she asked, seeing that I was quite serious. "Bearin' a child every other year, an' nursin' them, an' bringin' them through sickness, an' stayin' up nights to sew an' wash an' darn, an' drivin' them out to school, an' goin' out by the day's wurrk, where's the time for anythin' sacred to come into the life of a woman?"

[Pg 39]

"Just the same it does," I said. "Motherhood, Mrs. Hogan, is so holy a thing nowadays that a great many women are afraid to touch it, preferring to write in the magazines about it. Are you aware that when you married Mr. Hogan you were performing an act of social service?"

"I was not that," said Mrs. Hogan, "I was doin' a service to Jim, besides plazin' myself. 'Twas himself needed some one to take care of him."

"But that would mean," I said, "that you were false to your own highest self. If you had read Miss Pater's book you would know that any marriage entered into without the sense of social service merely means that a woman is selling herself to a man for life for the mere price of maintenance."

"When I married Jim," said Mrs. Hogan, "he was after being out of a job for six months."

She went back to her work more than ever puzzled why my wife and the children should look so well taken care of.

[Pg 40]

In those days—I mean about the time Mrs. Hogan was married to Jim, and I was at college constructing my world of ideas out of the now forgotten books which Mr. Gaynor was always quoting—I recall distinctly that the sacred things were also the secret things. What burned hot in the heart was allowed to rest deep in the heart. Partly this was because of a common habit of reticence which we have so fortunately outgrown. But another reason must have been that life then, as I have said, was imperfectly organised. To-day we have applied the principle of the division of labour so that we no longer expect the same person to do the work of the world and to feel its sacred significance. Thus, to-day there are women who are mothers and other women who proclaim the sacred function of motherhood. To-day there are women who bring up their children, and other women who, at the slightest provocation, thrill to the clear, immortal soul that looks out of the innocent eyes of childhood.

[Pg 41]

At this moment the clear, immortal soul of my boy, Harold, finds utterance in a succession of blood-curdling howls. He is playing Indians again. The wailing accompaniment in high falsetto emanates from the immortal soul of the baby. Those two immortalities are at it again.

I call out, "Harold!"

There is a silence.

"Harold!"

With extreme deliberation he appears in the doorway. I recognise him largely by intuition, so utterly smeared up is he from crawling in single file the entire length of the hall on his stomach. Beneath that thick deposit of rich alluvial soil I assume that my son exists. I ask him what he has been doing with the baby.

He had been doing nothing at all. He had merely tied her by one leg to a chair and pretended to scalp her with a pair of ninepins. He had performed a war dance around her and every time his ritual progress brought him face to face with the baby he made believe to brain her, but he only meant to see how near he could come without actually touching her, and he would strike the chair instead. He didn't know why the baby shrieked.

[Pg 42]

"Harold," I said, "do you feel the sacred innocence of childhood brooding in you?"

He was alarmed, but bravely attempted a smile.

"Ah, father!" he said.

I looked at him severely.

"Do you know what I ought to do to you in the name of the New Parenthood?"

"Ah, father!" and his lip trembled.

"You are a disgrace to the eternal spark in you," I said.

He lowered his head and began to cry. It required an effort to be stern, but I persisted.

"Harold," I said, "you will go into your room and stand in the corner for ten minutes. Close the door behind you. I will tell you when time is up."

He dragged himself away heartbroken and I found it was useless trying to write any more. I had made two people utterly miserable. I threw down my pen and rose to take a book from the shelf, but stopped in the act. Out of Harold's room came music. I stole to the door and looked in. He had not disobeyed orders. He had merely dressed himself in one of the nurse's aprons and the baby's cap, and standing erect in his corner, he sang "Dixie," with all the fervour of his fresh young voice.

[Pg 43]

About his appearance there was nothing sacred.

VI

[Pg 44]

EDUCATIONAL

Half-minute lessons for up-to-the-minute thinkers:

I. WORD STUDY

CHILD, *noun*; a student of sex hygiene; a member of boy scout organisations and girls' camp-fire organisations for the practice of the kind of self-control that parents fail to exercise; a member of school republics for the study of politics while father reads the sporting page; a ward of the State; a student of the phenomena of alcoholism; a handicap carefully avoided by specialists in child-study; one-third of a French family; the holder of an inalienable title to happiness which the Government must supply; in general, a human being under thirteen years of age who must be taught everything so that he will be surprised at nothing when he is thirty years of age. The ignorant and innocent offspring of a human couple, obs. Synonyms: man-child; girl-child; love-child.

[Pg 45]

MOTHERHOOD, *noun*; a profession once highly esteemed, but rejected by modern spirits as too frequently automatic.

MOTHER, *noun*; a female progenitor; a term often employed by the older poets in connection with the ideas of love, sacrifice, and holiness, but now delicately described by writers of the *Harper's Weekly* temperament as being synonymous with cow.

EUGENICS, *noun*; a condition of intense excitement over the future of the human race among those who are doing nothing to perpetuate it.

LITERATURE, *noun*; see SEX; WHITE SLAVE.

DRAMA, *noun*; see SEX; WHITE SLAVE.

PUNCH, *noun*; see DRAMA; LITERATURE; MAGAZINE ADVERTISING.

ADENOIDS, *noun*; something that is cut out of children.

SOCIAL-MINDEDNESS, *noun*; something that is injected into children.

[Pg 46]

II. GEOGRAPHY

ARGENTINA; where the tango comes from.

RUSSIA; where Anna Pavlova and ritual murder trials come from.

PERSIA; where the harem skirt comes from, and other fashions eagerly embraced by a generation which insists that woman shall no longer be man's chattel and plaything.

AMERICA; where the profits of all-night restaurants in Montmartre come from.

ASSYRIA, BABYLONIA, EGYPT, PERU, YUCATAN, PATAGONIA; where the decorations for Broadway lobster-palaces come from.

EQUATOR; the earth's waistline, unfashionably located in the same place year after year.

TENDERLOIN; where the world's wisdom comes from.

CAMBRIDGE, NEW HAVEN, PRINCETON, MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS; the sites of once celebrated educational institutions whose functions have now been taken over by theatre managers on Broadway.

[Pg 47]

UNDERWORLD; the world now uppermost.

MOUNTAIN; a rugged elevation of the earth's surface which comes to every self-constituted little prophet when he snaps his fingers.

SEA; where we are all at.

MEXICO CITY; residence of Huerta, the most eminent living disciple of Nietzsche.

BULGARIA; a nation which scornfully rejected peace and reaped honour, widows, and orphans; where the Servians were the other day.

SERVIA; where the Bulgarians may be next week.

CHAUTAUQUA; any place outside the offices of the State Department.

III. ARITHMETIC

1. A ship carrying 800 passengers and crew is in collision off the banks of Newfoundland, and 700 are saved. Describe the method by which the *Evening Journal* computes 400 souls lost. [Pg 48]
2. The salary of a police lieutenant is about \$2,500 a year. At what rate of interest must this sum be invested to produce a million dollars' worth of real estate in ten years?
3. $2+2=4$. Show this to be true otherwise than by writing a four-act play with its principal scene laid in a house of ill fame.
4. The loss to the nation from disease has been estimated at \$200,000,000 a year. Show the profit that would accrue to the nation from abolishing every form of disease after deducting the cost of maintaining the dependent widows and orphans of 50,000 doctors who have starved to death.
5. In a certain gubernatorial campaign several disinterested gentlemen contributed \$10,000 each to the campaign fund; yet the total of campaign contributions was a little over \$5,000. Explain this.
6. If you were called upon to build a bridge to the moon, which would you rather use, the total number of postage stamps on rejected magazine contributions laid end to end, or the total number of automobiles shipped from Detroit placed end to end? [Pg 49]
7. In a recent article on mortality statistics in the *World*, the writer omitted to divide his average death rate by 2. Was his argument, because of that, two times as convincing or only half as convincing?
8. Describe the modifications in the laws of arithmetic introduced by Mr. Thomas W. Lawson.

IV. HISTORY

The supporters of Mr. Theodore Roosevelt have frequently remarked that if Abraham Lincoln were alive to-day, he would be with them. Uncle Joe Cannon has expressed the conviction that Abraham Lincoln if he were alive to-day would be on his side. Is there anything in history to indicate that Abraham Lincoln, great man though he was, could be in two places at the same time?

Mention three Republican administrations in which the rainfall was twice as heavy as in any Democratic administration since 1837, and show what this indicates for the prosperity of the country under Mr. Woodrow Wilson. [Pg 50]

Julius Cæsar is said to have been in the habit of dictating to three secretaries simultaneously. How does this compare with the literary productivity of Mr. Arnold Bennett and Mr. Jack London?

At the last meeting of the Tammany aldermanic convention of the Fifth Assembly District a speaker declared it to be the most momentous event in the history of the world. Compare the Fifth Assembly District convention with (a) the battle of Marathon; (b) the meeting of the States-General at Versailles in 1789; (c) the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

V. LOGIC

Prove that the department store is the principal cause of prostitution by showing that the department store is fifty-six years old and the social evil is forty thousand years old. [Pg 51]

The mortality rate in municipal foundling asylums is $99\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Develop this into an argument for the maintenance of all children by the State.

Compare the arguments advanced in at least four (4) New York newspapers to show that the Giants would win with the reasons given in the same newspapers why the Athletics won.

Compare Richard Pearson Hobson's last speech on the Japanese peril with Demosthenes's Oration on the Crown.

VI. SCIENCE

The classification of the sciences has always presented peculiar difficulties, but a partial list would include the following:

Tonsorial Science,	Sunday Supplement Science,	[Pg 52]
Science of Bricklaying	Domestic Science,	
Science of Cosmic Love	Bohemian Science,	
Science of Advertising	Science of Sir Oliver Lodge,	
Scranton, Pa., Science	Science of Packy McFarland,	
Science of Puts and Calls	Science of Sexology,	

VII

[Pg 53]

MORGAN

We were speaking of the man whose career was written in terms of huge corporations and incomparable art collections.

"What a life it was!" said Cooper. "From his office-desk he controlled the destinies of one hundred million people. His leisure hours were spent amidst the garnered beauty of five thousand years. Isn't it almost an intolerable thought that the same man should have been master of the Stock Exchange and owner of that marvellous museum in white marble on Thirty-sixth Street?"

"Cooper," I said, "you sound like the I. W. W."

"I am that," he retorted. "I express the Inexhaustible Wonder of the World in the face of this thing we call America. A nation devoted to the principle that all men are born equal has produced the perfect type of financial absolutism. A people given up to material aims has cornered the art treasures of the ages. Need I say more?"

[Pg 54]

"You needn't," I said. "You have already touched the high-water mark in lyricism."

But Harding waved me aside.

"I have also been thinking of that marble palace on Thirty-sixth Street," he said. "I can't help picturing the scene there on that critical night in the fall of 1907 when Wall Street was rocking to its foundations, and a haggard group of millionaires were seeking a way to stave off ruin. I imagine the glorious Old Masters looking down from their frames on that unhappy assembly of New Masters—the masters of our wealth, our credit, our entire industrial civilisation. I imagine Lorenzo the Magnificent leaning out from the canvas and calling the attention of his neighbour, Grolier, to that white-faced company of great American collectors. The perspiring gentleman at the head of the table had one of the choicest collections of trust companies in existence. The man at his elbow was the owner of an unrivalled collection of copper mines and smelters. Facing him was an amateur who had gone in for insurance companies. Others there had collected railroads, or national banks, or holding companies. No wonder old Lorenzo was moved at the prospect of so many matchless accumulations, representing the devoted labour of years, going under the hammer. Around the walls the wonderful First Editions stood at attention and some one was saying, 'Naturally, on the security of your first mortgage bonds—'"

[Pg 55]

"Putting poetry aside," I said somewhat impatiently, "what I should like to know is whether this garnered beauty of five thousand years, as Cooper calls it, really has any meaning to its owners. I understand that most of our great collections are bought in wholesale lots, Shakespeare folios by the yard, Chinese porcelains by the roomful. Does a man really take joy in his art treasures in such circumstances?"

[Pg 56]

"Of course he does," said Cooper. "If we buy masterpieces in the bulk, that again is the American of it. I am certain that this man's extraordinary business success is to be explained by the mental stimulus he derived from his books and his pictures. His business competitors really had no chance. Their idea of recreation was yachts or cards or roof-gardens. But he found rest in the presence of the loveliest dreams of dead painters and poets. Can't you see how a man's imagination in such surroundings would naturally expand and embrace the world? No wonder he thought in billions of dollars. Why, I myself, if I could spend half an hour before a Raphael whose radiant beauty brings the tears to your eyes, could go out and float a \$100,000,000 corporation."

"Having first dried your tears, of course," I suggested.

"Well, yes," he said.

Harding had been showing signs of impatience, a common trait with him when other people are speaking.

[Pg 57]

"When a rich man dies," he said, "the first thing people ask is what will the stock market do. They were putting that question last week. Your Wall Street broker is a sensitive being. Nothing can happen at the other end of the world but he must rush out and sell or buy something. Returning, he says to the junior partner, 'I see there has been a big battle at Scutari. Where's Scutari and what are they fighting about?' 'Search me,' says the junior partner, 'but I think you did right in buying.' 'I sold,' says the broker. 'Who won the battle?' says the junior partner. 'I don't recall,' says the broker. But he is convinced that no big battle should be allowed to pass without being reflected in Wall Street.

"But that is not what I wanted to say. Suppose the market does go up two points or loses two points. What is the effect on the Stock Exchange compared with the crisis that ensues in the art world when a rich American dies? There's where things begin to look panicky. The quotations on Rembrandts and Van Dycks are cut in two. There is consternation in London auction rooms and Venetian palaces. In some half-ruined little Italian town the parish council has almost made up its mind to ship to New York the thirteenth-century altar piece which is the glory of the cathedral. The news comes that Croesus is dead and the parish authorities see their dreams of new schools and a new chapel and a modern water supply vanish. That is the crisis worth considering."

[Pg 58]

"Not to speak," I said, "of that little shop on Fourth Avenue where they paint Botticellis."

"I admit that Harding has made a very interesting suggestion, though probably without any deliberate intention on his part," said Cooper. "This steady drain by Wall Street upon Europe's art treasures is a civilising process which scarcely receives the attention it deserves, except when some Paris editor loses his temper and calls us barbarians and despoilers. I am not sure who is the barbarian, the American trust magnate who thinks a million francs is not too much for one of Raphael's Madonnas, or the scion of Europe's ancient nobility who thinks that no Madonna is worth keeping if you can get a million francs for it. According to the European idea, the proper place for a masterpiece is a corner of the lounging-room where the weary guest, after a hard day with the hounds, may be tempted to stare at the canvas for a moment and say, 'Nice little daub, what?' Their masterpieces are made to be seldom seen and never heard of."

[Pg 59]

"Now see what we do with the same picture over here. Before it is brought into the country all the papers have cable despatches about it, and they have impressed its value on the public mind by multiplying the real price by five. Then we advertise it by raising the question whether it is genuine or a fake. Then we put it into a museum and countless thousands besiege the doorkeeper and ask which is the way to the million-dollar picture. Then the Sunday papers print a reproduction in colours suitable for framing, but it isn't framed very often because the baby destroys it while papa is busy with the comic supplement. Then the New York correspondents of the Chicago papers write columns about the picture. Then it is taken up by women's clubs, the reading circles, and the Chautauqua. Before the process is completed that picture has entered into the daily thought and speech of the American people."

[Pg 60]

Harding interrupted.

"The members of the European nobility have seldom been interested in art. They have been too busy wearing military uniforms or pursuing the elusive fox all over the landscape."

"But that is just the point I was making," said Cooper indignantly.

"Yes, but not so clearly as I have formulated it," said Harding. "The fact is that art has always flourished under the patronage of the merchant class. The Athenians were a trading people. Lorenzo the Magnificent came from a family of pawn-brokers. Rembrandt sold his pictures to the sturdy, and quite homely, tea and coffee merchants of Holland. It is preposterous to suppose that because a man is lucky in the stock market he is incapable of appreciating the very best things in art. He is not incapable; only he keeps his interests separate. From ten o'clock to three our patron of the arts is busy downtown attending to the unfortunate financiers whom he has caught on the wrong side of the market. If Cooper here were a Cubist painter, and you gave him the run of a great art collector's front office on settlement day, he could produce any number of pictures entitled *Nude Speculator Descending a Wall Street Staircase*."

[Pg 61]

"The European aristocracy doesn't always despise us," I said. "Occasionally an American will be decorated by the Grand Duke of Sonderklasse-Ganzgut with the cross of the Bald Eagle of the Third Class, the person thus honoured being worth nine hundred million dollars and the area of the Prince's dominions being eighty-nine square miles."

[Pg 62]

VIII

[Pg 63]

THE MODERN INQUISITION

QUESTIONNAIRE: *A favourite indoor amusement in uplift circles.*

His eyes were bloodshot and he stared forward into vacancy.

"We were married," he said, "shortly after I was graduated from law school. For just five years we were happy. We were in love. I was making good in my profession. Helen took delight in her household duties and her baby. Then one day—the exact date is still engraved in letters of fire on my memory—I received a letter. It was from the Society for the Propagation of Ethical Statistics. It said that a study was being made of the churchgoing habits of college graduates, and there was a printed list of questions which I was requested to answer. I cannot recall the entire list, but these were some of the items:

"Do you go to church willingly or to please your wife?"

[Pg 64]

"Do you stay all through the sermon?"

"What is the average amount you deposit in the contribution plate (a) in summer; (b) in winter?"

"Is your choice of a particular church determined by (a) creed; (b) the quality of the preaching; (c) ventilation?"

"Are you ever overtaken by sleep during the sermon, and if so, at what point in the sermon do you most readily yield to the influence? (Note: In answering this question a state of recurrent drowsiness is to be considered as sleep.)

"Do you go to sleep most easily under (a) an Episcopalian; (b) Presbyterian; (c) Methodist; (d) Rabbi; (e) Ethical Culturist? (Note: Strike out all but one of the above names.)

"Is your awakening attended by a sensation of remorse or merely one of profound astonishment?"

"What do you consider to be the ideal length for a sermon, leaving climatic conditions out of account?" [Pg 65]

"I tossed the letter across the breakfast table to Helen and intimated that I couldn't spare the time for an answer. But Helen insisted it was my duty as a college graduate. If the science of sociology couldn't look to us men of culture for its data, whom could it go to? So I telephoned down to the office that I would be late and sat down to draft my reply. It was much more difficult than I imagined. I was amazed to find how little I knew of my own habits and processes of thoughts. It took the greater part of the morning, and when I finally did get down to the office I learned that my most important client, an aged gentleman of uncertain temper, had gone off in a rage saying he would never come back. He kept his word.

"That letter was the beginning. I had no leisure to worry over this loss of a very considerable part of my income, because the next morning's mail brought a letter from the Association for the Encouragement of the City Beautiful. It contained a very long questionnaire which I was requested to fill out and forward by return mail. I was asked to state whether the character of the telegraph poles in our neighbourhood was such as to reflect credit on the civic spirit of the community, in respect to material (a) wood, (b) ornamental iron; and secondly, as to paint, (a) yellow, (b) red, (c) green, (d) no paint at all. I was also to say whether conditions in our neighbours' back yards were conducive to the propagation of the typhoid-bearing or common house-fly and to give my estimate of the number of flies so propagated in the course of a week, in hundreds of thousands. Finally, was the presence of the house-fly in our community due to the negligence of individual citizens, or was it the direct result of inefficient municipal government? And if the latter, was our municipal administration Republican or Democratic, and what were the popular majorities for mayor since the Spanish-American war?" [Pg 66]

"With Helen's assistance I managed to send off my reply within two days. But when I came down to my place of business I found that I had missed an important long-distance call from Chicago which the office-boy had promised to transmit to me, but failed to do so because he did not understand it in the first place." [Pg 67]

He sighed and stared at the floor. His emaciated fingers beat a rapid tattoo on my desk. He droned on in dull, impersonal tones, as if this story of the wreck of a man's happiness had no special concern for him.

