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by Arthur Colton**

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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS \*\*\*

# **THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS**

**By Arthur Colton**

**Charles Scribner's Sons**

**1901**

**DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF**

**MY SISTER, MABEL COLTON**

**S**o they went up to the Mountains, to behold the Gardens, and Orchards, the Vineyards, and Fountains of water.... Now there was on the tops of these Mountains, Shepherds feeding their flocks, and they stood by the high-way side. The Pilgrims therefore went to them, and leaning upon their staves, (as is common with weary Pilgrims, when they stand to talk with any by the way,) they asked, Whose delectable Mountains are these?... When the Shepherds perceived that they were way-faring men, they also put questions to them, as, Whence came you? and, How got you into the way? and, By what means have you so persevered therein?... Then said the Shepherds one to another, Let us here shew to the Pilgrims the Gates of the Coelestial City, if they have skill to look through our Perspective Glass.... Then they essayed to look, but... they could not look steadily through the Glass; yet they thought they saw something like the Gate.

*The Pilgrim's Progress.*

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## THE PLACE OF THE ABANDONED GODS

The hut was built two sides and the roof of sodded poles; the roof had new clapboards of birch bark, but the rest had once belonged to a charcoal burner; the front side was partly poled and partly open, the back was the under-slope of a rock. For it stood by a cliff, one of the many that show their lonely faces all over the Cattle Ridge, except that this was more tumultuous than most, and full of caves made by the clumsy leaning bowlders; and all about were slim young birch trees in white and green, like the demoiselles at Camelot. Old pines stood above the cliff, making a soft, sad noise in the wind. In one of the caves above the leafage of the birches we kept the idols, especially Baal, whom we thought the most energetic; and in front of the cave was the altar-stone that served them all, a great flat rock and thick with moss, where ears of corn were sacrificed, or peas or turnips, the first-fruits of the field; or of course, if you shot a chipmunk or a rabbit, you could have a burnt offering of that kind. Also the altar-stone was a council chamber and an outlook.

It was all a secret place on the north side of the Cattle Ridge, with cliffs above and cliffs below. Eastward half a mile lay the Cattle Ridge Road, and beyond that the Ridge ran on indefinitely; southward, three miles down, the road took you into Hagar; westward the Ridge, after all its leagues of length and rigor of form, broke down hurriedly to the Wyantenaug River, at a place called the Haunted Water, where stood the Leather Hermit's hut and beyond which were Bazilloa Armitage's bottom-lands and the Preston Plains railroad station. The road from the station across the bridge came through Sanderson Hollow, where the fields were all over cattle and lively horses, and met the Cattle Ridge Road to Hagar. And last, if you looked north from the altar-stone, you saw a long, downward sweep of woodland, and on and on miles and miles to the meadows and ploughed lands toward Wimberton, with a glimpse of the Wyantenaug far away to the left. Such were the surroundings of the place of abandoned gods. No one but ourselves came there, unless possibly the Hermit. If any one had come it was thought that Baal would pitch him over the cliffs in some manner, mystically. We got down on our hands and knees, and said, "O Baal!" He was painted green, on a shingle; but his eyes were red. The place was reached from the Cattle Ridge Road by trail, for the old wood-road below was grown up to blackberry brambles, which made one scratched and bloody and out of patience, unless it were blackberry time.

And on the bank, where the trail drops into the climbing highway, there Aaron and Silvia were sitting in the June afternoon, hand in hand, with the filtered green light of the woods about them. We came up from Hagar, the three of us, and found them. They were strangers, so far as we knew. Strangers or townsmen, we never took the trail with any one in sight; it was an item in the Vows. But we ranged up before them and stared candidly. There was nothing against that. Her eyes were nice and blue, and at the time they contained tears. Her cheeks were dimpled and pink, her brown dress dusty, and her round straw hat cocked a bit over one tearful blue eye. He seemed like one who had been growing fast of late. His arms swung loosely as if fastened to his shoulders with strings. The hand that held her small hand was too large for its wrist, the wrist too large for the arm, the arm too long for the shoulder. He had the first growth of a downy mustache, a feeble chin, a humorous eye, and wore a broad-brimmed straw hat and a faded black coat, loose and flopping to his knees. A carpet bag lay at his feet, only half full and fallen over with an air of depression. He seemed depressed in the same way.