"Well," he said, "you can foresee the end for yourself. Within less than two months my law business disappeared, because I simply could not devote the necessary time to it. I resorted to desperate measures. I wrote to our alumni secretary, asking him to remove my name from the college catalogue; but it was too late. My name was by this time the common property of all the sociological laboratories and research stations in the country. At home, want began to stare us in the face. Worry over my financial condition, added to the long hours of labour involved in filling out questionnaires, undermined my health. I grew morose, ill-tempered, curt in my behaviour to Helen and the child. We still loved each other, but the glow and tenderness of our former relations had disappeared." [Pg 68]

"Fortunately Helen did not feel my neglect as she might. For by this time she, too, was getting letters from sociological experiment stations. Helen was graduated from a New England college. Her letters, at first, dealt with problems of domestic economy. She had to write out model dietaries, statements of weekly expenses, the relative merits of white and coloured help. Later she was led into the field of child psychology. Our little Laura was hardly able to go out into the open air, because her mother had to keep her under observation during so many hours of the day. The child grew pale and nervous. Helen grew thin. In her case, poor girl, it was actual lack of food. There was no money in the house. One night as we sat down at table there was just a glass of milk and a slice of bread and butter at Laura's plate; for us there was nothing. At first I failed to understand. Then I looked at Helen and she was trying to smile through her tears." [Pg 69]

He sobbed and I turned and stared out of the window.

"That night," he said, "I went out and pawned my watch; my great-grandfather had worn it. People rally quickly under trouble, and the next morning we were fairly cheerful. I set to work on a list of questions from the Bureau of Comparative Eugenics. Helen was busy with a questionnaire on Reaction Time in Children Under Six, from the Psychological Department at Harvard. I was resigned. I looked up and saw Laura playing with her alphabet blocks. I thought: Well, our lives may be spoiled, but there is the child. Life had cast no shadow on the current of her young days. At that moment the hall-boy brought in a letter. It was addressed to Miss Laura Smith—our baby. It was from the Wisconsin Laboratory of Juvenile Aesthetics. It contained a list of questions for the child to answer. How many hours a day did she play? Did she prefer to play in the house or on the street? Did she look into shop windows when she was out walking or at moving-picture posters? Was she afraid of dogs? I was crushed. There was a mist before my eyes. I fell forward on the table and wept." [Pg 70]

His lip trembled, but the manhood was not gone from him. He faced me with a show of firmness.

"Mind you," he said, "I am not complaining. The individual must suffer if the world is to move forward. We have suffered, but in a good cause."

I agreed. I recalled the tabulated results of a particularly elaborate questionnaire printed in the morning's news. Questions had been sent to a thousand college graduates. Of that number it appeared that 480 lived in the country, 230 preferred the drama to fiction, 198 were vegetarians, and 576 voted for Mr. Wilson at the last Presidential election. Those who voted the Democratic ticket were less proficient in spelling than those who voted for Colonel Roosevelt. Could anything [Pg 71]

IX

[Pg 72]

THORNS IN THE CUSHION

I have a confession to make and I have my desk to clean out. One is as hard to go at as the other. If people would only refrain from putting my books and papers in order whenever I am away, I could always find things where I leave them and the embarrassment I am about to relate would have been spared me. After all, there is efficiency and efficiency. If the book I need at any moment is always buried beneath a pile of foreign newspapers, it is only interfering with my work to haul it out during my absence and put it on the desk right in front of me, where I cannot see it.

It was at Harding's place that I met Dr. Gunther. Harding had insisted that we two ought to know each other. After I had spent half an hour in the Doctor's company I agreed that had been worth my while; the rest is for him to say. Gunther is a physician of high standing, but his hobby is astronomy, and it was quite evident that he is as big an expert in that field as in his own profession. We spent a delightful evening. As he rose to say good-night, Gunther turned to me and smiled in a timid fashion that was altogether charming.

[Pg 73]

"I must confess," he said with a sort of foreign dignity of speech, "that my desire to make your acquaintance was not altogether disinterested. I have here," pulling a large envelope out of his pocket, "a few remarks which I have thrown together at odd moments, and which it occurred to me might be of interest to your readers. It is on a subject which I can honestly profess to know something about. Perhaps you might pass it on to your editor after you have glanced through it and decided that it had a chance. In case it is found unavailable for your purposes, you must be under no compunction about sending it back. You see, I have put the manuscript into a stamped and addressed envelope. I know how busy you journalists are."

[Pg 74]

I told him I would be delighted to do what I could. I brought the manuscript to the office next morning, laid it on my desk, and forgot about it. It was a Saturday. After I left the office, the janitor's assistant, being new to the place, came in and cleaned up my room. When I looked for the paper on Monday, I could not find it. At first I was not alarmed, because I reasoned that in the course of two or three weeks it would turn up.

But this was evidently Dr. Gunther's first experience as a contributor to the press. He was impatient. Within a week I had a letter from him, dated Boston, where, as he explained, he had been called on a matter of private business which would keep him for some time. Without at all wishing to seem importunate, he asked whether my editor had arrived at any decision with regard to his manuscript. It was a vexing situation. I shrank from writing and confessing how clumsy I had been; and besides the paper was likely to be found at any moment. I saw that I must fight for time.

[Pg 75]

What I am about to say will confirm many good people in their opinion of the unscrupulous nature of the newspaper profession; but the truth must be told. I determined to write to Dr. Gunther as if I had read his article. The terrible difficulty was that I did not know what it was about. I was fairly sure it had to do with one of two things, medicine or astronomy. He had said, when he gave me the manuscript, that it was a subject on which he could claim special knowledge. But which of the two was it? For some time I hesitated, and then I wrote the following letter:

"Dear Dr. Gunther: Before giving your valuable paper a second and more thorough reading, I must bring up a question which suggests itself even after the most cursory examination. It is this: Will your article go well with illustrations, and if so where are they to be had? You know that ours is a picture supplement, appealing to a general audience, and there is every chance for inserting illustrations into an article of scientific nature abounding in such close-knit argument as you present. Of course there is not the least reason for haste in the matter. A reply from you within the next four weeks will be in time."

[Pg 76]

Next morning I found a telegram from Boston on my desk. It said: "Naturally no objection to pictures. Suggest you reproduce some of the illustrations from Langley's masterly work on the subject. Gunther."

My ruse had succeeded. I was prepared now to keep up a fairly active correspondence until the missing paper was found. I knew of Samuel Pierpont Langley, one of the greatest of American astronomers and a pioneer of aviation. I turned to the encyclopædia to see which one of Langley's books was likely to be the one Gunther had in mind. There, before me, was a biographical sketch of John Newport Langley, an English physiologist, who had published, among other things, a treatise "On the Liver," and another "On the Salivary Glands." I recalled that at Harding's house Gunther, after an elaborate discussion of the present state of meteorology, had drifted into a spirited tirade against the evils of ill-cooked and undigested food. It might very well be this paper "On the Salivary Glands" that Gunther had in mind.

[Pg 77]

I delayed writing as long as I could while the office was being ransacked for the missing article. It was a hopeless search. The manuscript had evidently been swept away into the all-devouring waste basket, another victim to mistaken ideals of efficiency. A few days later came a long and

friendly letter from Gunther. Without wishing to flatter me, he said that he was quite as much interested in my opinion of his article as in getting it published. He hoped to hear from me at my very earliest convenience.

I waited nearly a week, and yielding to fate wrote as follows:

"Dear Dr. Gunther: The article is altogether admirable. It seems to me that there are just two subjects which never lose their appeal to the average man. One is the food by which he lives. The other is the universe in which he lives. They represent the opposite poles in his nature, one being no less important than the other. Let the primitive man but satisfy the cravings of his stomach, and his awed gaze will turn to the illimitable glory of the stars. I think of Pasteur's epoch-making researches into the processes of food-fermentation and then I think of Galileo. If you ask me which is the greater man, I will say frankly I do not know. Your article will duly appear in our magazine, though not for some time. In the meanwhile, it may be that additions or changes will suggest themselves to you. Very likely you have a carbon copy of your manuscript at home. Make such alterations as you see fit and send the new manuscript to us as soon as you are satisfied with it."

[Pg 78]

The foregoing letter was addressed to Dr. Gunther in Boston. Two days later he wrote from his home address in New York. He said: "I cannot speak adequately of the consideration you have given to my poor literary effort. Your letter offering me an opportunity to revise the manuscript reached me just before I left for New York. At home I found the original article awaiting me, in my own envelope. Evidently it had occurred to you that I might not have a copy of the article at hand—which is indeed the case—and so you hastened to send me the original."

[Pg 79]

Of course the envelope containing the good Doctor's manuscript had not fallen into the hands of the janitor at all. It had caught the quick eye of our conscientious mail-boy, who saw his duty and promptly did it. It only remains for me to persuade the managing editor to print the article when it comes back. After what I have gone through, this should not be difficult. Our readers, therefore, may look forward to a masterly article on a subject of great interest. Whether it is an astronomical article or a pure food article the reader will learn for himself.

X

[Pg 80]

LOW-GRADE CITIZENS

Cooper was in a confidential mood.

"Isn't it true," he said, "that once so often every one of us feels impelled to go out and assassinate a college professor?"

"Why shouldn't one?" said Harding. "No one would miss a professor except, possibly, his wife and the children."

"That's just it, his children," said Cooper. "That's what makes a man hesitate. The particular college professor I have in mind recently published an article on Social Decadence in the *North American Review*. He deplored the tendency among our well-to-do classes toward small families. At the same time he deplored the mistaken zeal of our low-income classes in trying to more than make up for the negligence of their betters. He said, 'The American population may, therefore, be increasing most rapidly from that group least fitted by heredity or by income to develop social worth in their offspring. Such a process of "reversed selection" must mean, for the nation, a constant decrease in the social worth of each succeeding generation.' He brought forward a good many figures, but I have been so angry that I am quite unable to recall what they are."

[Pg 81]

"In that case," Harding said, "you should lose no time in seeking out the man and slaying him before his side of the case comes back to you."

"People," said Cooper, with that happy gift of his for dropping a subject to suit his own convenience, "have fallen into the habit of saying that the art of letter-writing is extinct. They say we don't write the way Madame de Sévigné did or Charles Lamb. This is not true.

"For instance, on April 26, 1913, Charles Crawl, a low-income American residing in the soft-coal districts of western Pennsylvania, wrote a letter which I have not been able to get out of my mind. With that unhappy predilection for getting into tight places which is one of the characteristics of our improvident, low-income classes, Charles Crawl happened to be in one of the lower workings of the Cincinnati mine when an explosion of gas—unavoidable, as in all mine disasters—killed nearly a hundred operatives. Charles Crawl escaped injury, but after creeping through the dark for two days he felt his strength going from him, and so, with a piece of chalk, on his smudgy overalls, he wrote the following letter:

[Pg 82]

"Good-bye, my children, God bless you."

"He had two children, which for a man of low social worth was doing quite well. But on the other hand he was improvident enough to leave his children without a mother. When I was at college, my instructor in rhetoric was always saying that my failure to write well was due to the fact that I had nothing to say; and he used to quote passages from Isaiah to show how the thing should be done. I think my rhetoric teacher would have approved of Charles Crawl's epistolary style. I think Isaiah would have."

[Pg 83]

"But we can't all of us work in the mines," I said.

"Therefore it is not to you that America is looking for the development of an epistolary art," said Cooper; "an art in which we are bound to take first place long before our coal deposits are exhausted. Charles Crawl had his predecessors. In November, 1909, Samuel Howard was thoughtless enough to let himself be killed, with several hundred others, in the St. Paul's mine at Cherry, Illinois. He, too, left a letter behind him. He wrote:

"If I am dead, give my diamond ring to Mamie Robinson. The ring is at the post-office. I had it sent there. The only thing I regret is my brother that could help mother out after I am dead and gone. I tried my best to get out and could not.

"You see, being a low-income man, of small social worth and pitifully inefficient, even when he did his best to get out, he could not. But perhaps the subject tires you?" [Pg 84]

"You might as well go on," said Harding. "If you finish with this subject you will have some other grievance."

"I have only two more examples of the vulgar epistolary style to cite," said Cooper. "Strictly speaking one of them is not a letter. But it is to the point. On the night of April 14, 1912, an Irishman named Dillon of low social value, in fact a stoker, happened to be swimming in the North Atlantic. The *Titanic* had just sunk from beneath his feet. But perhaps I had better quote the testimony before the Mersey Commission, which, being an official communication, is necessarily unanswerable, as the late Sir W. S. Gilbert pointed out:

"Then he [Dillon] swam away from the noise and came across Johnny Bannon on a grating—

"From the fact that Johnny Bannon had managed to possess himself of a grating we are justified in concluding that he was a man of somewhat higher social worth than the witness, Dillon. However, [Pg 85]

"—came across Johnny Bannon on a grating. He said, "Cheero, Johnny," and Bannon answered, "I am all right, Paddy." There was not room on the grating for two, and Dillon, saying, "Well, so long, Johnny," swam off—

In thus leaving Johnny Bannon in undisputed possession of the grating you see that Dillon once more wrote himself down as a low-grade man unfit for competitive survival. However,

—"Well, so long, Johnny," swam off in the direction of a star where Johnny Bannon had seen a flashlight.

And as it turned out, it was, indeed, a flashlight, and Dillon was pulled out of the water to go on stoking and accelerating the process of national decadence.

"My last letter," continued Cooper, "was written in October, 1912, in the Tombs. The author was one Frank Cirofici, known to the patrons of educational moving-picture shows all over the country as Dago Frank. It was addressed to one Big Jack Zelig, a distinguished ornament of our Great White Way, cut down before his time by a bullet from behind. Cirofici wrote: [Pg 86]

"I know the night I heard Jip and Lefty were arrested I cried like a little baby.—Dear pal, I have more faith in you than in any living being in this country. I tell you the truth right from my heart. I don't know you long, Jack, and I think if it wasn't for you, I don't know what would happen to me. Being I am a Dago, of course, you don't know what I know."

"Please," said Harding, "please don't knock a hole into your own argument by asking us to shed tears over the undefiled wells of purity that lie deep in the soul of the Bowery gunman. You won't contend that Dago Frank, when he leaves us, will be a loss to the nation."

"It would be an act of delusion on my part," said Cooper, "to expect you to see what I am driving at without going to the trouble of spelling it out for you, Harding, even if you do belong to the classes of superior social worth. What I want to express is the justifiable wrath which possesses me at this silly habit of taking a pile of figures and adding them up and dividing by three and deducing therefrom scarlet visions of Decadence and the fall of Rome and Trafalgar, and all that rot. What if empires, and republics, and incomes, and the size of families do rise and fall? Does the soul of man decay? Do the primitive loyalties decay? As long as we have men like Charles Crawl and Samuel Howard, do you think I care whether or not Harvard graduates neglect to reproduce their kind? The soul of man, as embodied in Dillon with his 'So long, Johnny,' is as sound to-day as it was ten thousand years ago, before the human race entered on its decline by putting on clothes. And Cirofici, pouring his soul out to his 'pal,' crying like a child over those poor lambs, Lefty Lewis and Gyp the Blood—" [Pg 87]

"If that's what you mean," said Harding with suspicious humility, "I quite agree with you. You know, I have often—" [Pg 88]

"Once you agree with me," said Cooper, "I don't see why it is necessary for you to continue."

ROMANCE

At 5:15 in the afternoon of an exceptionally sultry day in August, John P. Wesley, forty-seven years old, in business at No. 634 East Twenty-sixth Street as a jobber in tools and hardware, was descending the stairs to the downtown platform of the Subway at Twenty-eighth Street, when it occurred to him suddenly how odd it was that he should be going home. His grip tightened on the hand rail and he stopped short in his tracks, his eyes fixed on the ground in pained perplexity. The crowd behind him, thrown back upon itself by this abrupt action, halted only for a moment and flowed on. Cheerful office-boys looked back at him and asked what was the answer. Stout citizens elbowed him aside without apology. But Wesley did not mind. He was asking himself why it was that the end of the day's work should invariably find him descending the stairs to the downtown platform of the Subway. Was there any reason for doing that, other than habit? He wondered why it would not be just as reasonable to cross the avenue and take an uptown train instead.

[Pg 90]

Wesley had been taking the downtown train at Twenty-eighth Street at 5:15 in the afternoon ever since there was a Subway. At Brooklyn Bridge he changed to an express and went to the end of the line. At the end of the line there was a boat which took him across the harbour. At the end of the boat ride there was a trolley car which wound its way up the hill and through streets lined with yellow-bricked, easy-payment, two-family houses, out into the open country, where it dropped him at a cross road. At the end of a ten minutes' walk there was a new house of stucco and timber, standing away from the road, its angular lines revealing mingled aspirations toward the Californian bungalow and the English Tudor. In the house lived a tall, slender, grey-haired woman who was Wesley's wife, and two young girls who were his daughters. They always came to the door when his footsteps grated on the garden path, and kissed him welcome. After dinner he went out and watered the lawn, which, after his wife and the girls, he loved most. He plied the hose deliberately, his eye alert for bald patches. Of late the lawn had not been coming on well, because of a scorching sun and the lack of rain. A quiet chat with his wife on matters of domestic economy ushered in the end of a busy day. At the end of the day there was another day just like it.

[Pg 91]

And now, motionless in the crowd, Wesley was asking whether right to the end of life this succession of days would continue. Why always the south-bound train? He was aware that there were good reasons why. One was the tall grey-haired woman and the two young girls at home who were in the habit of waiting for the sound of his footsteps on the garden path. They were his life. But apparently, too, there must be life along the uptown route of the Interborough. He wanted to run amuck, to board a north-bound train without any destination in mind, and to keep on as far as his heart desired, to the very end perhaps, to Van Cortlandt Park, where they played polo, or the Bronx, where there was a botanical museum and a zoo. Even if he went only as far as Grand Central Station, it would be an act of magnificent daring.

[Pg 92]

Wesley climbed to the street, crossed Fourth Avenue, descended to the uptown platform, and entered a train without stopping to see whether it was Broadway or Lenox Avenue. Already he was thinking of the three women at home in a remote, objective mood. They would be waiting for him, no doubt, and he was sorry, but what else could he do? He was not his own master. Under the circumstances it was a comfort to know that all three of them were women of poise, not given to making the worst of things, and with enough work on their hands to keep them from worrying overmuch.

[Pg 93]

Having broken the great habit of his life by taking an uptown train at 5:15, Wesley found it quite natural that his minor habits should fall from him automatically. He did not relax into his seat and lose himself in the evening paper after his usual fashion. He did not look at his paper at all, but at the people about him. He had never seen such men and women before, so fresh-tinted, so outstanding, so electric. He seemed to have opened his eyes on a mass of vivid colours and sharp contours. It was the same sensation he experienced when he used to break his gold-rimmed spectacles, and after he had groped for a day in the mists of myopia, a new, bright world would leap out at him through the new lenses.

Wesley did not make friends easily. In a crowd he was peculiarly shy. Now he grew garrulous. At first his innate timidity rose up and choked him, but he fought it down. He turned to his neighbour on the right, a thick-set, clean-shaven youth who was painfully studying the comic pictures in his evening newspaper, and remarked, in a style utterly strange to him:

[Pg 94]

"Looks very much like the Giants had the rag cinched?"

The thick-set young man, whom Wesley imagined to be a butcher's assistant or something of the sort, looked up from his paper and said, "It certainly does seem as if the New York team had established its title to the championship."

Wesley cleared his throat again.

"When it comes to slugging the ball you've got to hand it to them," he said.

"Assuredly," said the young man, folding up his paper with the evident design of continuing the

conversation.

Wesley was pleased and frightened. He had tasted another new sensation. He had broken through the frosty reserve of twenty years and had spoken to a stranger after the free and easy manner of men who make friends in Pullman cars and at lunch counters. And the stranger, instead of repulsing him, had admitted him, at the very first attempt, into the fraternity of ordinary people. It was pleasant to be one of the great democracy of the crowd, something which Wesley had never had time to be. But on the other hand, he found the strain of conversation telling upon him. He did not know how to go on.

[Pg 95]

The stranger went out, but Wesley did not care. He was lost in a delicious reverie, conscious only of being carried forward on free-beating wings into a wonderful, unknown land. The grinding of wheels and brakes as the train halted at a station and pulled out again made a languorous, soothing music. The train clattered out of the tunnel into the open air, and Wesley was but dimly aware of the change from dark to twilight. The way now ran through a region of vague apartment houses. There were trees, stretches of green field waiting for the builder, and here or there a colonial manor house with sheltered windows, resigned to its fate. Then came cottages with gardens. And in one of these Wesley, shocked into acute consciousness, saw a man with a rubber hose watering a lawn. Wesley leaped to his feet.

[Pg 96]

The train was at a standstill when he awoke to the extraordinary fact that he was twelve miles away from South Ferry, and going in the wrong direction. The imperative need of getting home as soon as he could overwhelmed him. He dashed for the door, but it slid shut in his face and the train pulled out. His fellow passengers grinned. One of the most amusing things in the world is a tardy passenger who tries to fling himself through a car door and flattens his nose against the glass. It is hard to say why the thing is amusing, but it is. Wesley did not know that he was being laughed at. He merely knew that he must go home. He got out at the next station, and when he was seated in a corner of the south-bound train, he sighed with unutterable relief. He was once more in a normal world where trains ran to South Ferry instead of away from it. He dropped off at his road crossing, just two hours late, and found his wife waiting.

[Pg 97]

They walked on side by side without speaking, but once or twice she turned and caught him staring at her with a peculiar mixture of wonder and unaccustomed tenderness.

Finally he broke out.

"It's good to see you again!"

She laughed and was happy. His voice stirred in her memories of long ago.

"It's good to have you back, dear," she said.

"But you really look remarkably well," he insisted.

"I rested this afternoon."

"That's what you should do every day," he said. "Look at that old maple tree! It hasn't changed a bit!"

"No," she said, and began to wonder.

"And the girls are well?"

"Oh, yes."

"I can hardly wait till I see them," he said; and then, to save himself, "I guess I am getting old, Alice."

[Pg 98]

"You are younger to-night than you have been for a long time," she said.

Jennie and her sister were waiting for them on the porch. They wondered why father's kiss fell so warmly on their cheeks. He kissed them twice, which was very unusual; but being discreet young women they asked no questions. After dinner Wesley went out to look at the lawn.

XII

[Pg 99]

WANDERLUST

April sunlight on the river and the liners putting out to sea. Paris! Florence! the Alps! the Mediterranean! I turned away and let my thoughts run back to the time when Emmeline and I were in the habit of making, once a year, the trip to Prospect Park South.

The Subway has brought this delightful region within the radius of ordinary tourist travel, though I am told that the element of adventure has not been completely eliminated, owing to the necessity of transferring at Atlantic Avenue, where it is still the custom of the traffic policemen to direct passengers to the wrong car. At the time of which I am speaking, Prospect Park South lay off the beaten track, but the difficulties of the venture were atoned for by the delight of finding one's self, at the journey's end, in a world of new impressions, a world untouched by the rush and clamour of our own days, and steeped in the colour and poetry which Cook's, cotton goods, and the cinematograph have been wiping out in Europe and the Near East.

[Pg 100]

There were no Baedekers then for travellers to Prospect Park South. To-day I presume guide-

books and maps may be purchased at the Manhattan end of the Brooklyn Bridge if people still go by that route. We did without guide-books or guides, because the inhabitants of Prospect Park South were a kindly folk and as a rule would wait for visitors at the trolley stops, with an umbrella. When this did not happen, we asked our way from passers-by. These were always strangers who had lost their way. The inhabitants were either peacefully at home or waiting at the trolley stops. For that matter an inhabitant, when encountered by rare chance, was not really of assistance. A resident always referred to streets and avenues by the names they bore when he first moved in; and inasmuch as the streets in Prospect Park South are renamed every year and the street numbers altered at the same time, the settlers, who would find their own homes by intuition, were worse than useless as guides. On the other hand, to meet a stranger who was lost was always a help. It was a peculiarity of strangers who were lost in Prospect Park South that they would always be passing the street you were looking for, while you in turn had just turned in from the street they were looking for, so that an exchange of information was always mutually profitable.

[Pg 101]

The following hints for travellers to Prospect Park South are based upon our experiences of some years ago. Those who go by the Interborough tube will probably find that changed conditions have rendered many of these rules obsolete. But for those who go by way of Brooklyn Bridge they may still be of some value. First then as to dress. As a rule one should dress for Prospect Park South very much as for a short run to Europe. That is to say, woollens are always preferable, especially in the rainy season (which in Prospect Park South is coextensive with the visiting season), owing to the long waits between cars. It is true, as I have said, that the inhabitants of Prospect Park South are accustomed to wait at the trolley stations with an umbrella, and no household is without a full assortment of old mackintoshes and rubbers to lend to improvident visitors who believed the weather reports in the paper. But house parties in Prospect Park South are frequently large and there may not be enough old raincoats to go around. A light overcoat, an umbrella, rubbers or a pair of stout shoes, and a pocket electric light for reading names on the street lamps at night, will be found sufficient for the ordinary traveller.

[Pg 102]

The choice of route is important. Those who, like us, live in upper Manhattan may lay their plans (excluding the Subway) either for the Ninth Avenue L or the Sixth Avenue L. As far south as Fifty-third Street the two lines coincide. Below Fifty-third Street the question of route should be determined by one's personal preferences in the matter of scenery; though not entirely. Veteran travellers assure me that there is also a difference in comfort. The curves are sharper on Sixth Avenue, but there are more flat wheels on the Ninth Avenue line. According as the tourist is susceptible to lateral or vertical disturbances he will make his choice. The front and rear cars are to be recommended above all others because a seat may always be obtained. I recognise, however, that if the traveller has long been a resident of New York he will force his way into the middle cars. Then, hanging from a strap, he may curse the company and be in turn cursed by the quick-tempered gentleman upon whose feet he is standing.

[Pg 103]

A phrase-book is not necessary. The English language is used on both the Sixth and Ninth Avenue lines, and being equally incomprehensible, cannot be looked up in a dictionary. Only legal currency of the United States is accepted at the ticket-offices, but change is frequently given in Canadian dimes. It is convenient, but not essential, to supply one's self with reading matter at the beginning of the trip. Newspapers are always to be had for the picking on the floor of the cars. The question of fresh air, a topic of constant unpleasant controversy between American travellers and Europeans on the Continent, need not concern the traveller here. The matter is regulated by the company management which keeps the windows closed in summer and open in winter. Passengers of an independent turn of mind will be wary of opening windows on their own account. The sudden entrance of air following upon the heavy perspiration induced by the effort has been known to lead to pneumonia.

[Pg 104]

With these few general considerations in mind, we may proceed to give a rapid sketch of the route the tourist traverses. As we have said, down to Fifty-third Street the passenger on the Sixth Avenue and on the Ninth Avenue will pass through the same landscape. As the train makes the magnificent curve through One Hundred and Tenth Street he will have before him on the right the towering mass of the Cathedral of St. John, which a kindly neighbour will tell him is Columbia University, and on the left the lovely, wooded heights of Central Park, their base skirted by a low line of garages and French dyeing establishments. At Ninety-eighth Street, on the right, is a water tower of red brick, which probably has the distinction of being the tallest water tower on Ninety-eighth Street. At Seventy-seventh Street to the left is the Museum of Natural History, which the same kindly informant to whom we have referred will describe as the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On every cross street to the right one may catch a glimpse of the beautiful Riverside Drive with the smoke from the New York Central's freight engines rising above the trees.

[Pg 105]

At Fifty-third Street the Sixth Avenue trains diverge to the left for a short distance and then, turning south once more, carry the traveller through a region heavily overgrown with skeleton advertising signs of woman's apparel and table waters. If the Ninth Avenue route is selected the vista is one of tenement houses and factories. At Thirty-third Street is the new Pennsylvania Station, the cost of which the same kindly neighbour will exaggerate by several hundred millions of dollars.

[Pg 106]

Ten blocks further down are the buildings of the General Theological Seminary, so beautiful in line and colour that no resident of New York ever alludes to them. A few minutes further down the train rounds a curve and the traveller, if he goes in the early morning, as every visitor to Prospect Park South must, catches a glimpse of the fairy land of steeples and battlements of

lower New York, a Camelot wreathed with wisps of steam. For the lover of scenery the Ninth Avenue is to be unhesitatingly recommended, whereas the Sixth Avenue route will give pleasure to the citizen who takes pride in the development of our garment industries.

[Pg 107]

I have no space to describe the interesting views to be had while crossing Brooklyn Bridge. I can only mention the harbour with the sunlight upon it, a spectacle of loveliness for which New York will be forgiven much. Straight under the span of the bridge is the pier from which Colonel Roosevelt set sail for South America. On the left, close to the edge of the river, is the beetling mass of sugar refineries famous the world over as the scene of an epoch-making experiment in modifying the law of gravitation, when the sugar company succeeded in weighing in three thousand pounds of sugar to the ton and paying duty on the smaller amount to the United States Government.

Of the trip through Brooklyn to Prospect Park South I will not attempt to give any description. For that matter I will not pretend that on any of our journeys I have carried away a definite idea of Brooklyn. For that a lifetime is necessary.

XIII

[Pg 108]

UNREVISED SCHEDULES

Life's ironies beset us whichever way we turn. The very day that Woodrow Wilson signed the tariff bill, I discovered that Emmeline is a Protectionist.

Thrice in the course of the evening I alluded, with pretended calm, to the signing of the bill, without awakening the least response in Emmeline. The tariff apparently had no meaning to her. Thereupon I reproached her openly.

"It is characteristic of your sex," I said, "not to betray the slightest interest in a matter that comes so intimately home to you. Here is a bill which is bound to affect the problem of high prices. Every woman who carries a market basket, every woman who shops, every woman who has the management of a household on her hands, is directly concerned in the question of lower tariff duties. Yet I dare say you haven't read two lines on the subject in your newspaper."

[Pg 109]

"What have we been paying duties on?" she said.

"On everything," I replied with spirit. "Anchors, for instance. We have been paying one cent a pound on them. That means twenty dollars a ton. You know what the average anchor weighs, so you can figure out for yourself what we have been paying out all these years for this commodity alone. We have been paying 85 per cent. on bunion plasters, 10 per cent. on animals' claws, and 85 per cent. on teazels."

"But we hardly ever use any of these things," she said.

"I was simply illustrating the iniquitous extremes to which our tariff advocates were prepared to go," I said. "It may seem natural to put a duty on beef, and shoes, and cotton goods. But the tariff barons were not content. Insatiable greed demanded that a tax be put on teazels."

"What is a teazel?" she said.

"I am not sure that I know," I replied. "But that just illustrates one of the favourite methods of the tariff plunderers. It consisted in slapping a stiff duty on articles people did not know the meaning of and so would pay without protest. I say teazels, but, of course, I mean meat, and sugar, and cotton, and woollen goods, all of which things will soon be within the reach of all. I should imagine that women would be grateful for what has been done to make the living problem so much easier."

[Pg 110]

"Under the new tariff bill," she said, "will there still be only twenty-four hours to the day?"

"The new tariff doesn't repeal the laws of astronomy," I replied.

"That is what I was thinking when you spoke of the living problem being made easier for us," she said. "Putting twelve more hours into the day would be a help. Did the old tariff have a big duty on hanging up pictures?"

"I don't know what you are driving at," I said, but in my heart I thought I knew.

[Pg 111]

"I mean," she said, "around moving time. I have always thought there must be a very heavy tax on every picture that a man hangs up; or rugs—"

I decided that frivolity was the best way out of a situation that had suddenly become menacing. "Usually we don't hang up rugs," I said.

"That may be an oversight on our part," she replied. "Perhaps, if we hung up rugs and put pictures on the floor it might appeal to your passion for romance. You might even find it exhilarating."

The idea seemed to fascinate her.

"There are a great many things," she went on, "that I should like to see on the free list. Seats in the Subway, for instance. I stood up all the way from Twenty-third Street this afternoon, but I suppose the duty on a man's giving up his seat to a woman is prohibitive. Then there's Mrs.

Flanagan who comes in by the day. She has a baby who is teething and cries all night. I wish there was a lower duty on babies' teeth, so that they came easier; and on sleep for mothers who have to go out by the day. I also wish there was a lower duty on the whisky that her husband consumes. She could possibly afford to stay at home more than she does."

[Pg 112]

"He'd only drink himself to death," I said.

But she was not paying attention. "There might be a lower duty on efficient domestic help. It would be a relief."

"Foreign household help are not under the tariff law at all," I said. "They come in free."

"That's what the girl said yesterday when she decided to quit, an hour before dinner. And from the way she spoke to me I imagine that her language also came in free. The more I think of it the fewer advantages I can see for us women under your new tariff bill." And then the bitter truth came out. "I think that on the whole I am in favour of a high tariff on most things."

[Pg 113]

"You are in favour of Protection," I stammered, hardly believing my senses.

"I am in favour of protecting domestic industry," said Emmeline, and I saw that she had been reading the newspapers more carefully than I imagined.

The protective system which Emmeline outlined to me that evening would have made Senator Penrose sob for joy. One of the first things she demanded was a heavy duty on tobacco. She said she would be satisfied with a flat rate of 100 per cent. on the nasty article, with a super tax of 100 per cent. on all half-smoked cigars left lying around the house, and another 100 per cent. on cigar ashes and half-burnt matches. Alcoholic spirits should be totally excluded. She wanted a pretty heavy duty on raincoats left lying on chairs when they should be hung up on the proper hook. She was also in favour of a prohibitive tax on all arguments tending to prove that woman's natural sphere is the home. Lodge dues, club dues, and the practice of reading newspapers at the breakfast table should be heavily taxed. There were a great many other schedules she proposed, carrying a minimum duty of seventy-five per cent. I cannot pretend to remember all, but my impression is that plays dealing with the social evil and eugenics were among them.

[Pg 114]

By this time it will be apparent that Emmeline's views on tariff legislation were somewhat confused. She evidently made no distinction between import duties, internal revenue taxes, and the police power of the State. Before continuing our discussion I therefore insisted that we restrict debate to the specific question of import duties and the cost of living. The simple fact was that we had now changed from a high-tariff nation to a low-tariff nation. How would this affect ourselves and our neighbours?

Thereupon I was subjected to a severe examination as to tariffs and prices in other countries. My answers were, in a general fashion, correct, though possibly I may have confused the British tariff system with that of Germany.

[Pg 115]

"From your statements, so far as I can make head or tail out of them," said Emmeline, "I gather that in protection countries the cost of food and clothing and rent is always just a little ahead of wages and salaries."

"You have followed me perfectly," I said.

"Whereas in low-tariff countries people's wages and salaries are always just a little behind the cost of food, clothing, and shelter.

"That is due to quite a different set of causes," I said.

"I imagined," she said, "that the causes must be other than those you mentioned. But the fact remains that the choice which confronts most of us is between having a little less than we need, or needing a little more than we have. If that is so, it seems to me rather a waste of time to spend—did you say seventy-five years?—in revising the tariff. I prefer my own kind of tariff."

"And the cost of living?" I said.

[Pg 116]

"My kind of tariff gets much nearer to solving that problem," she said.

"But then, why Mrs. Pankhurst?" I said. "If the making of laws has nothing to do with the comfort of life, why do you want to vote?"

"Because we want to assert our equality by sharing your illusions. Besides, we can use the vote to bring about a state of things when voting won't be necessary."

On further thought, Emmeline is not a Protectionist; she is an Anarchist.

XIV

[Pg 117]

SOMEWHAT CONFUSED

He said:

"Last night my wife took me to a lecture on Eugenics and the Future. The night before, we went to a lecture on the Social Implications of the Tango. I enjoyed them both immensely. Of course, after a long day in the office, I am rather tired in the evening. If I dozed off on either occasion it must have been just for a moment. I followed the arguments perfectly."

"Are you converted?" I said.

He pushed his derby further back on his head.

"Quite. I am not a mule. I know a good argument when I see one. Now, isn't it true, as the speaker contended last night, that the human animal, taking him by and large, is not a beautiful object? When he isn't bow-legged, he is knock-kneed. There are too many men prematurely bald. There are too many women prematurely wrinkled—and fat. We are nothing but a shambling, stoop-shouldered race, in a permanent state of ill-health. In summer we get sun-struck. In winter we get colds in the head. Look at the ancient Greeks. Is there any reason why we cannot produce a race as healthy, as beautiful, as graceful in the free play of muscle and limb? An erect, supple, free-stepping race, breathing deeply of life, looking the world full in the face, daring everything, afraid of nothing. Our bodies are divine, as much so as our souls. To go on being a race of physical degenerates, a snuffling, wheezing, perspiring race that is always running to the doctor, is mortal sin; especially when the remedy is close at hand."

[Pg 118]

"You mean eugenics?" I said.

"No," he said, "I refer to the tango. The speaker last night—or was it the night before?—was absolutely convincing on the point. I am sure you will agree."

To make sure that I would agree he interrupted me just as I opened my mouth to frame an objection. He continued rapidly:

[Pg 119]

"Take this matter of old age. There's no reason why people should let themselves grow old, is there now? And a properly constituted race would see to it that old age was postponed indefinitely. After all, when a man says he is eighty years old or ninety years old, it is only a figure of speech. Look at Napoleon winning the battle of Leipzig when he was seventy-eight years old."

"I never heard that before," I said. "I thought Napoleon lost the battle of Leipzig, and when he died—"

"It may have been Hannibal," he said. "At that point I may possibly have dozed off. But the principle of the thing is the same. Only a race of weaklings will succumb to the ravages of time without making a fight for it. There is really nothing beautiful in old age. You sit out the long winter nights by the fire. Your eyes are too weak for the fine print in the evening paper, and when you ask your son to tell you about the new Currency Law he grows cross and scolds the baby. When you stop to buy a ticket in the Subway, people grow impatient and murmur something about an old ladies' home. It's all as plain as daylight. There is no reason why people, as soon as they get to be sixty, should reconcile themselves to the idea of debility, warm gruel, and chest protectors, when they might go on being young, alert, graceful, full of the joy of life, if they would only recognise the way of going about it."

[Pg 120]

"You mean the tango?" I said.

"No," he said. "I was alluding to eugenics."

He spoke with assurance, but from the corner of his eye he threw me a wistful, fugitive glance, as if to make sure from my bearing that this was really what he meant. I did not contradict him. I was thinking of his wife. For the first time in my experience my sympathies were with the tired business man. It is good for the tired business man that his wife shall be alive to the things that count; but two nights in succession is rather hard. His wife, I knew, was alive to every phase of our intense modern existence, and in rapid succession. She did not precisely burn with that hard, gemlike flame which Mr. Pater recommended. Sometimes I thought she burned with a sixty-four-candle power carbon glow. It was a bit trying on the eyes.

[Pg 121]

"Or take the question of sex," he said. "What is there in sex emotion to be ashamed of? It is the most primordial of feelings. It comes before the law of gravitation, as the speaker showed last night."

"Does it though?" I said.

"Well," he said, "perhaps it was the night before last. Around this universal urge, of which we ought to be proud, as the most powerful force in Evolution (the speaker last night was sure there could be no doubt on the subject), we have built up an elaborate structure of reticence and hypocrisy. All art, all literature, is of significance only as it emphasises sex. If the Bible has impressed itself on the imagination of humanity for two thousand years, it is because it contains the most beautiful love songs in all literature. It is the force which drives the sun in its course, as the Italian poet has said. It has been the inspiration of all great deeds. If we searched deeply enough, we should find that sex was the inspiration behind the discovery of America, the invention of printing, and the building of the Roman aqueducts. Only the most benighted ignorance will permit our prudish sentiments on the subject to stand in the way of a movement which is sweeping the world like wildfire."