"What's she crying for?" asked Moses Durfey, stolidly.

Aaron peered around at her shyly.

"She's scared to go home. I ain't, but I mote be 'fore I got there."

"What's your name?"

"We-ell—"

He hesitated. Then, with loud defiance:

"It's Mr. and Mrs. Bees."

A red squirrel clambered down a low-hanging branch overhead, and chattered sharply, scattering flakes of bark. Aaron, still holding Silvia's hand, leaned back on the bank and looked up. All lines of trouble faded

quickly from his face. He smiled, so that his two front teeth stood out startlingly, and held up a long forefinger.

"Cherky little cuss, ain't he?"

The squirrel became more excited. Aaron's finger seemed to draw him like a loadstone. He slid down nearer and nearer, as far as the branch allowed, to a foot or two away, chattering his teeth fearfully. We knew that any one who could magnetize so flighty and malicious a person as a red squirrel, must be a magician, however simple he might be otherwise. Aaron snapped his finger and the squirrel fled. "We'd better be movin', Silvy."

Silvia's tears flowed the faster, and the lines of trouble returned to Aaron's face.

"Why don't she want to go home?" persisted Moses, stolidly.

We drew close beside them now and sat on the bank, Moses and I by Aaron, Chub Leroy by Silvia. Chub was thoughtful. Silvia dried her eyes and said with a gulp:

"It's pa."

"That's it." Aaron nodded and rubbed his sharp nose. "Old man Kincard, it's him."

They both looked at us trustfully. Moses saw no light in the matter.

"Who's he?"

"He's my father-in-law. He ain't goin' to like it. He's a sneezer. What he don't like generally gets out of the way. My snakes! He 'll put Silvy up the chimney and me in the stove, and he 'll light the fire."

He chuckled and then relapsed into trouble. His emotions seemed to flit across his face like sunbeams and shadows on a wall, leaving no trace behind them, or each wiped out by the next.

"Snakes! We might just as well sit here."

Silvia wept again. Moses's face admitted a certain surprise.

"What'll he do that for?"

While Aaron told their story, Silvia sometimes commented tearfully on his left, Moses stolidly on his right, and the red squirrel with excitement overhead; Chub and I were silent; the woods for the most part kept still and listened too, with only a little sympathetic murmur of leaves and tremble of sunbeam and shadow.

The Kincard place, it seemed, lay five miles away, down the north side till you cleared the woods, and then eastward among the foothills. Old Kincard's first name was James. And directly across the road stood the four-roomed house where the Bees family once lived. It was "rickety now and rented to rats." The Bees family had always been absent-minded, given to dying off and leaving things lying around. In that way Aaron had begun early to be an orphan and to live with the Kincards. He was supposed to own the old house and the dooryard in front of it, but the rats never paid their rent, unless they paid it to the old man or the cat; and Mr. Kincard had a low opinion of Aaron, as being a Bees, and because he was built lengthwise instead of sidewise and knew more about foxes than cows. It seemed to Aaron that a fox was in himself a more interesting person; that this raising more potatoes than you could eat, more tobacco than you could smoke, this making butter and cheese and taking them to Wimberton weekly, and buying little except mortgages and bank accounts, somewhere involved a mistake. A mortgage was an arrangement by which you established strained relations with a neighbor, a bank account something that made you suspicious of the bank. Now in the woods one dealt for direct usefulness, comfort, and freedom of mind. If a man liked to collect mortgages rather than fox-skins, it was the virtue of the woods to teach tolerance; but Mr. Kincard's opinion of Aaron was low and active. There was that difference between a Kincard and a Bees point of view.