[Pg 122]

"Referring to eugenics?" I said.

"No," he said, "I mean the tango."

He looked out of the window and pondered.

"Yes," he said, "that was night before last. What the speaker dwelt upon last night was the subject of democracy. At present we know nothing of true democracy, of true equality. Society is divided into classes with separate codes of morals and standards of conduct. There are rich and poor; workers and idlers; meat eaters and vegetarians; the old and the young; the literate, the

[Pg 123]

illiterate, and the advocates of simplified spelling. It isn't a world at all; it is chaos. In the end it all resolves itself into this: humanity is divided into the strong and the weak. The surest way to do away with inequality is to produce a race in which every member is strong."

"You mean—" I said.

"Pardon me," he said. "I haven't finished. Let me sum up the speaker's concluding sentence as I recall it. As we look around us to-day there is unmistakably one force which works for the elimination of that inequality which is the source of all our troubles; a force which wipes out all distinction of class, of age, and of education, and produces a world in which everybody is engaged in doing the same thing as everybody else."

"Oh, I see," I said. "You are now speaking of the tango."

"Not at all," he said, "I am referring to eugenics. But perhaps you do not agree with me?"

[Pg 124]

I hesitated. He was watching me eagerly, pushing his derby back until it stood upright on its tail like a trained seal.

"I have done my best to agree with you," I said, "but you have made it rather difficult for me. Nevertheless I do agree with you. What I am thinking of now is something which the speaker last night omitted to mention—or was it the night before last? And it is this. Under the conditions which you describe, how beautifully complex the art of thinking will become. At present we can hardly be said to think at all. We are cowards. We crawl along from one truth to another. We timidly look back to our premises before jumping at the conclusion. We are horrified by inconsistencies. We are enslaved by facts—facts of nature, facts of human nature, facts of experience. How different it will all be when we can sidestep facts, when we can dip over inconsistencies, when we can hug boldly an apparent contradiction and make it our own; when thinking, in short, will not be a timid regulated process, but a succession of dips, twists, gallops, slides, bends, hurdles, sprints, and pole vaults."

[Pg 125]

"You are thinking of the tango?" he said.

"No," I replied. "I had eugenics in mind."

XV

[Pg 126]

HAROLD'S SOUL, II

You, mothers and fathers [said this particular advertising folder which I found in my morning's mail], do you know what goes on in the soul of your child?

I, for one, know very little of what goes on inside of Harold. My information on the subject would hardly furnish material for a single university extension lecture on child psychology. It is an imperfect, unsystematised knowledge based on accidental glimpses into Harold's soul, odd flashes of self-revelation, and occasional questions the boy will put to me. I don't know whether Harold is more reticent than the average boy in the second elementary grade, but in his case it does no good to cross-examine. He grows confused, suspicious, and afraid. He resents the intrusion of my rough fingers into his sensitive world of ideas. So I do not insist on detailed accounts of how the boy passes his time in class or at play; for what are time and space and grammatical sequence to the child? I am content to wait, and now and then I make discoveries.

[Pg 127]

Harold and I were discussing one day the rather important question, raised by himself, from what height a man must fall down in order to be killed. It began, I think, with umbrellas and how they behave in a high wind. From that we passed on to parachutes and balloons and the loftier mountain tops. We dwelt for some time upon the difficulties and dangers of mountaineering.

"Once there was a man," said Harold, "who used to drive six mules up a mountain."

"Six mules," I said. "How do you know?"

"A bishop told me," he said.

The sense of utter helplessness before the closed temple of Harold's private life oppressed me. Let alone his soul, I found that I did not even know how the boy was spending his time and who his associates were. Fortunately, in this case it was a bishop; but it might have been some one much worse.

[Pg 128]

And why had Harold never spoken of his friend the bishop until our talk of parachutes and mountain climbing brought forth his perfectly matter-of-fact statement? Was it indifference on Harold's part? Was it studied reticence? I thought with a pang of self-accusation how I would have behaved, after meeting a bishop; how I would have turned the conversation at the dinner-table to the declining influence of the Church; how I would have found a way of comparing the Woolworth Building with ecclesiastical architecture; how I might have steered a course from golf to bridge and from bridge to chess; always ending with a careless allusion to what the bishop said when we met.

There was, as it turned out, a simple explanation for Harold's statement. A notable conclave of bishops and laymen had been in session for some days in our neighbourhood, and one of the visiting dignitaries had addressed the school children at the opening exercises one morning. I say

[Pg 129]

the explanation is simple, though it is largely my own hypothesis based on Harold's words as I have given them above; but I believe my supposition to be true. With regard to the six mules up a steep mountain I am not so sure; but probably it was a missionary bishop who entertained the children with an account of his experiences in Montana or British Columbia. What else the bishop told them Harold could not say. He admitted, regretfully, that the bishop used long words.

But I am not at all certain that other bits of information from that ecclesiastical speech have not lodged in Harold's memory, to be brought forward on some utterly unexpected but quite appropriate occasion. In the meanwhile I can only think that it must be a very fine sort of bishop, indeed, who could find time for an audience of school children and was not afraid to use long words in their presence. As I can testify, the encounter thus brought about did Harold good; and I am inclined to think that it did the bishop good.

[Pg 130]

We finally decided that no man could fall from a height over one hundred and fifty feet and reasonably expect to live.

You, mothers and fathers [this advertising folder petulantly insists], can you appease the wonder that looks out of the eyes of your child?

From Harold's eyes, I am inclined to think, no wondering soul looks out. The world to him is quite as it should be. Everything fits into its place. Harold does not think it strange that a bishop should address him any more than he would think it strange to have the Kaiser walk into the class-room and begin to do sums on the blackboard. Why should there be anything to puzzle him? He has learned no rules of life and is, therefore, in no position to be astonished by the exceptions of life. If only you are unaware that two things cannot be in the same place at the same time, or that the whole is greater than any of its parts, the world becomes a very easy thing to explain. To Harold everything that is, is. Everything that appears to be, is. Everything that he would like to be, is; and nothing contradicts anything.

[Pg 131]

It is true that Harold asks questions. But I believe he asks questions not because he wonders, but because he suspects that he is being deprived of something that should be his. It is that partly and partly it is the desire to make conversation. He insists on having his privacy respected, but often he appears to be seized with an utter sense of loneliness. All children experience this recurrent necessity of clinging to some one, and they do so by putting questions the answers to which frequently do not interest them or else are already known to them. To postpone the bedtime hour a child will try to make conversation as desperately as any fashionable hostess with an uncle from the country in her drawing-room. Children rarely deceive themselves, but they are expert at the game of hoodwinking and concealment. I think we find it difficult to understand how passionately they desire to be let alone whenever they do not need us.

[Pg 132]

And how desperately bent we are upon not letting them alone! The number of ways in which I am constantly being urged to make myself a nuisance to Harold is extraordinary. I am assailed by advertising folders, uplift articles in the magazines, Sunday specials, Chautauqua lectures, pedagogical reviews, and the voice of conscience in my own breast, to inflict myself upon the boy, to win his confidence, make him my comrade, guide his thoughts, shape his moral development, keep a diary of his pregnant utterances, and in every other way that may occur to a fertile mind bent on mischief, peer into him, pry into him, spy on him, spring little psychological traps under him—a disgusting process of infant vivisection which has no other excuse than our own vacant curiosity. Provided Harold digests his food, sleeps well, does his lessons, and abstains from unclean speech, it is no business of mine what Harold is doing with his soul. I am thankful for what he consents to reveal at odd moments. I guess at what I can guess and am content to wait.

[Pg 133]

And waiting, I have my reward—occasionally. Not until several weeks after I had discovered that Harold had the entrée into ecclesiastical circles did the subject come up again. The boy paused between two spoonfuls of cereal and asked me whether a bishop would not find it easier to go up a mountain in an aeroplane. I foolishly asked him what he was driving at and he grew shy. I am afraid he now thinks bishops are not proper.

But who shall say that the connection between high altitudes and the episcopal dignity is not really an important one? Harold is apparently occupied with the question and I shall take care not to disturb him.

XVI

[Pg 134]

RHETORIC 21

Every time I happen to turn to the Gettysburg Address I am saddened to find that, after many years of practice, my own literary style is still strikingly inferior to that of Lincoln at his best. The fact was first brought home to me during my sophomore year.

(Incidentally I would remark that the opportunities for consulting the Gettysburg Address occur frequently in a newspaper office. Every little while, in the lull between editions, a difference of opinion will arise as to what Lincoln said at Gettysburg. Some maintain that he said, "a government of the people, for the people, by the people"; some declare he said, "a government by the people, of the people, for the people"; some assert that he said, "a government by the people, for the people, of the people." Obviously the only way out is to make a pool and look up Nicolay

[Pg 135]

and Hay. When we are not betting on Lincoln's famous phrase, we differ as to whether the first words in Cæsar are "Gallia omnis est divisa," or "Omnis Gallia est divisa," or "Omnis Gallia divisa est." We all remember the "partes tres.")

In my sophomore year we used to write daily themes. We were then at the beginning of the revolt from the stilted essay to the realistic form of undergraduate style. Instead of writing about what we had read in De Quincey or Matthew Arnold, we were asked to write about what we had seen on the Elevated or on the campus. I presume this literary method has triumphed in all the colleges, just as I know that the new school of college oratory has quite displaced the old. Instead of arguing whether Greece had done more for civilisation than Rome, sophomores now debate the question, "Resolved, that the issue of 4½ per cent. convertible State bonds is unjustified by prevailing conditions in the European money market." So with our daily themes. We did not write about patriotism or Shakespeare's use of contrast. We wrote about football, about the management of the lunch-room, about the need of more call-boys in the library.

[Pg 136]

The underlying idea was sensible enough. But it was disheartening to have a daily theme come back drenched in red ink to show where one's prose rhythm had broken down or the relative pronouns had run too thick. Our instructors were good men. They did not content themselves with pointing out our sins against style; they would show us how much more skilfully the English language could be used. When I wrote: "That the new improvements that have been made in the new gymnasium that has just been inaugurated are all that are necessary," my instructor would pick up the Gettysburg Address and read out aloud: "But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground." Sometimes he would pick up the Bible and read out aloud:

For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

[Pg 137]

With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves.

Sometimes he would read from Keats's "Grecian Urn," or ask me, by implication, why I could not frame a concrete image like "Look'd at each other with a wild surmise, Silent upon a peak in Darien."

Even then I laboured under a sense of injustice. I could not help thinking that the comparison would have been more fair if I had had a chance to speak at Gettysburg and Abraham Lincoln had had to write about the new gymnasium. I thought how the red ink would have splashed if I had ended a sentence with a comma like Job, or had said "kings and counsellors which." Are there still sophomores whom they drill in writing about the prospects of the hockey team and to whom they read "The Fall of the House of Usher," as an example of what can be done with the English language? And do some of them do what some of us, in desperation, used to do? We cheated. We worked ourselves up into ecstasies of false emotion over the hockey team or pretended to see things in Central Park which we never saw. I always think of Central Park with bitterness. We were to write a description of what we saw as we stood on the Belvedere looking north. I wrote a faithful catalogue of what I saw, and the instructor picked up "Les Misérables" and read me the story of the last charge over the sunken road at Waterloo. I should have done what one of the other men did. He never went to Central Park. He stayed at home and, looking straight north from the Belvedere, he saw the sun setting in the west, and Mr. Carnegie's new mansion to the east, and the towers of St. Patrick directly behind him. He saw it all so vividly, so harmoniously, that they marked him A. I got C+. Is it any wonder that I cannot even now read the Gettysburg Address without a twinge of resentment?

[Pg 138]

And yet we were fortunate in one way. In those days they read the Gettysburg Address to us as a model, and in spite of our resentment our sophomore hearts caught the glory and the awe of it. But in those days the art of text-book writing had not attained its present perfection, and the Gettysburg Address had not yet been edited as a classic with twenty pages of introduction and I don't know how many foot-notes. Am I wrong in supposing that somewhere in the high schools or the colleges this is what the young soul finds in the Gettysburg Address?:

[Pg 139]

Fourscore and seven years^[1] ago our fathers^[2] brought forth on this continent^[3] a new nation,^[4] conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition^[5] that all men are created equal.^[6] Now we are engaged in a great civil war,^[7] testing whether that nation,^[8] or any nation so conceived and so dedicated,^[9] can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield^[10] of that war.

XVII

[Pg 140]

[Pg 141]

REAL PEOPLE

Among the most remarkable people I have never met is the family that had just moved out of the apartment we were going to rent. My knowledge of those strangers is based entirely on odd bits of information casually furnished by the renting-agent in the course of a single interview. Yet they are more actual and alive to me than many people with whom I have lived in intimate communion for years. Is it our fate ever to meet? I look forward to the event and dread it. I look

forward with eagerness to a new sensation, and I fear lest the reality fall short of the vivid image I have built up with the help of the renting-agent.

In the matter of picking out an apartment, it is an invariable rule that I shall inspect the place and decide whether I like it. This I do after Emmeline has paid down a month's rent and selected the wall-paper. On questions of such nature, Emmeline is the Balkan States and I am the European Concert. She creates a *status quo* and I ratify. In the present instance, however, I was really given a free hand. Emmeline admitted she was suffering from headache when she told the renting-agent that she rather liked the place. Later she recognised that the rooms were altogether too small. What had swayed her judgment was that the bedrooms had the sun in the morning and we should thus be saving on our doctor's bills. In this respect expensive apartments are like high-powered motor cars and a long summer vacation on the St. Lawrence. They may be all easily paid for by cutting in two the doctor's annual bills amounting to ninety-odd dollars. However, I understood that this time Emmeline would be glad to be overruled.

[Pg 142]

The European Concert had its first shock when it was confronted with the size of the nursery bedroom. The renting-agent called my attention to the wall-paper. It had a very pretty border, showing scenes from "Mother Goose"; this at once revealed the purpose for which the room was intended. But I pointed out to him that if we put a chest of drawers against the wall and a little armchair in the corner, the crib would come hard against the steam pipe and would project halfway across the window.

[Pg 143]

"Oh," he said, looking up in surprise. "There's a crib?"

"Naturally," I said, "we should want this nursery for the baby."

This did not seem to strike him as altogether unreasonable, but he was puzzled nevertheless.

"You see," he explained, "the people who were here before you had a music-box."

When a renting-agent discerns signs of disappointment in a prospective tenant he immediately calls his attention to the shower. The agent's face as he ushered me into the bath-room and pointed to the shower was irradiated by a smile of ecstatic beatitude. He reminded me of Mme. Nazimova when she waits for the Master Builder to tumble from the church tower.

[Pg 144]

"Does the shower work?" I asked.

"Why, of course it does," he said.

"That is very interesting," I said. "Most of them either drip or else the hot water comes down all at once. I don't suppose you have to keep away to one side and thrust your finger forward timidly before you venture under the shower?"

"Not at all," he said. "This has splendid pressure. Just turn it on for yourself."

I did as I was told, and after he had finished drying himself with his handkerchief he asked me whether this wasn't one of the best showers I had ever come across. I agreed, and he then told me that the very latest ideas in modern bath-room construction had been utilised by the architect. As for the people who had just moved out, they were so delighted with the shower that they spent the greater part of the day in the tub, often doing their reading there.

On our way towards the library and living-room he called my attention to the air in the hall. He said that if there was any breeze stirring anywhere we were sure to get it in that particular apartment. This puzzled me, because he had told Emmeline the same thing about another apartment which she had inspected and which faces south and west, while this one faces north and east. Suppose now a good northeast breeze— But we were now in the main bedroom and he was asking me to take notice of a small iron safe let into the wall at the height of one's head.

[Pg 145]

"This," he said, "is extremely useful for jewels and old silver. You don't find it in every apartment house, I assure you."

"That *is* convenient," I said, and looked out of the window, "and of course one could keep other valuables in there, too, like bonds and mortgages and such things."

"A great many people do," he said.

We passed another bedroom which was so small that even the agent looked apologetic. He said it was the maid's room, but that the people who had just moved out had a woman come in by the day and used the chamber as a store-room. He supposed we should prefer to have our maid sleep in the house.

[Pg 146]

"We do," I said, "but then we might get a short maid. The Finns, for example, are a notoriously chunky race and attain their full height at an early age. Let us look at the library."

I did not like the room at all. It faced north and looked out upon the rear of a tall building only thirty feet away. I asked him if the light was always as bleak as it was to-day.

"You get all the light you want in here," he said. "Lots of people, you know, object to the sun. It's hard on the eyes. The people who had this apartment always kept the window shades down. It made the room so cosy."

I shook my head. The dimensions of the room were quite disappointing. It was not only small, but there was little wall space, because the architect had provided no less than three doorways which were supposed to be covered with portières. I presume that architects find open doorways much easier to plan than any other part of a room.

[Pg 147]

He was surprised at my objections. There was plenty of space, he thought. As libraries go it was

one of the largest he had seen. Here you put an armchair, and here you put a small, compact writing-desk, and you had plenty of floor space in the middle for a small table.

"And the bookcases?" I asked.

He looked downcast.

"You have bookcases?" he said.

"We have six."

He was about to say something, but I anticipated him.

"I know, of course," I said, "that the people who lived here before used to keep their books in the kitchen, but I hardly see how we could manage that. It's too much trouble, and besides I am somewhat absent-minded. It would be absurd if I should walk into the kitchen for a copy of 'Man and Superman,' and come back with half a grapefruit on a plate. And, furthermore, I like a library where a man can get up occasionally from his writing-table and pace up and down while he is clarifying his ideas. You couldn't do that here."

[Pg 148]

"There is a nice, long hall," he said. "You might pace up and down that." But he saw I was unconvinced, and he did not go to much pains in exhibiting the dining-room, merely remarking that it did look rather small, but the people who last lived in the apartment were accustomed to go out for their meals.

You will see now why I am so intensely interested in the tenants whose successors we were on the point of being. With life growing more flat and monotonous about us, how refreshing to come across a family which keeps a music-box in the nursery, does its reading in the bath-tub, and never eats in the dining-room. Is it studied originality on their part or are they born rebels? And how far does their eccentricity go? Does the head of the house, when setting out for his office in the morning, walk upstairs? Do they walk downstairs when they wish to go to bed?

[Pg 149]

I am still to meet these highly original citizens of New York, but their numbers must be increasing. Every year I hear of more and more former tenants who prefer dark rooms and libraries without shelf space. I have never asked the renting-agent why, being so contented with their surroundings, his tenants should have moved out. But probably it is because they have found an apartment where the rooms are still smaller and the windows have no sun at all.

XVIII

[Pg 150]

DIFFERENT

Constantly I am being invited, through the mails or the advertising columns, to buy something because it is different. Such appeals are wasted upon me. In the realm of ideas, I am as radical as the best of them, in many ways. But when it comes to shopping I am afraid of change.

The advertising writer is the most unoriginal creature imaginable. He is more imitative than a theatre manager on Broadway. He is more imitative than the revolutionaries of art, the Impressionist who imitates the Romanticist, the Post-Impressionist who imitates the Impressionist, the Cubist who imitates the Post-Impressionist, the Futurist who imitates the Cubist, and the Parisian dressmaker who imitates the Futurist. When a happy word or phrase or symbol is let loose in the advertising world, it is caught up, and repeated, and chanted, and echoed, until the sound and sight of it become a torture. How long ago is it since every merchantable product of man's ingenuity from automobiles to xylophones was being dedicated to "his majesty the American citizen"? How long is it since every item in the magazine pages was something ending in ly, "supremely" good, or "potently" attractive, or "permanently" satisfying, or in any other conceivable phrase, adverbially so? To-day the mail-order lists are crammed with commodities that are different. Oh, jaded American appetite that refuses to accept a two-for-a-quarter Troy collar unless it is different!

[Pg 151]

Now the truth that must be apparent to any man who will only think for a moment—and by all accounts your advertising writer is always engaged in a hellish fury of cerebration—is that there are a great many commodities whose value depends on the very fact that they shall not be different, but the same. If I were engaged in the business of publicity, I cannot imagine myself writing, "Try our eggs—they are different." I should also hesitate to write, "Sample our lifeboats, they are different; try them and you will use no other." If I were working for the gas company I should never think of saying, "Come in and look at our gas metres, they are different." It requires little effort to draw up a list of marketable goods, services, and utilities for which it would be no recommendation at all to say that they are different. Thus:

[Pg 152]

Railway time tables.

Photographs.

Grocers' scales.

Complexions.

Affidavits, and especially statements made in swearing off personal property tax assessments.

Clocks.

Individual shoes of a pair.

The multiplication table.

The Yosemite Valley.

In every instance it would manifestly be absurd to try to prove that the object in question is anything but what we have always known it to be or expected it to be. [Pg 153]

On the other hand, there is a great class of commodities which one would never think of taking seriously unless we were assured that they are different from what we have always found them to be. If some ingenious inventor could really put on the market a Tammany Hall that was different, or a hair tonic that was different, or something different in the way of

Hat plumes (guaranteed not to tickle).

[Pg 154]

Musical comedy.

Rag-time.

Domestic help.

Book-reviews.

Winter temperature at Palm Beach (as compared with temperature in New York city).

Remarks on the weather.

Mr. Carnegie's speeches.

Remarks on Maude Adams.

Epigrams about women.

Epigrams about love.

Epigrams about money.

Epigrams.

Food prices.

Florence Barclay.

Golf drivers (guaranteed not to slice).

Brassies (guaranteed not to top).

Mid-irons (guaranteed not to cut).

Advertising.

And countless other things which every one can imagine being different in a better-organised world than ours.

But does your advertising expert recognise the distinction between things which must under no consideration be different and things which must be made different if they are to find acceptance? Not in the least. In season and out he sounds his poor little catch-word, and frightens away as many customers as he attracts. Under such circumstances one can only wonder why advertising should continue to be the best-paid branch of American literature. Of what use are the Science of Advertising, the Psychology of Advertising, the Dynamics of Advertising, the Ethics of Advertising, the Phonetics of Advertising, the Strategy and Tactics and Small-Fire Manuals of Advertising—on all of which subjects I have perused countless volumes—if all this theoretical study will not teach a man that it is appropriate to say: "Try our latest Hall Caine, it is different," and quite out of place to say, "Try our quart measures, they are different"? [Pg 155]

Between the things that must never be different and the things that ought never to be the same, there is a vast class of commodities which may be the same or may be different according to choice. Linen collars, musical machines, newspapers, ignition systems, interior decoration—it is evident that some people may like them the same and some people may like them different. My own inclinations, as I have intimated, are toward the same, but my sympathies are with those who want things different. The argument advanced by the advertiser in behalf of his latest three-button, long-hipped, university sack with rolling collar, that it is different and that it radiates my individuality, leaves me cold. I am not moved by the plea that the rolling-collar effect is so different that a quarter-million suits of that model have already been sold west of the Alleghanias. I remain indifferent on being told that the three-button effect would radiate my individuality even as it is radiating the individuality of ten thousand citizens of Spokane. When it is a choice between wearing unindividual clothes of my own or being different with a hundred thousand others, I suppose I must be classed as a reactionary and a fossil. [Pg 156]

XIX

[Pg 157]

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The approaching end of another college year gives peculiar timeliness to the following account of a recent meeting of the Supercollegiate Committee on Entrance Examinations. For the details of the story I am indebted to the able and conscientious correspondent of the Disassociated Press at Nottingham. The discerning reader will have no difficulty in identifying the persons mentioned. Professor Münsterberg is, of course, Professor Münsterberg. Professor Lounsbury is Professor Lounsbury. Professor Hart is Professor Albert Bushnell Hart. Dr. Woods Hutchinson is Dr. Woods Hutchinson.

Professor Münsterberg: The meeting will please come to order. We are now in the first week of October. This fact, which the average citizen has probably accepted without question, has been [Pg 158]

amply confirmed in an elaborate series of laboratory tests carried on by means of white and yellow cards and rapidly revolving disks. Thus we are prepared to discuss once more the highly interesting question, why the vast majority of freshmen cannot spell. Neither can they write their native tongue in accordance with the rules of grammar.

Professor Lounsbury: Aw, gee! Why should they? Look at Chaucer, Milton, and Browning. The fiercest bunch of little spellers you ever saw. And their grammar is simply rotten. They didn't care a red cent for the grammarians. When they saw a word or a phrase they liked they went to it. If the grammarians didn't agree with them it was up to the grammarians. Chaucer should worry.

Dr. Hutchinson: Quite right.

Professor Lounsbury: The question is this: Are freshmen made for the English language or is language made for freshmen? Language is like a human being; change does it good. Stick to your Lindley Murray and it's a cinch your little old English tongue will be a dead one in fifty years.

[Pg 159]

Dr. Hutchinson: I agree with Professor Lounsbury, speaking from the standpoint of physiology. Constant use of a plural verb with a plural subject plays the deuce with the larynx. You know what the larynx is, gentlemen. It's the rubber disk in the human Victrola. Drop the pin on the rubber disk and the record will grind out the same formula, again and again. Keep it up long enough and the record wears out. That's the larynx under the operation of grammatical rules. It gets the habit, and the first law of health is to avoid all habits. What you want to do is to shake up the larynx by feeding it with new forms of expression. When a man says "I done it," it imparts a healthy jolt to the delicate muscles of the throat, limbers up his aorta and his diaphragm, and reconciles him with his digestion. This is the opinion of eminent physiologists, like Drinckheimer of Leipzig.

Professor Lounsbury: Whom did you say the man is?

[Pg 160]

Dr. Hutchinson: Drinckheimer, professor at Leipzig. He doesn't write for the magazines.

Professor Lounsbury: Then you agree with me that when a man has something to say he will say it?

Professor Münsterberg: We have an excellent illustration on this point in a history paper submitted in the last entrance examinations. In reply to the question, "Name the first two Presidents of the United States," one candidate wrote, "The first pressident was Gorge Washington; his predeceassor was Alexander Hamilton." Observe the extraordinary psychological correlation between thought and expression in such a reply.

Professor Hart: I don't think the young man was guilty of an injustice with regard to Alexander Hamilton. You will recall that Hamilton was one of the principal founders of the system of privilege which has produced, in our own day, Lorimerism and the purchase of Southern delegates. If it had not been for Hamilton and his crowd we should not now be compelled to wage a campaign for social justice and I should not be under the necessity of writing Bull Moose history for *Collier's*.

[Pg 161]

Dr. Hutchinson: But getting back to the real point of our inquiry, whether the failure to spell and write correctly is a sign of mental feebleness—

Professor Münsterberg: On that point I believe I can speak with authority. Psychological tests in the laboratory show that the average freshman is as quick-witted to-day as his predecessor of fifty or a hundred years ago. We examined three hundred first-year men from eleven colleges and universities. Each man was required to peep into a dark box, shaped like a camera, through an eye-hole sixteen millimetres in diameter. By pressing a button, light was flashed upon a slip of paper inside the box, on which was printed, in letters nine millimetres high, the following question: "What is your favourite breakfast food?" The candidate was required to signify his answer by tapping with his finger on the table, one tap for Farinetta, two taps for Dried Husks, three taps for Atlas Crumbs, and so forth. The average time for three hundred answers was six and seven-tenths seconds. Thereupon the candidates were asked to think over the question at their leisure and to hand in a written answer sworn to before a notary public. On comparing the written answers with the laboratory results, it appeared that only thirty-seven out of the three hundred had tapped the wrong answer. Need I say more?

[Pg 162]

Professor Lounsbury: May I ask how the written answers showed up from the point of view of spelling and grammar?

Professor Münsterberg: They were impressively defective.

Professor Lounsbury: I'm tickled to death. When you cut out bad spelling and grammar, you queer the evolution of the English language. There's nothing to it.

Professor Münsterberg: But take the case of the freshman squad whom we kept in a hermetically sealed room for twenty-four hours at a temperature of eighty-nine degrees—

[Pg 163]

Professor Lounsbury: May I ask what their language was when they were released at the end of twenty-four hours?

Professor Münsterberg: Truth compels me to say it was something awful.

Professor Lounsbury: But how about the grammar?

Professor Münsterberg: There was no grammar to speak of. They used mostly interjections.

Dr. Hutchinson: Finest thing in the world, interjections. Good for the lungs and the heart. Rapid

process of inhalation and expulsion keeps the bellows in prime order. That's all a man is, gentlemen, a bellows on a pair of stilts driven by a hydraulic pump. If the bellows holds out under sudden strain, that's all you want. That's why I like to hear people swear. It's good for the wind. Next time you walk down a step too many in the dark or lose your hat under a motor truck, don't hold yourself back. It's the way nature is safeguarding you against asthma.

[Pg 164]

Professor Münsterberg: Then it is the consensus of opinion here that the psychological and cultural status of our college freshmen is everything it ought to be?

Professor Hart: I'd rather take the opinion of a roomful of freshmen on any subject than the opinion of the United States Supreme Court. They don't know anything about American history, but it's the kind of history that isn't worth knowing. I prefer them to know things as they ought to have been rather than as they were before the Progressive party was born. Whatever is worth preserving from the past, including the Decalogue, will be found in the Bull Moose platform. We don't want examination papers. We want social justice.

Professor Lounsbury: Between you and I, the English language won't get what's coming to it until all entrance examinations have been chucked into the discard.

Dr. Hutchinson: Spelling is demonstrably bad for the muscles of the chest and the abdomen.

[Pg 165]

Professor Lounsbury: You've said it.

XX

[Pg 166]

THE HEAVENLY MAID

As the familiar sound fell upon our ears, we walked to the window, drew aside the curtains, and shamelessly stared into the windows of the apartment across the court. That usually quiet home had been in evident agitation all that afternoon. There was the noise of hurrying feet. Excited voices broke out now and then. Twice a woman scolded and we distinctly heard a child cry. Now the mystery was explained.

"The new Orpheola has come," said Emmeline. "I wonder how late they will keep it up the first night."

In the apartment across the way the family was gathered in a reverent circle about the new talking-machine, and we heard the opening strains of the "Song to the Evening Star."

"Have you ever thought," I said to Emmeline, "how infinitely superior the music of Wagner is to that of any other composer, in its immunity against influenza? The German Empire, you know, has a moist climate, and the magician of Bayreuth recognised that he must write primarily for a nation that is extremely subject to cold in the head. It was different with the Italian composers. Bronchial troubles are virtually unknown in Italy. When Verdi wrote, he failed to make allowance for a sudden attack of the grippe. That is why when Caruso catches cold they must change the bill at the Metropolitan. But if a Wagnerian tenor loses his voice, the papers say the next morning, 'Herr Donner sang Tristan last night with extraordinary intelligence.' Sometimes Herr Donner sings with extraordinary intelligence; sometimes he sings with marvellous histrionic power; sometimes he sings with an earnest vigour amounting to frenzy. Wagner, who foresaw everything, foresaw the disastrous effect of steam-heated rooms on the delicate organs of the throat. So he developed a music form in which the use of the throat is not always essential."

[Pg 167]

"I know," said Emmeline, "that you'd much rather listen to the la-la, la-la-la-la-lah from Traviata."

"I'd much rather listen to Traviata," I said, losing my temper, "than strive painfully to be electrified by the 'Ho-yo-to-ho' of eight Valkyrie maidens averaging one hundred and seventy-five pounds and leaping from crag to crag at a speed of two miles an hour."

[Pg 168]

When a man first acquires an Orpheola, he loses interest in his business. He leaves for home early and bolts his dinner. The first night he sits down before the machine from 6:30 to 11, and with a rapt expression on his face he runs off every record in his collection twice. No one but himself is permitted to return the precious rubber disk to its envelope. Later in the week the eldest child, as a reward of good behaviour, may be allowed to adjust the record on the revolving base and to pull the starting lever, while mother watches anxiously from the dining-room. At intervals grandma puts her head in at the door to make sure that the proper needle has been inserted. The modern musical cabinet does not eliminate the personal factor. People can put all of their individuality into the music by choosing between a fine needle and one with a blunt point. Persons of temperament are particular about the speed at which the disk revolves. When a man is in high spirits he picks out a sharp needle and winds the spring up tight. Pessimists do just the opposite. It is imperative to keep the fine, steel points out of the baby's reach because irreparable

[Pg 169]

harm might thereby be done to the record.

"Of course," said Emmeline, "I can see why you should be so greatly attracted by the Italian ting-a-ling stuff. It's the result of your journalistic training. It's the most superficial business there is. Everything in a newspaper must be perfectly obvious at the first glance, and there's nothing like a jingle to fetch the crowd. After a while a man gets to be like the people he writes for." [Pg 170]

I had been called to the telephone and Emmeline had made use of the interval to build up her little argument. It was unfair, but I generously refrained from saying so. Besides, I, too, had not been idle while I waited for Central to restore the connection.

"I am not denying," I said, "that Wagner gets his effects, if you give him time enough. But how does he do it? By wearing you out and knocking you down and running away with you. That was the way, you will recall, the old Teutonic gods and heroes used to make love. When a Germanic warrior was attacked with the fatal passion, he would seize the well-beloved by the hair, throw her over his shoulder and ride away with her. It was different with Puccini's countrymen. In their hands a mandolin on a moonlit night under a balcony melted away all opposition. After half an hour of solid Wagnerian brasswork you surrender; but only the way Adrianople surrendered." [Pg 171]

"That, too, was the case with the early Teutonic ladies. Their masters did not always woo with a club. Now and then they interjected little bits of kindness which were appreciated because they were so rare. That is Wagner again. Every little while he throws you a kind word, a snatch of golden melody that Verdi himself might have written, and, as a matter of fact, did write all the time. With the master of Bayreuth these little rifts in the clouds are doubly welcome. They shine out like a good deed on a dark night."

"How any one can listen to the last act of Tristan without feeling all the sorrow of the universe, I cannot understand," said Emmeline. "Do you mean to say that the Liebestod does not really carry you out of yourself?"

"It does not," I said. "But when Gadske in Aïda turns to the wicked Amneris and sings 'Tu sei felice,' something in me begins to give way." [Pg 172]

"It is probably your intellect," said Emmeline.

One popular error with regard to talking-machines is that they have solved the hitherto irreconcilable conflict between music on the one hand and bridge and conversation on the other. At first sight it may seem that the religious silence which one must maintain while some one is singing—it may be the hostess herself—is no longer compulsory. You cannot hurt the feelings of a mahogany cabinet three feet high. If the worst happens, you can wind up the machine and start all over again. But actually the situation is very much what it was before. I myself, on one occasion when Tetrizzini was singing from Lucia, ventured to lean over to my neighbour and whisper a word or two. Whereupon there came across the face of my host, brooding fondly over the machine, a look of pain such as I never want to bring to any face again. As it happened, it was the man's favourite record. On the other hand, people who play cards tell me that as between a living tenor and Caruso on the machine there is not much to choose. Both are a hindrance to the correct leading of trumps. [Pg 173]

"Besides," I said, "any number of Wagnerians will tell you that the music dramas in their unabridged form are much too long. You will recall that Wagner himself said that many of his scores would benefit by generous cutting. A great many eminent conductors have made a specialty of cutting things out of Tristan. This serves a double purpose. It permits the development of a class of post-graduate Wagnerians who can take the whole opera without flinching, and it enables people to catch the 11:45 for Montclair. Somewhere I have come across a story of two great conductors who had charge of rival orchestras in one of the principal cities of Europe. One man, when he conducted the Ring, was in the habit of cutting out the first half of every act. The other man played the first half, but omitted the second half of every act. For many years there was a bitter controversy as to which of the two conductors best brought out the real meaning of the composer." [Pg 174]

"I don't think it is a very good story," said Emmeline, walking to the window and closing it; for our neighbour's machine had switched without warning from the Ride of the Valkyrs to Alexander's Band. "It's a poor story and I am inclined to think you made it up yourself."

"As for that," I said, "that is just what Wagner did with his music."

When you overhear a man in the subway say to his neighbour, "Mine are all twelve-inch, reversible, and go equally well on low or high speed," you will know that the new Orpheola came home last week. Next week the children will be allowed to handle the records without special

injunctions regarding the proper needle. The week after that, the baby will be allowed to approach quite near and hear Mother Goose come out of the mahogany toy. Within a month the master of the house will be looking for his hat in the cabinet. The intolerable air of superiority and aloofness with which he has been greeting you will disappear.

[Pg 175]

XXI

[Pg 176]

SHEATH-GOWNS

From Emmeline I learned that I had been doing the fashion designers an injustice. I had always imagined that styles were the creation of Parisian dressmakers who worked with only two ends in view—novelty and discomfort. But Emmeline assured me that styles are a faithful record of the march of civilisation. When the Manchurian War was under way, everything in the shops was Russian. When Herr Strauss produced "Salome," half the world went in for the slim and viperous costume. The revolution in Persia worked a revolution in blouse decoration. Later everything was Bulgarian.

"In that case," I said, "those poor fellows at Adrianople have not died in vain. Under a rain of shot and shell I can hear the Bulgarian officers rallying their men: 'Forward, my children! The eyes of Fifth Avenue are upon you! Fix bayonets! For King, for country, and for Paquin!' The Turks, being a backward millinery nation, naturally had no chance."

[Pg 177]

"What you say is extremely amusing, of course," remarked Emmeline. "But I seem to remember an old suit of yours. It was about the time of the Boer War. The coat was cut like an hour glass and there was cotton wadding in the shoulders so that you had to enter a room sideways. The trousers were Zouave. Yes, it must have been about the time of the Boer War or the war with Spain."

"That was just when the feminist movement was beginning to shape our ideals," I retorted.

Not only do the styles symbolise the process of historic evolution—I distinctly recall toilets on Fifth Avenue which must have commemorated the Messina earthquake and the report of the New York Tenement House Commission—but styles actually follow an evolution of their own. They do not change abruptly, but melt into each other. Thus the costume which Emmeline described as Bulgarian could not have been altogether that. The coat was military enough, with its baggy shoulders and a bold backward sweep of the long skirts. But this coat was worn over a gown that was unmistakably hobble, revealing the persistence of the Salome influence. To call this outfit Bulgarian is to raise the supposition that the Bulgarians hopped to victory at Kirk-Kilisseh.

[Pg 178]

I pointed this out to Emmeline, and at the same time took occasion to protest against the extravagant lengths to which the languorous styles were being carried. It was bad enough, I said, to see elderly matrons arrayed like Oriental dancing girls. But what was worse was to see young girls, mere children, in scant and provocative attire. I thought the law might very well take up the question of a minimum dress for women under the age of eighteen.

"Of course it's disgusting," said Emmeline, "but it's their right."

"I know that youth has many rights," I said, "but I didn't know that the right to make one's self a public nuisance and offence is among them."

[Pg 179]

"What I mean," said Emmeline, "is that we have outgrown the days when young ladies fainted and wives fetched their husbands' slippers. We have broken the shackles of mid-Victorian propriety and are working out a new conception of free womanhood. Our ideas of modesty are changing. You might as well make up your mind to be shocked quite frequently before the process is completed."

"Oh, I see," said I. "Enslaved within the iron circle of the home, crushed by the tyranny of convention, of custom, of man-made laws, woman lifts up her head and declares she will be free by inserting herself into a skirt thirteen inches in diameter. Where's the sense of it?"

"It's all very simple," said Emmeline. "It means that we are having an awful time trying to escape from the degradation into which you have forced us. We struggle forward, and then the habits of the harem civilisation which you have imposed on us assert themselves. Do you think we women love to dress? Every time we try on a pretty gown we know that we are riveting on the chains of our own servitude."

[Pg 180]

"But why make the chains so tight?" I said.

She now turned to face me.

"The reason for the sheath-gown is quite plain," said Emmeline. "Men have always shown such a decided preference for actresses and dancing girls that we others have taken to imitating actresses and dancing girls in self-defence."

"But that isn't so at all," I said. "Look at your trained nurses in their simple white caps and aprons. They are bewitching. It is universally conceded that the most dangerous thing in the world is for an unmarried man to be operated on for appendicitis. That was the way, you'll recall, Adam obtained his wife—after a surgical operation. The case of the hospital nurse alone disposes of your entire argument about our predilection for dancing girls."

[Pg 181]

"That I do not admit," said Emmeline. "It is true that a man finds himself longing for what is simple and wholesome whenever there is something the matter with him."

"When I spoke of the immodesty of present-day fashions," I said, adroitly turning the subject, "I am afraid I gave you the wrong impression. It isn't the viciousness of the thing that I object to, it's the stupid, sheeplike spirit of imitation behind it. If the passion for tight gowns indicated a kind of spiritual development, I shouldn't mind it even if it was development in the wrong direction. There might be an erring soul in the hobble, but still a soul. If the young girl of good family who strives to look like a lady of the chorus did so out of sheer perversity, there would be some comfort. One must think and feel to be perverse. What appals me is the dreadful, unquestioning innocence with which the thing is done. If we males are indeed responsible for what you are, then we have a real burden on our souls. We have done more than degrade you; we have made automata out of you. The little girl behind the soda counter who paints her face and hangs jet spangles from her ears will just as readily comply with fashion by putting on a military cape and boots, or a pony coat, or calico and a sunbonnet, or an admiral's uniform, or a *yashmak*."

[Pg 182]

"A what?" said Emmeline, frowning slightly.

"A *yashmak*," I replied, meeting her gaze steadily. "I use the word with confidence because I have just looked it up in the dictionary. At first I confused it with *sanjak*, which, on examination, turns out to be a district in the Balkan Peninsula bounded on the east by Servia and on the north by Bosnia-Herzegovina. A *yashmak* is the long veil worn by Moslem women to conceal the face and the outlines of the upper part of the body."

"You seem to have prepared pretty thoroughly for this discussion," said Emmeline.

[Pg 183]

"I have always considered it prudent before entering into debate with a woman to have a few facts on my side," I said.

"As if that made any difference," she replied scornfully.

"As to the sheeplike way in which women follow the fashions of the moment," continued Emmeline, "it simply isn't true." I could see she was terribly in earnest now. "There are tens of thousands of women who dress to please themselves; independent, courageous, self-reliant women who face life seriously and rationally. We are going in more and more for loose and comfortable things to wear."

"Not the typical woman of to-day, I assure you."

"Of course not the typical woman," said Emmeline. "Any Exhibition of common-sense by a woman at once makes her a freak. You prefer the other kind for your ideal of the eternal womanly. Take her and welcome. I suppose it is necessary for a man to have something worthless to work for."

[Pg 184]

XXII

[Pg 185]

WITH THE EDITOR'S REGRETS

Talk of post-office-reform brings to my mind a conversation I had with Williams, who is a poet. It was about the time, some two years ago, when a Postmaster-General of the United States proposed the abolition of the second-class mail privilege for magazines.

I knew that Williams hates magazine editors with all the ardour of an unsuccessful poet's soul. Consequently, when he sat down and lighted one of my cigarettes and said that the magazines in their quarrel with the post office had overlooked the strongest argument on their side, I suspected irony. It is Williams's boast that he has one of the largest collections of rejected manuscripts in existence, the greater part being in an absolutely new and unread condition. Placed end to end, Williams once estimated, his unpublished verses would reach from Battery Park to the Hispanic Museum, at Broadway and One Hundred and Fifty-Sixth Street. Every poem in his collection has been declined at least once by every editor in the United States, and many of the longer poems have been declined two or three times by the same editor, and for totally opposite reasons.

[Pg 186]

It is not mere brute persistence on Williams's part that is responsible for this unparalleled literary accumulation. As a matter of fact he is easily discouraged, although, of course, like all poets he has his moments of exaltation. The trouble, he complains, is that with every printed rejection slip there comes a word of sincere encouragement from the editor. The editors are constantly telling Williams that his verse is among the very best that is now being produced, but that a sense of duty to their readers prevents them from printing it. They regret to find his poems unavailable, and earnestly advise him to keep on writing.

"You will recall," said Williams, "the principal point made by the periodical publishers. Conceding that their publications, as second-class mail matter, are carried at a loss, they argue that the post office is more than compensated by the volume of first-class mail sent out in response to magazine advertisements. The argument is sound, as I can testify from personal experience. Not long ago I came across a five-line 'ad' in *agate* which said, 'Are you earning less than you should? Write us.' Well, the question seemed to fit my case and I wrote. That was two cents to the credit of the post office. The post office sold another stamp when I received a reply asking me to send

[Pg 187]

fifty cents in postage for instructions on how to double my income in three months. I was somewhat disappointed. With my income merely doubled I should still find it difficult to pay my landlady, but it was better than nothing. So I sent the fifty cents in stamps. You will recall the half-dollar."

"Oh, don't mention it," I said.

"Well, after a day or two I received in a penny envelope a paper-bound copy of 'How to Succeed,' being a baccalaureate address delivered by the Rev. Josiah K. Pebbles, who showed that honesty, thrift, and perseverance were the secrets underlying the career of Hannibal, Joan of Arc, John D. Rockefeller, and Theodore Roosevelt. So you see, by the time the secret had been conveyed to me the post office had sold stamps to the amount of fifty-five cents. Now assume that there are in the United States between forty and fifty thousand poets and other literary workers who would like to double their income, and it is plain that the United States Government made a very handsome profit on that five-line 'ad.'"

[Pg 188]

"But that is not what I started out to show," said Williams. "What the magazines have omitted to point out is that by rejecting every contribution at least once, the editors are doing more for Uncle Sam's first-class mail business than through their advertising pages. And the difference is this: While there must be a limit to the number of people who will answer an advertisement, there need be no limit to the number of times a manuscript is sent back. I can't see why the publishers and the Postmaster-General should be flying at each other's throat, when there's such a simple solution at hand. It is evident that there is no postal deficit, however large, which cannot be wiped out by a sharp increase in the average number of rejections per manuscript. Editors will only have to augment by, say, fifty per cent. the number of reasons why a contribution of exceptional merit is unavailable. My 'Echoes from Parnassus' was sent back thirty-seven times before it found a publisher. It would have been a simple matter to send the poem back a dozen times more either absolutely or with a word of hearty encouragement."

[Pg 189]

By this time I had made up my mind that it was indeed irony, and I was sorry. I don't mind when Williams gets quite angry and lashes out; but I hate to have a poet laugh at himself.

"Not that I can help feeling sorry for the editor chaps," he went on. "You couldn't help feeling sorry, could you, for a man who has been trained to recognise the very best in literature, and to send it back on the spot? And the more he likes it the quicker he sends it back. Frequently I have been on the point of writing to the man and telling him that if it is really such a wrench to return my poem to please not consider my feelings in the matter, but to go ahead and print it. What saves the editor, I imagine, is that after a while he does learn how to detect some real fault in a contribution which just enables him to send it back without altogether succumbing to grief. Of the fourteen men who rejected my 'Echoes from Parnassus,' one wrote that I reminded him of Milton, but that I lacked solemnity; another wrote that I reminded him of Thomas Bailey Aldrich, but that I was a little too serious; another wrote that my verses had the Swinburnian rush, but were somewhat too fanciful. The editor who accepted the poem wrote that he couldn't quite catch the drift of it, but that he would take a chance on the stuff."

[Pg 190]

Here Williams got up and strode about the room and vowed that no combination of editors could prevent him from continuing to write poetry. "And I never refuse to meet them half way," he said rather inconsequentially. "I went into Smith's office yesterday with a bit of light verse and had him turn it down because it had the 'highbrow touch.' 'My boy,' he said, 'we must give the people what they want. For instance, I was going up to my apartment last night and the negro boy who runs the elevator was quite rude to me; he had been drinking. Now why couldn't you write a series of snappy verses on the troubles of the flat-dweller? This line you're on now won't go at all with my readers; they are not a very intelligent class, you know.' And that's another thing I can't understand: Why should every editor be anxious to prove that his subscribers are a bigger set of donkeys than any other editor in town can claim?"

[Pg 191]

[Pg 192]

"I was fool enough," Williams proceeded, "to reject Smith's suggestion. I should have accepted it. My poet's mission won't feed me. If President Eliot insists it is my mission to write stuff no editor will touch, he doesn't know what he is talking about."

"I don't think it was President Eliot," I said.

"Wasn't it? Say Plato or Carlyle, then. You can't go on for ever slapping us on the back and letting us starve. You have got to back up your highly laudatory statements by purchasing our wares or we shut up shop. We don't ask for champagne and truffles, but we do want a decent measure of substantial appreciation, all of us people with a mission, poets, artists, prophets, women. Now women, here comes Plato or Carlyle and says it is a woman's mission to have at least eight children."

"President Eliot said that," I interposed.

"Oh it *was* President Eliot? Eight children, says he, is her mission. But let me tell you if you take her children and pitch them into the waste basket, if you use them only to fill up your factories, and slums, and reformatories, woman will be chucking that sacred mission of hers through the window before President Eliot can say Jack Robinson. She is doing it now and serve them right. Mission! Rot!"

[Pg 193]

He seized a handful of my cigarettes and went out without saying good-morning.

A MAD WORLD

From an old-fashioned country doctor to an eminent alienist in New York city:

My dear Sir:

I cannot claim the honour of your acquaintance. My name is quite unknown to you. For some thirty years I have been established in this little town, ministering to a district which extends five miles in every direction from my house-door. My practice, varying little from year to year consists largely in prescribing liniments, quinine, camphorated oil, and bicarbonate of soda; and regularly I am summoned, of course, into the presence of the august mysteries of birth and death.

The life, though grateful, is laborious. The opportunities for keeping in touch with the march of events in the great world outside are limited. It has nevertheless been one of the few delights of my restricted leisure to follow your career through the medium of the public press. My own course, as I have shown, lies far from the highly specialised and fascinating field of mental pathology to which you have devoted yourself. But from the distance I have admired the expert skill and the consummate authority which have made you the central figure in an unbroken succession of brilliant criminal trials. I have admired and kept silent. If I have departed from my custom in the present instance, it is only because I feel that your brilliant services in the recent Fletcher embezzlement case ought not, in justice to yourself and to our common profession, to be passed over in silence.

[Pg 195]

Let me recall the principal circumstances of the Fletcher case. The man Fletcher was indicted for appropriating the funds of the trust company of which he was the head. His lawyer pleaded insanity and called upon you to give an account of several examinations you had made of the prisoner's mental condition. You testified that on one occasion you asked the defendant how much two plus two is, and he replied four, thereby revealing the extraordinary cunning with which the insane assume the mask of sanity. You then asked him to enumerate the days of the week in their proper order. This the prisoner did without the least hesitation, thereby supplying a remarkable instance of the unnatural lucidity and precision of thought which, in the case of those suffering from progressive insanity, immediately precede a complete mental eclipse.

[Pg 196]

On the other hand you found that the defendant was unable to recall the name of the clergyman who had married him to his first wife at San Jacinto, Texas, twenty-seven years ago; an unaccountable failure of memory, which could not be passed over as an accident and must be accepted as a symptom of the gravest nature. You cited the prisoner's lavish expenditure on motor-cars and pearl necklaces as evidence of his inability to recognise the value of money; and this in turn clearly indicated a congenital incapacity to recognise values of any kind, whether physical or moral. This contention you drove home by citing the very terms of the indictment, in which it was charged that the prisoner had failed to distinguish between what was his and what was not his—another infallible sign of approaching mental deliquescence.

[Pg 197]

You did not stop with the man Fletcher. You searched his family history and found (1) a great-uncle of the defendant who used to maintain that Mrs. E. D. N. Southworth was a greater genius than George Eliot; (2) a second cousin who dissipated a large fortune by reckless investments in wild-cat mining shares; and (3) a nephew who was accustomed to begin his dinner with the salad and finish with the soup.

At the trial, counsel for defence asked you a hypothetical question. It contained between nine and ten thousand words arranged in two hundred and fifty principal clauses, and nearly a thousand subordinate adjective and adverbial clauses, with no less than eighty-three parentheses and seven asterisks referring to as many elaborate foot-notes. It would have taken a professional grammarian from three to six days to grasp the proper sequence of the clauses. Yet it is on record that within three seconds after the lawyer had finished his question, and while he was still wiping the sweat from his forehead, you answered "Yes." This is all the more curious because I gather from statements in the press that while the question was being propounded to you, you were apparently engaged in jesting with your fellow-experts or nodding cheerfully to friends in different parts of the court-room. Needless to say Fletcher was acquitted.

[Pg 198]

I have mentioned your fellow-experts. That recalls to my mind another admirable phase of your services in behalf of the medical art. Your activity in the criminal courts has freed our profession from the ancient reproach that doctors can never agree. As a matter of fact, whether you have been retained by the prosecution or the defence, I cannot think of a single instance in which you have failed to agree with every one of the half-dozen other experts on the same side. More than that, I firmly believe that if by some unexpected intervention you were suddenly transferred from the employ of the defence to that of the prosecution, or *vice versa*, your opinion would still be in complete harmony with that of every one of your new colleagues. In offering your services impartially to the District Attorney or to counsel for the defence you have lived up to that lofty impartiality of service which is the glory of our art. The physician knows neither friend nor foe, neither saint nor sinner. From the rich store of your expert knowledge you can draw that with which to satisfy all men.

[Pg 199]

I find it hard to frame a single formula which shall describe the sum total of your achievements in the field of medicine. Perhaps one might say that you have discovered the unitary principle underlying the laws of health and disease, for which men have searched since the beginning of time. Behind all physical ills they have looked for Evil. Behind diseases they have looked for

[Pg 200]

Disease. That unitary principle you have found in what goes by the general name of Insanity. The cynical opinion of mankind long ago laid it down that all crimes may be resolved into the single crime of allowing one's self to be found out. If a poor man is caught, it is stupidity or negligence. But obviously, when a wealthy criminal is apprehended, the only possible explanation is that he is insane.

The youthful degenerate who resorts to murder; the financier who steals the savings of the poor; the lobbyist who buys a Senator-ship and sells a State; the Pittsburg millionaire who seeks to rise above the laws of bigamy, may all be explained, and acquitted, in terms of mental aberration. The only parallel in history that I can think of, is the elder Mr. Weller's belief in the efficacy of an alibi as a defence in trials for murder and for breach of promise of marriage.

[Pg 201]

I congratulate you, sir. You have discovered a principle which, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. Like charity, too, your discovery begins at home. For, as I have shown, there is no home in this broad land wherein the expert will fail to discover the necessary great-aunt or third cousin endowed with the precise degree of paranoia, paresis, or infantile dementia required to secure an acquittal, or, at least, a disagreement of the jury.

Sincerely yours,
AN ADMIRER.

XXIV

[Pg 202]

Ph.D.

The time has come when a serious attempt must be made to determine Gilbert and Sullivan's permanent place in the world of creative art. A brief review of the musical-comedy output during the last theatrical season will convince any one that we are sufficiently far removed from "Pinafore" and "The Mikado" to insure a true perspective.

Happily, the material for a systematic examination of the subject is accessible. It is true that we are still without a definitive text of the Gilbert librettos. For this we must wait until Professor Rück sack, of the University of Kissingen, has published the results of his monumental labours. So far, we have from his learned pen only the text for the first half of the second act of "The Mikado." This is in accordance with the best traditions of German scholarship, which demand that the second half of anything shall be published before the first half. In the meanwhile, there are several editions of Gilbert available which, though somewhat imperfect, ought to present no difficulties to the scholar. For example, in my own favourite edition of "The Mikado" (Chattanooga, 1913), the text reads:

[Pg 203]

And he whistled an air, did he,
As the sabre true
Cut cleanly through
His servical vertebrae!

where "servical" is evidently a misprint for "cervical." So, too, the trained eye will at once discern that in the following passage from the Peers' chorus in "Iolanthe":

'Twould fill with joy
And madness stark
The hoi polloi
(A Greek rebark),

the sense is greatly improved by reading "remark" for "rebark," unless we argue that the chorus had a slight cold in the head, an assumption which nothing in the text would justify us in bringing forward, and which, indeed, would be contradicted by the highly emphasised summer style in which the chorus is apparelled. Thus forewarned, then, we are ready to enter upon a detailed examination of the intensely animated men and women in whom Sir William S. Gilbert has embodied his *ultima ratio*, his *dernier cri*, and his *Weltanschauung*.

[Pg 204]

In Ko-Ko, the author has given us a Man, with none of the sentimentalities of August Strindberg, with nothing of the limited, vegetarian outlook upon life of Bernard Shaw, with nothing of the over-refinement of Mrs. Wharton. Ko-Ko is atingle with all the passion and faults of humanity. He is both matter and spirit. He comes close to us in his rare flashes of insight and in his moments of poignant imbecility. The human being is not lost in the Lord High Executioner. He is alive straight through to his entrails and liver, as Jack London might say. He is infinite, even as life is infinite. He is, by turns, affable, as with Pitti-Sing; cynically disdainful, as with Pooh-Bah; paternal, as with Nanki-Poo.

[Pg 205]

In the presence of Yum-Yum he is that most appealing figure, a strong man in love torn between desire and duty. The firmness with which he rejects the suggestion that he decapitate himself, arguing that in the nature of things such an operation was bound to be injurious to his professional reputation, reveals a character of almost Roman austerity. There is something of the Roman, too—or shall we say something of the German?—in the thoroughness with which he would enter on his career. He would prepare himself for his functions as Lord High Executioner by beginning on a guinea pig and working his way through the animal kingdom till he came to a second trombone. This is the old standard of conscientiousness of which our modern world knows

so little.

And yet a very modern man withal, this Ko-Ko. I cannot help thinking that Mr. Chesterton would have loved him, and would have had no difficulty in proving that his name should be pronounced not Ko-Ko, but the second syllable before the first. He is modern in his extraordinary adaptability to time and circumstance. Starting life as a tailor, he adapts himself to the august functions of Lord High Executioner. He adapts himself to Yum-Yum. He adapts himself to Katisha. No sooner is he released from prison to become Lord High Executioner than he has ready his convenient little list of people who never would be missed. Of his powers of persuasion we need not speak at great length. His wooing of Katisha is a triumph of romantic eloquence. It carries everything before it, as in that superb climax when Katisha inquires whether it is all true about the unfortunate little tom-tit on a tree by the river, and Ko-Ko replies: "I knew the bird intimately." He is modern through and through, our Ko-Ko. He is at one with Henri Bergson in asserting that existence is not stationary but in constant flux, and that the universe takes on meaning only from our moods:

The flowers that bloom in the spring,
Tra la,
Have nothing to do with the case.

Far less subtle a character is the Lord High Chancellor in "Iolanthe," although, within the well-defined limitations of his type, he is as real as Ko-Ko. Like Ko-Ko he has risen from humble beginnings. But whereas our Japanese hero attains fortune by trusting himself boldly and joyfully to life, letting the currents carry him whither they will, like Byron, like Peer Gynt, and like Captain Hobson, the Lord High Chancellor's rise is the result of painful concentration and steadfast plodding. Ko-Ko is at various times the statesman, the poet, the lover, the man of the world (as when he is tripped up by the Mikado's umbrella-carrier). The Lord High Chancellor is always the lawyer. In response to Strephon's impassioned cry that all Nature joins with him in pleading his love, that dry legal soul can only remark that an affidavit from a thunderstorm or a few words on oath from a heavy shower would meet with all the attention they deserve.

Plainly, we have here a man who has won his way to the highest place in his profession by humdrum methods; the same methods which Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., employed when, by writing in a hand of remarkable roundness and fluency, he became the ruler of the Queen's navee; the same methods brought into play by Major-General Stanley, of the British army and Penzance, when he qualified himself for his high position by memorising a great many cheerful facts about the square of the hypothenuse.

There is matter enough for an entire volume on Gilbert's self-made men—Ko-Ko, the Lord High Chancellor, Major-General Stanley, and the lawyer in "Trial by Jury," who laid the foundation of his fortunes by marrying a rich attorney's elderly ugly daughter. I throw out the suggestion in the hope that it will be some day taken up as the subject of a Ph.D. thesis in the University of Alaska. That is only one hint of the unworked treasures of research that await the student in these librettos. How valuable would be a really comprehensive monograph on the royal attendants in Gilbert, including a comparison of the Mikado's umbrella-carrier with the Lord High Chancellor's train-bearer!

As for Gilbert and Sullivan's women, I find that even if I were not so near to the end of my chapter, I could not enter upon a discussion of the subject. The field is too vast. I must content myself with merely pointing out that Gilbert's ideas on women were painfully Victorian. It is true that the eternal chase of the male by the female was no secret to him. In Katisha's pursuit of Nanki-Poo we have a striking anticipation of Anne's pursuit of John Tanner in "Man and Superman." But on the whole, Gilbert describes his women of the upper classes as simpering and sentimental—Josephine, Yum-Yum, Mabel, Iolanthe—and his women of the working classes as ignorant and incapable. What an extraordinary example of ineptitude is afforded by Little Buttercup, who, in her capacity as baby-farmer, so disastrously mixes up Ralph Rackstraw with Captain Corcoran. Or by Nurse Ruth of Penzance, who fails to carry out orders and, instead of apprenticing her young charge to a pilot, apprentices him to a pirate. Miss Ida Tarbell could not have framed a severer indictment of inefficiency in the home.

XXV

TWO AND TWO

Harding said that if he were ever called upon to deliver the commencement oration at his alma mater, he knew what he would do.

"Of course you know what you would do," I said. "So do I. So does every one. You would rise to your feet and tell the graduating class that after four years of sheltered communion with the noblest thought of the ages they were about to plunge into the maelstrom of life. If you didn't say maelstrom you would say turmoil or arena. You will tell them that never did the world stand in such crying need of devoted and unselfish service. You will say that we are living in an age of change, and the waves of unrest are beating about the standards of the old faith. You will follow this up with several other mixed metaphors expressive of the general truth that it is for the Class of '14 to say whether this world shall be made a better place to live in or shall be allowed to go to

the demnition bow wows. You will conclude with a fervent appeal to the members of the graduating class never to cease cherishing the flame of the ideal. You will then sit down and the President will confer the degree of LL.D. on one of the high officials of the Powder Trust."

But Harding was so much in earnest that he forgot to receive my remarks with the bitter sneer which is the portion of any one unfortunate enough to disagree with him.

"The commencement address I expect to deliver," he said, "will precisely avoid every peculiarity you have mentioned. It is the fatal mistake of every commencement orator that he attempts to deal with principles. He knows that by the middle of June the senior class has forgotten most of the things in the curriculum. His error consists in supposing that this is as it should be; that Euclid and the rules of logic were made to be forgotten, and that the only thing the college man must carry out into the world is an Attitude to Life and a Purpose. Which is all rot. There is no necessity for preaching ideals to a graduating class. The ideals that a man ought to cling to in life are the same that a decent young man will have lived up to in college. The dangers and temptations he will confront are very much like those he has had to fight on the campus. The undergraduate of to-day is not a babe or a baa-lamb."

[Pg 213]

He paused and seemed to be weighing the significance of what he had said. Apparently he was pleased. He nodded a vigorous approval of his own views on the subject, and proceeded:

"It is not the temptations of the world the college man must be on the lookout against, but its stupidities, its irrelevancies, its general besotted ignorance. He is less in peril of the flesh and the devil than of the screaming, unintelligent newspaper headline, whether it leads off an interview with a vaudeville star or with a histrionic college professor. What he needs to be reminded of is not principles, but a few elementary facts. My own commencement address would consist of nothing more or less than a brief review of the four years' work in class—algebra, geometry, history, physics, chemistry, psychology, everything."

[Pg 214]

"How extraordinarily simple!" I said. "The wonder is no one has ever thought of this before."

"I admit," he said, "that it may be rather difficult to compress all that matter in fifteen hundred words, but it can be done. It can be done in less than that. My peroration, for instance, would go somewhat as follows—that is, if you care to listen?"

"It will do no harm to listen," I said.

"I would end in some such way: 'Members of the graduating class, as you leave the shades of alma mater for the career of life, the one thing above all others that you must carry with you is a clear and ready knowledge of the multiplication table. Wherever your destiny may lead you, to the Halls of Congress, to the Stock Exchange, to the counting room, the hospital ward, or the editorial desk, let not your mind wander from the following fundamental truths. Two times two is four. A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Rome fell in the year 476, but it was founded in the year 753 B. C., and so took exactly 1,229 years to fall. The northern frontier of Spain coincides with the southern frontier of France. The Ten Commandments were formulated at least 2,500 years ago. Japan is sixty times as far away from San Francisco as it is from the mainland of Asia. Virginius killed his daughter rather than let her live in shame. The subject of illicit love was treated with conspicuous ability by Euripides. The legal rate of interest in most of the States of the Union is six per cent. The instinct for self-preservation is one of the elementary laws of evolution. Hamlet is a work of genius. Victor Hugo is the author of "Les Misérables." I thank you.'"

[Pg 215]

"Thus equipped, any young man ought to become President in time," I said.

[Pg 216]

"Thus equipped," retorted Harding, "any young man ought to make his way through life as a rational being, and not as a sheep. And that is the main purpose of a college education, or of any process of education. No amount of moral enthusiasm will safeguard a man against the statement that the panic of 1893 was caused by the Democratic tariff bill; but the knowledge that the tariff bill was passed in 1894 may be of use. It saves a rational being from talking like a fool. Idealism will not keep a man from investing in get-rich-quick corporation stock; but knowledge of the fact that the common sense and experience of mankind have agreed upon six per cent. as a fair return on capital will keep him from going after 520 per cent. Mind you, it is not the fact that he will lose his money which concerns me. It is the fact that there should be a mentality capable of believing in 520 per cent. The dignity of the human mind is at stake. Or take this matter of the boundary line between France and Spain."

[Pg 217]

"If you are sure it is related to the subject in hand," I said.

"It is, intimately," he replied. "I am, as you know, exceedingly fond of books of travel. I read them as eagerly as I do all the cheap fiction that deal with brave adventures in foreign lands. Now a very common trait in books of both kinds is the author's fondness for pointing out the differences between the people of the southern part of a particular country and the people living in the northern part. You are familiar with the distinction. The inhabitants of the south are hot-headed, amorous, given to mandolin playing, and lacking in political genius. The people of the north are phlegmatic, practical, averse to love-making, unimaginative, readers of the Bible, and tenacious of their rights. I don't recall who first called attention to the fact. Perhaps it was Macaulay. Perhaps it was Herodotus. The idea is sound enough."

"But observe what the writers have made out of this simple truth. It has escaped them that anything is north or south only by comparison with something else. In the minds of our parrot authors the south has simply become associated with one set of stock phrases and the north with another. Here is where my Franco-Spanish frontier comes in. We learn that the people of

[Pg 218]

southern Spain are gay and fickle whereas the people of northern Spain are sturdy and sober-minded. But cross over into France and the people of southern France are once more gay and fickle, in spite of the fact that they live further north than the sober-minded inhabitants of northern Spain; and the people of northern France are calm and self-reliant. Moving still further toward the Pole, into Belgium, we find that the Belgians of the south are a frivolous lot, but the Belgians of the north are eminently desirable citizens. From what I have said you will no longer be surprised to hear that the inhabitants of southern Sweden are a harum-scarum populace, whereas in the north of Sweden every one attends to his own business. As a result of my long course in travel literature I am convinced that the southern Eskimos are not to be mentioned in the same breath, for hardihood and manly self-control, with the sturdy inhabitants of northern Congo. People go on writing this terrific nonsense and people go on reading it. A brief review in geography would put a stop to the nefarious practice. Have I made myself clear?"

[Pg 219]

"The question is whether people are interested in the countries you have mentioned," I said.

Even then Harding was patient with me.

"That is what I would try to do in my commencement oration—arm those young minds against the catch-words and imbecilities of the great world. Altruism, the passion for service, the passion for progress, are all very well in their way. But first of all comes the duty of every man to defend the integrity of his own mind and the multiplication table."

XXVI

[Pg 220]

BRICK AND MORTAR

It is a pleasure to put before my readers the first completely unauthorised interview with Professor Henri Bergson on the spiritual significance of American architecture. We were speaking of Mr. Guy Lowell's original design for New York's new County Court house.

M. Bergson smiled pragmatically.

"A round court house, you say? Suggestive of the Colosseum, with a touch of the Tower of Babel, and the merest *souppçon* of Barnum and Bailey? Come then, why not? To me it is eminently just that your architecture should typify the different racial strains that have entered into the making of the American people. When one observes in the façade of your magnificent public buildings the characteristic marks of the Chinese, the Red Indian, the Turco-Tartar, the Provençal, the Lombard Renaissance, the Eskimo, and the Late Patagonian, one catches for the first time the full meaning of your so complex civilisation."

[Pg 221]

The distinguished philosopher turned in his seat, struck a match on a marble bust of Immanuel Kant just behind him, and lit his cigar. He gazed thoughtfully out of the window. Before him stretched the enchanting panorama of Paris so familiar to American eyes—Notre Dame, the Gare de St. Lazare, the Bois de Boulogne, the Eiffel Tower, the cypresses of Père Lachaise, the tomb of Napoleon, and the offices of the American Express Company.

"Yes," he said, "one envies the advantages of your multi-millionaires. The kings and princes of former times, when they built themselves a home, had to be content with a single school of architecture. Your rich men on Fifth Avenue may have two styles, three, four—what say I?—a dozen! And on their country estates, where there is a garage, a conservatory, stables, kennels, the opportunities are unlimited."

"But we have pretty well exhausted all the known styles," I said. "What about the future?"

[Pg 222]

"Have no fear," he replied. "The archæologists are continually digging up new monuments of primitive architecture. By the time you need a new City Hall excavations will be very far advanced in Peru and Ceylon."

"The one secret of great architecture," M. Bergson went on, "is that it shall contain a soul, that it shall be the expression of an idea. A splendid courage accompanied by a high degree of disorder is what I regard as the American Idea. Hence the perfect propriety of a fifty-story Venetian tower overlooking a Byzantine temple devoted to the Presbyterian form of worship. Too many of my countrymen are tempted to scoff at your skyscrapers. But I maintain that a skyscraper perfectly expresses the spirit of a people which has created Pittsburg, the Panama Canal, and Mr. Hammerstein's chain of opera houses. Take your loftiest structures in New York and think what they stand for."

[Pg 223]

I thought in accordance with instructions, and recognised that the three tallest structures in New York symbolised, respectively, the triumph of the five and ten cent store, the sewing machine, and industrial insurance at ten cents a week.

"In your skyscrapers," he went on, "there speaks out the soul of American idealism."

I recalled what a drug the skyscrapers are on the real estate market, how they yield an average of two per cent. on the cost, and I decided that our tall buildings are indeed the expression of uncompromising idealism. As an investment there was little to be said for them.

"I repeat," said M. Bergson, "your skyscrapers stand for an idea, but they also express beauty. Not only do they reveal the restless energy of a people which waits five minutes to take the

elevator from the tenth floor to the twelfth, but they also embody the most modern conception of fine taste. I think of them as displaying the perfection of the hobble-skirt in architecture—tall, slim, expensive, and never failing to catch the eye."

[Pg 224]

We were interrupted by a trim-looking maid who brought in a telegram. My host tore open the envelope, glanced at the message, and handed it to me with a smile. It was from a Chicago vaudeville manager who offered M. Bergson five thousand dollars a week for a series of twenty-minute talks on the influence of Creative Evolution on the Cubist movement to be illustrated with motion pictures. I handed the telegram to M. Bergson, who dropped it into the waste basket.

"People," he said, "have fallen into the habit of asserting that beauty in architecture is not to be separated from utility. To be beautiful a building must at once reveal the use to which it is devoted. But this need not mean that a certain architectural type must be devoted to a certain purpose. The essential thing is uniformity. The same form should be devoted to the same purpose. Then there would be no trouble in learning the peculiar architectural language of a city. When I was in New York I experienced no difficulty whatsoever. When I saw a Corinthian temple I knew it was a church. When I saw a Roman basilica I knew it was a bank. When I saw a Renaissance palace I knew it was a public bath house. When I saw an Assyrian palace I knew there was a cabaret tea inside. When I saw a barracks I knew it was a college laboratory. When I saw a fortress I knew it was an aquarium. The soul of the city spoke out very clearly to me."

[Pg 225]

He thought for a moment.

"But yes," he said. "When I think of New York and its architecture I am more than ever convinced that there is no such a thing as predestination, that your American architect is emphatically a free agent."

"This seems so very true," I murmured.

"Recently," he went on, "when I was the guest of your most hospitable countrymen there was a sharp controversy regarding the appropriateness of the architect's design for a memorial to be erected to your immortal Lincoln in the national capital. There were critics who professed to be shocked by the incongruity of placing a statue of Lincoln, the frontiersman, the circuit-rider of your raw Middle West, the teller of most amusing anecdotes, amusing, but—somewhat Gothic, shall I say?—putting a statue of this typical American inside a temple of pure Grecian design. Such critics, in my opinion, were in error. They made the same mistake of concentrating on the specific use, instead of searching after the broad meaning. Lincoln was an American. His monument should be American in spirit. And I contend that it is the American spirit to put a statesman in frock coat and trousers inside a Greek temple. For that matter, what structural form is there which one might call typical of your country, outside of your skyscrapers?"

[Pg 226]

"There is the log cabin," I said, "but that would hardly bear reproduction in marble. And there is the baseball stadium, but somehow that sounds rather inappropriate."

"So I should earnestly advise you," continued M. Bergson, "not to waste time in studying what your architectural types ought to be, but to build as the fancy seizes you. In the course of time the right fancy may seize you. If anything, avoid striving for perfection. Continue to mix your styles. It is not essential to cling to the original plans once you have started. Change your plans as you go along. Avoid the spick and span. If your foundations begin to sag a little before the roof is completed, so much the better. If the right wing of your building is out of line with the left wing, let it go at that. If your interior staircases blind the windows, if your halls run into a *cul-de-sac*, instead of leading somewhere, let them."

[Pg 227]

"But that is precisely the way we build our State Capitols," I said.

"Then you are to be congratulated on having solved the problem of a national style," said M. Bergson.

XXVII

[Pg 228]

INCOHERENT

A topsy-turvy chapter of no particular meaning and of little consequence; whether pointing to some divine, far-off event, the reader must determine for himself.

He came into the office and fixed me with his glittering eye across the desk. Under ordinary circumstances I should have found his manner of speech rather odd. But it was the last week of the Cubist Exhibition on Lexington Avenue, and a certain lack of coherence seemed natural. He said:

"Is there a soul in things we choose to describe as inanimate? Of course there is. Can we assign moral attributes to what people usually regard as dead nature? Of course we can. Why don't we do something then? Take the abandoned farm. Doesn't the term at once call up a picture of shocking moral degradation? We are surrounded by abandoned farms, and do nothing to reclaim them morally. But I have hope. That is the fine thing about the spirit of the present day. It abhors sentimentality. It is honest. It recognises that before we can do away with evil we must acknowledge that it exists. Look at the wild olive! Look at the vicious circle! Look at Bad Nauheim!"

[Pg 229]

"Are you sure it's me you wished to see?" I asked. "Because there's a man in the office whose name sounds very much the same and the boys are apt to confuse us. He is in the third room to your right."

"It doesn't matter," he said. "The main thing is that the present uplift does not go half far enough. Just consider the semi-detached family house. Can anything be more depressing? There are happy families; of them we need not speak. There are unhappy families; but there at least you find the dignity of tragedy, of fierce hatreds, of clamour, of hot blood running riot in the exultation of excess—Swinburne, you know, Dolores, Faustina, Matisse, and all that. But a semi-detached family, a home of chilly rancours and hidden sneers, too indifferent for love, too cowardly for hate, a stagnant pool of misery—can you blame me?"

[Pg 230]

"I do not," I said. "Far be it from me to censure the natural antipathy for real estate agents which surges up—"

"Thank you," he said. "That is all I wish to know." He rose, but turned back at the door. "Of course," he said, "there is the other side of the picture. Not all nature is degenerate. There are upright pianos. There are well-balanced sentences. There are reinforced-concrete engineers. I thank you for your courtesy." And he went out.

I had no scruples in directing my visitor to the third floor from mine on the right, because that room is occupied by the anti-suffragist member of the staff. Between editions he reads the foreign exchanges with a fixed sneer and polishes up his little anti-feminist aphorisms. These he recites to me with a venomous hatred which Charlotte Perkins Gilman would have no trouble in tracing back to the polygamous cave man. He came in now and sat down in the chair just vacated by my somewhat eccentric visitor.

[Pg 231]

"Mrs. Pankhurst," he said, "is completely justified in asserting that the leaders may perish, but the good fight will go on. There are plenty of frenzied Englishwomen to carry the torch. The practice of arson, you will observe, comes natural to woman as the historic guardian of the domestic fire. We have great difficulty in preventing our cook from pouring kerosene into the kitchen range. Instinct, you see."

"But look at the other side of the question," I said.

"That doesn't concern me in the least," he replied. "Of course you will say there is the hunger strike. But what does that prove? Simply that another ancient custom of the submerged classes has become an amusement of the well-to-do. We are all copying the underworld nowadays. We have borrowed their delightfully straightforward mode of speech. We have learned their dances. We are imitating their manners. Now we are acquiring their capacity for going without food. Not that I think the hunger-strike is altogether a futile invention. Practised on a large scale it will undeniably exercise a beneficent influence on the status of woman. Modern fashions in women's garments have already reduced the expenditure on dress material to an insignificant minimum. When the wives of the middle and upper classes have learned to be as abstemious with food as they are with clothes, it is plain that the economic independence of women will be close at hand."

[Pg 232]

"You are assuming that the sheath-gown is less expensive than the crinoline," I managed to interject.

"I consider your remarks utterly irrelevant to my argument," he said. "Mind you, I don't deny that forcible feeding is a disgusting business as it is carried on at present. But that is because it is being misdirected. If the British Government were to apply forcible feeding in Whitechapel and among the human wreckage that litters the Thames Embankment, I am confident that the problem of social unrest would be speedily disposed of."

[Pg 233]

He, too, turned back at the door.

"Mark my word," he said, "it won't be long before the manhood of England asserts itself, and then look out for trouble! You know, even the earth turns when you step upon it."

But sometimes you find yourself wondering whether it is really (1) the solid earth we tread to-day, or whether it is (2) on clouds we step, or whether (3) we walk the earth with our heads in the clouds, or whether (4) we are standing on our heads on earth with our feet in the clouds. It isn't an age of transition, because that means progress in one direction. It isn't revolution, because revolution is an extremely clear-cut process with heads falling and the sewers running red with blood; whereas the swollen channels to-day run heavy with talk chiefly. It isn't a transmutation of values, because we have no single accepted standard of exchange. It isn't a shifting of viewpoints, because it is much more than that.

[Pg 234]

It is a shifting of the optical laws, of the entire body of physical laws. Pictures are painted to be heard, music is written to be seen, passion is depicted in odours, dancing aims to make the bystander lick his chops. Mathematics has become an impressionist art, and love, birth, and death are treated arithmetically. Grown men and women clamour for the widest individual freedom, and children, if you will listen to the Princeton professor, should render compulsory service to the State. We are in full revolt; in revolt toward State Socialism, toward Nietzsche, toward Christian idealism, toward the paganism of the Latin Quarter and Montmartre, toward university settlements, toward the cabaret. Are we in a fog? Are we in the clouds striving toward the light? Well, I haven't the least doubt that the mist will roll away and leave us in man's natural position, his feet planted solidly on earth, his face lifted to the sun. But for the moment it's puzzling.

[Pg 235]

REALISM**(AFTER A-N-LD B-N-ETT)**

In the dining-room of her little apartment, from the windows of which one might catch a glimpse of the Place de la Révolution on a clear day, Madame Lafarge was laying the table for supper. She had folded the table-cloth in two. With outstretched arms she held the four ends of the beautifully laundered piece of napery between the thumb and middle-finger of either hand. Suddenly she released two of the corners of the white cloth, transferring her grip with practised deftness to the two other corners, and whipped the flapping sheet across the table with a confident gesture that emphasised the vigour of her ample bosom. The further end of the cloth wrinkled. Perfect mistress of herself, Madame Lafarge walked around the table and patted the offending creases into an unblemished surface. She was extremely proud of her finger-nails, upon which she spent fifteen minutes twice a day.

[Pg 237]

From the china-closet at one end of the room, Madame Lafarge brought forth two plates, which she placed on the table at either end of a perfect diameter. This diameter she bisected with four salt and pepper casters of cut-glass topped with silver elaborately chased in the bourgeois style. While arranging the spoons she happened to look at the clock and noticed that it was a quarter past five. M. Lafarge would be leaving his shop behind the Palais Royal in half an hour. He would stop at the tobacconist's for his semi-weekly bag of fine-cut Maryland and would probably call at the cobbler's for Madame's second best shoes which she was having resoled for the third time; they would last out the winter. That would bring her husband home within an hour. In another half hour it would be time to put the cutlets on the fire. As she walked into the kitchen she wondered whether there was quite enough flour in the sauce. A heavy sauce made M. Lafarge toss about in bed.

[Pg 238]

Outside, on the Place, they were guillotining Marie Antoinette....

XXIX

[Pg 239]

ART**(WHEN EMMY DESTINN SANG IN THE LION CAGE)**

First Lion: I'm nervous. Aren't you?

Second Lion: Not in the least.

First Lion: Then why do you keep your tail between your legs?

Second Lion: I always do that when I'm thinking.

First Lion: What I want to know is, what do they want to go and put her in the cage for? The place is crowded as it is and there isn't enough raw beef to go around.

Second Lion: Maybe she is a new kind of beef.

First Lion: I wouldn't touch it for the world— Now what are you doing? Are you afraid?

Second Lion: Who's afraid?

First Lion: What made you back into me like that and growl when she waved her upper limbs and stepped forward?

[Pg 240]

Second Lion: Purely reflex action. Do you think she's hungry?

First Lion: For heaven's sake, don't say that. What makes you think so?

Second Lion: She has her mouth wide open and she emits prolonged howls. I wish she wouldn't move forward so abruptly.

First Lion: And I wish you wouldn't back into me like that without warning.

Second Lion: Perhaps she howls because she's afraid.

First Lion: Whom would she be afraid of?

Second Lion: The man outside who is turning the handle of the picture-machine.

First Lion: He has a red face.

Second Lion: He must be juicy. I could fetch him in two leaps if I were feeling just right.

First Lion: There you go again. You'll be backing me against the bars before you know it.

Second Lion: Can't one stretch when one feels bored?

[Pg 241]

First Lion: The red-faced man must be the new keeper.

Second Lion: Probably, and she is howling for something to eat. I wonder how long this will last.

First Lion: I wonder. This is worse than the circus with nothing between you and a crowd. What is it now?

Second Lion: She's come nearer again and she is stretching out her upper limbs in our direction. Suppose she's hungry and the red-faced man refuses to let her have anything.

First Lion: For heaven's sake, don't speak like that.

XXX

[Pg 242]

THE PACE OF LIFE

(AS RECORDED BY THE FILM DRAMA AND TIMED BY A DOLLAR WATCH)

From love at first sight to end of successful courtship, 2½ minutes.

Breakfast, 45 seconds.

Ascent of the Jungfrau, 5 minutes.

A riot, 1 minute, 45 seconds.

A wedding, 1½ minutes.

A conflagration, 55 seconds.

A night of restless tossing on a bed of pain, 35 seconds.

From discovery of wife's faithlessness to attempt at suicide, 50 seconds.

Reconciliation between life-long enemies, 1 minute.

Trust monopolist converted to endow a hospital and reorganise business on a profit-sharing basis, 1½ minutes.

A piano recital, 30 seconds.

A battle in Mexico, 1½ minutes.

[Pg 243]

A major abdominal operation, 19 seconds.

Establishing identity of long-lost heir, 6 seconds.

Buy your hats at O'Grady's—they're different, 2 minutes.

Getting Central on the telephone, instantaneous.

Central gives the right connection, 2 seconds. (Incidentally it may be remarked that the film drama can never hope to reproduce the most powerful comic device of the legitimate stage. This consists in saying to Central, "Yes, I want two-four-six-thr-r-re-e," the most notable advance in dramatic art since the invention of the inflated bladder.)

Restoration of lost memory and discovery of hiding-place of lost documents, 10 seconds.

Orator sways hostile audience, 15 seconds.

Detailed plan for robbing Metropolitan Museum formulated by six conspirators, 15 seconds.

Twenty years pass, 2 seconds.

XXXI

[Pg 244]

MARCUS AURELIUS, 1914

Let me exaggerate! For in exaggeration there is life and the punch that makes for progress. Whereas no man can manifestly qualify as a live wire who sees things as they are.

Let me exaggerate the number of millions of bacteria to the cubic centimetre in our morning milk; and the hosts of virulent bacilli that make their encampment on the unlaundered dollar-bill; and the anti-social micro-organisms that beset the common drinking-cup.

Let me exaggerate the virtue of assiduously and courageously swatting the common house-fly.

Let me exaggerate the grey and monotonous life of the poor, forgetting the children who dance to the sound of the hurdy-gurdy; and the mothers who smile over their babies in tenement cradles, and the lovers in the parks, and the May parties, and the millions who patronise the moving-picture theatres, and the millions in Coney Island.

[Pg 245]

Let me exaggerate the grinding, crushing, withering speed of modern industry, forgetting the hundreds of thousands who throng the baseball parks and the additional millions who study the score boards on Park Row.

Let me exaggerate the number of children who go breakfastless to school, since nothing less than 25,000 gets into the newspaper headlines; and the wickedness of regularly ordained clergymen who marry people without asking for a physician's certificate; and the peril of helping an old lady up the Subway steps lest she turn out to be a recruiter of white slaves.

Let me exaggerate the blessings of an age when babies shall be born without adenoids and tonsils, and shall develop just as automatically into clear-eyed little Boy Scouts and Camp-fire Girls.

Let me exaggerate! Teach me that outlook upon life which the highbrow pragmatists describe as the will to believe, and the low-brow describes as pipe dreams! Save me from those twin devils, the Sense of Humour and the Sense of Proportion; for in common sense is stagnation and death, but progress lies in exaggeration! [Pg 246]

XXXII

[Pg 247]

BY THE TURN OF A HAND

In seven different ways has the world been on the point of being regenerated since the Spanish-American War. For the completeness with which the world has been reconstructed consult the current files of the newspapers.

The world was to be made over by the bicycle. The strap-hanger was to abandon his strap and ride joyfully down the Broadway cable-slot, snapping his fingers at traction magnates and imbibing ozone. The factory-hand was to abandon his city flat and live in the open country, going to and from his work through the green lanes at fifteen miles an hour, with his lunch on the handle bars. The old were to grow young again and the young were to dream close to the heart of Nature. The doctors were to perish of starvation. But where is the bicycle to-day?

The world was to be made over by jiu-jitsu. Elderly gentlemen were to regain the waistline of their youth by ten minutes' attention every morning to the secrets of the Samurai. Slim young women, when attacked by heavy ruffians, were to seize their assailants by the wrist and hurl them over the right shoulder. The police were to discard their revolvers and their night sticks, and suppress rioters by mere muscular contraction. The doctors, as before, were to grow extinct through the rapid process of starvation. But where is jiu-jitsu to-day? [Pg 248]

The world was to be regenerated by denatured alcohol. Congress had merely to remove the internal revenue tax and a new motive power would be let loose, far transcending the total available horsepower of our coal mines. Denatured alcohol was to drive the farmer's machines, propel our war automobiles, run our factories, and reduce the cost of living to a ridiculous minimum. But where is denatured alcohol to-day?

The world was to be redeemed by the bungalow. The landlord was to disappear and in his place would come a race of free-men bowing the head to no man and raising their own vegetables. Kitchen drudgery was to be eliminated by the simple device of abolishing the kitchen and calling it a kitchenette. With no more stairs to climb, rheumatism would pass into history. So would the doctors. The bungalow is still with us, and alas, so are the doctors. [Pg 249]

The world was to be regenerated by sour milk; by the simple life; by sleeping in the open air. But where now are Prof. Metchnikoff and Pastor Wagner? And the pictures of rose-embowered sleeping porches in the garden magazines have been supplanted by pictures of colonial farmhouses transformed into charming interiors by two coats of white-wash and a thin-paper edition of the classics.

Does this show that we must give up all hope of seeing a new world around us before 1915? By no means. We still have Eugenics.

XXXIII

[Pg 250]

THE QUARRY SLAVE

The tired business man leaves his home in the country just in time to catch the next train. By ten o'clock, at the latest, he is in his office, having ridden up to the thirteenth floor in an express elevator and so gained a distinct advantage over his London competitors who are in the habit of walking up to their offices on the third floor. He finds his mail opened and sorted on his desk. He glances over the most important letters, puts aside those requiring immediate attention, and has his shoes shined. At eleven o'clock he calls up on the telephone and, in the course of fifteen minutes' conversation, transacts a great deal of business which has to be confirmed by letter. His father would merely have written the letter.

Ignoring the primary rule of health which forbids the mingling of work and recreation, he makes a business appointment for lunch, and between one o'clock and half-past three he puts through a deal on which his father would have spent at least half an hour during his busiest hours. [Pg 251]

Returning to his office he dictates several letters which he dictated the day before and into which a number of vital errors have been introduced in the course of transcription. This necessitates repeated reference to a card catalogue, an operation which takes some time because the young man in charge has been brought up on the phonetic system and experiences some difficulty in determining the proper place of the letter G in the alphabet. From 3:30 to 4:30 the business man is interviewed by an agent who demonstrates the merits of a new labour-saving letter file. Donning his overcoat hastily he runs to make an express which takes eight minutes to reach Grand Central Station, whereas the local trains sometimes take as much as eleven minutes.

Later, exhausted by his efforts of the day, he just manages to purchase two seats on the aisle from a speculator, and staggers to his chair at 8:30 as the curtain rises on the first act of "The Girl and the Eskimo."

[Pg 252]

XXXIV

[Pg 253]

MONOTONY OF THE POLES

(AT A FIVE O'CLOCK TEA)

The Lady: It's so good of you to come. It must be wonderful to have been at the Pole. Do you know, when the news first reached us, I was so excited I insisted on calling up all my friends on the telephone and asking them if they had heard. It must have been a wonderful trip. Won't you sit down and tell us all about it?

The Explorer: Thank you. We left our winter camp in latitude 83 degrees 7 minutes on October 24, with five men, four sledges, and thirty-two dogs. The long wait was spent in laying in stocks of seal-meat for the dogs, constructing sledges, breaking the dogs to harness, making meteorological observations, bathing, sleeping, and attending to the dogs. In the cold of the Polar night, work moves on rather slowly, but I always enjoyed the restful half-hour I devoted to winding up my watch. On August 24 we caught the first sign of spring.

[Pg 254]

The Lady: Of course.

The Explorer: But it was not till October 24 that the sun rose and the Polar day began.

The Lady: How very interesting!

The Explorer: We had been getting impatient. We were afraid the dogs would grow too fat. We were glad when the edge of the sun's disk showed above the horizon.

The Lady: It must have been like the first day of creation; it must have been like the radiant illumination of a great love.

The Explorer: It was indeed. We immediately harnessed the dogs and set out. The sledges had been loaded several days before. The dogs were in excellent physical condition. The ice was smooth. The temperature was minus 28 degrees Centigrade. What this is when expressed in terms of Fahrenheit, madam, you will of course readily ascertain for yourself by multiplying by 9, dividing by 5, and subtracting 32.

[Pg 255]

The Lady: It is all too wonderful!

The Explorer: On our first day's march we covered forty-three kilometres, the kilometre being equal, as you are aware, to .62121 of a mile. Part of the way we rode upon the sledges. Then the ice grew rough, and we took to our skis. We camped in 83 degrees 29 minutes, and built an igloo, which you will recall is a hut made of ice-blocks and snow. First we fed the dogs. The daily ration for the dogs was one and a half kilogrammes of seal-meat, the kilogramme, I need not tell you, being equal to 2.2046 pounds. Then we turned in.

The Lady: Your first night in the unknown!

The Explorer: As you say, madam. The next day we camped in 83 degrees 53 minutes, fed the dogs as usual, and built an igloo. The day after, we camped in 84 degrees 29 minutes and built another igloo, after feeding the dogs. Nothing happened for the next ten days. The dogs were in good condition. The sledges held well. We made an average daily march of 36 kilometres. But on the eleventh day, at the conclusion of a fairly good march, one of the dogs in sledge number 2—we called him Skraal—attacked and bit a dog we called Ragnar. We parted them with great difficulty. The two days that followed were uneventful, but on the third day Ragnar attacked and bit Skraal. We had to club them apart. On the fifteenth day out Ragnar and Skraal attacked and bit a third dog named Skalder, but he eventually recovered. That was in latitude 85 degrees 87 minutes, at an altitude of 3,700 feet, and the temperature was minus 27 degrees Centigrade. It occurred just after we had finished building an igloo and were preparing to feed the dogs.

[Pg 256]

The Lady: And always you were drawing nearer the goal!

The Explorer: Naturally, madam. All this time we were busy laying down depots of food for the dogs and the men. Because once we reached the goal we must, of course, get back as fast as we could. We built a depot at every degree of latitude, or, roughly speaking, every 100 kilometres. Our depot in latitude 87 degrees 25 minutes was situated amidst very picturesque surroundings.

[Pg 257]

The Lady: In that wonderful landscape!

The Explorer: Yes, the spot had some very extraordinary ice-formations. Setting out from that point we marched 37 kilometres over rough ice, fed the dogs, and built an igloo. The next day we marched 70 kilometres over smooth ice, and, having attended to the dogs, built another igloo. The next day we marched 50 kilometres over ice that was partly rough and partly smooth, and had a good night's rest, after putting up an igloo and caring for the dogs. The next day the ice was very soft, and the dogs hung back and complained. However, we managed to cover 27 kilometres that day, reaching 88 degrees 14 minutes. There we camped and—

The Lady: And built another igloo!

The Explorer: No, madam, a food depot. It was on the following day that I first had reason to feel anxious for my men. Skaarmund, my chief assistant, froze his ears. That was in latitude 88 degrees 36 minutes, and the temperature was minus 40 degrees Centigrade. After being vigorously rubbed for several minutes, he was all right again. Almost immediately Knudsen complained of headache and we had to give him some phenacetine. Half an hour later Lanstrup fell down a crevice in the ice.

[Pg 258]

The Lady: Horrors!

The Explorer: Fortunately the crevice was only two feet deep, and after we had applied peroxide and vaseline, Lanstrup was as well as ever. Owing to the high altitude we all experienced some difficulty in breathing. It was very much like being stalled on a crowded train in your Subway. It was our ambition to reach the Pole on the fifth day after, because that was our national holiday. But we found the going too rough. However, we celebrated the day by giving an extra half-kilogramme of seal-meat to the dogs and a whole cup of coffee to the men. Skaarmund had some cigarettes hidden about his person and we smoked and took an extra hour's rest. Two days later, we were at the Pole.

[Pg 259]

The Lady: Where no man's foot had trod before! Alone amidst that infinite stretch of virgin snow!

The Explorer: Quite so, madam. Immediately after taking observations and noting the temperature and the velocity of the wind, we built an igloo and picketed the dogs. We remained there for three days, taking additional observations, repairing the sledges, and resting up the dogs. On the third day after we raised the flag over the Pole, we set out on our return journey.

The Lady: What thoughts must have been yours! You were coming back with the prize of the centuries, to find the world at your feet.

The Explorer: Exactly, madam. Not one of the dogs had failed us. Having said farewell to the flag waving proudly at the apex of the globe, we marched fifty-two kilometres. At the end of the march we built an igloo and fed the dogs. At the end of the next day's march we killed two dogs: we gave one to the other dogs, and the other we ate ourselves. It tasted not unlike fresh veal. The following morning we had hardly commenced our march when Malstrom cut his foot on a sharp piece of ice which penetrated his boot. We washed his foot out with witch hazel and made him ride for a mile or two on a sledge. The pain thereupon disappeared. At exactly 89 degrees we built an igloo and slept for ten hours in one stretch. Rising, we killed a dog for breakfast, took our observations, and set out. Malstrom's foot gave him no trouble. That day we camped at 88 degrees 23 minutes, built another igloo, and killed another dog. Our appetites were very active. On the way to the Pole we had allowed ourselves two and one-half kilos of food per day. Now we were consuming over four kilos a day.

[Pg 260]

The Lady: Fancy eating four kilometres a day.

[Pg 261]

The Explorer: No, madam, kilogrammes. But at the same time we were travelling at a much faster pace; one day our record was ninety.

The Lady: That was a great deal, wasn't it, ninety kilogrammes a day?

The Explorer: No, madam, kilometres. And in this manner we arrived safely at our winter camp. Five days later we were on board our ship, on the way to civilisation.

The Lady: How happy you must have been!

The Explorer: We were. But perhaps madam may be interested in some of the photographs illustrating incidents of our journey to the Pole?

The Lady: How can you ask!

The Explorer: This picture, you will see, shows our permanent camp, situated in the midst of a snow plain stretching to the horizon in every direction. This is a picture of the South Pole, similarly situated, you will observe, in the midst of a snow plain stretching as far as the eye can see. This is the sledge upon which I travelled to the Pole. The next picture shows the same sledge viewed from the rear and a little to one side, and this is still the same sledge as seen at a distance of 200 feet to the left and from a slight elevation. The next picture shows the sledge with its load, and the one after that shows the load itself resting close to the walls of an igloo which is just going up. In this picture you see the igloo completed and with the dogs lying in front. The next picture shows the same group of dogs with two of the leaders missing. The next two pictures show the sledge as it was before the accident and after. The remaining pictures deal with similar subjects.

[Pg 262]

The Lady: This has been so delightful! Do you know, your English pronunciation is wonderful for a foreigner!

THE END

FOOTNOTES:

[1] I.e., eighty-seven years ago. The Gettysburg Address was delivered Nov. 19, 1863. Lincoln is here referring to the Declaration of Independence.

[2] Figuratively speaking. To take "fathers" in a literal sense would, of course, involve a physiological absurdity.

[3] The western continent, embracing North and South America.

[4] "A new nation." This is tautological, since a nation just brought forth would necessarily be new.

[5] "Proposition," in the sense in which Euclid employs the term and not as one might say now, "a cloak and suit proposition."

[6] See the Declaration of Independence in Albert Bushnell Hart's "American History Told by Contemporaries" (4 vols., Boston, 1898-1901).

[7] The war between the States, 1861-65.

[8] I.e., the United States.

[9] See Elliot's Debates in the several State Conventions on the adoption of the Federal Constitution, etc. (5 vols., Washington, 1840-45).

[10] Gettysburg; a borough and the county seat of Adams Co., Pennsylvania, near the Maryland border, 85 miles southwest of Harrisburg. Pop. in 1910, 4,030.

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