Aaron and Silvia grew up a few years apart on the old spread-out farm, with the wooded mountainside heaving on the south and stretching east and west. It was a neighborhood of few neighbors, and no village within many miles, and the old man was not talkative commonly, though he'd open up sometimes. Aaron and Silvia had always classed themselves together in subdued opposition to their grim ruler of destiny. To each other they called him "the old man," and expressed by it a reverential but opposed state of mind. To Aaron the undoubted parts of life were the mountain-side of his pleasures and the level fields of his toil. Wimberton was but a troubled glimpse now and then, an improbable memory of more people and houses than seemed natural. Silvia tended to see things first through Aaron's eyes, though she kept a basal judgment of her own in reserve.

"He always licked us together since we was little," said Aaron, looking at Silvia with softly reminiscent eye. "It was two licks to me for Silvy's one. That was square enough, and the old man thought so. When he got set in a habit he'd never change. It was two to me for Silvy's one."

Aaron told him, but a week now gone, that himself and Silvia would wish to be married, and he seemed surprised. In fact he came at Aaron with the hoe-handle, but could not catch him, any more than a lonesome rabbit. Then he opened up astonishingly, and told Aaron of his low opinion of him, which was more spread-out and full of details than you'd expect. He wasn't going to give Aaron any such "holt on him as that," with a guaranty deed, whatever that was, on eternity to loaf in, and he set him the end of the week to clear out, to go elsewhere forever. To Aaron's mind that was an absurd proposal. He wasn't going to do any such foolishness. The rather he sold his collection of skins to a farmer named Shore, and one morning borrowed a carpet bag and came over the Cattle Ridge hand in hand with Silvia.

From Preston Plains they hired a team, drove over the line into York State, and were married. The farmer named Shore laid that out for them. He had a back score of trouble with the old man.

"And Silvy's got a cat," added Aaron, "and she catches rats to please herself. Silvy thinks she ought to catch rats to be obligin'. Folks that live up these trees don't act that way. No more did Shore."

Here Aaron looked shrewd and wise.

"I wish Sammy was here," murmured Silvia, lovingly.

"First-rate cat," Aaron admitted. "Now, we didn't marry to oblige each other. Each of us obliged himself. Hey?"

Silvia opened her eyes wide. The idea seemed a little complicated. They clasped hands the tighter.

"Now," said Aaron, "Silvy's scared. I ain't, but I mote be when I got there."

A blue-jay flew shrieking down the road. Aaron looked after it with a quick change of interest.

"See him! Yes, sir. You can tell his meanness the way he hollers. Musses folks' eggs."

Aaron no longer surprised us now, nor did Silvia. We accepted them. We had standards of character and conduct, of wisdom and of things possible, but they were not set for us by the pulpit, the statute book, or the market-place. We had often gone forth on expeditions into the mystical beyond, always with a certain purpose to achieve there, and at some point it had been necessary to come home and face the punishment, if there were any, to have supper, and go to bed. Home could not be left permanently and another existence arranged, any more than the feet could be taken from the earth permanently. It had been found impractical. Aaron and Silvia were like ourselves. They might conceive of living away from the farmhouse under the mountain-side a few days. They shrank from facing old Kincard with his hoe-handle or horse-whip, but one must go back eventually. We recognized that their adventure was bold and peculiar; we judged the price likely to be appalling; we gave them frank admiration for both. None of us had ever run away to be definitely married, or suffered from a hoe-handle or a horse-whip, and yet all these were things to be conceived of and sympathized with.

"I knew a blue-jay," went on Aaron, thoughtfully, "that lived near the end of Shore's land, and he never appeared to like anything agreeable. He used to hang around other folks' nests and holler till they were distracted."

Silvia's snuffling caught his ear, and once more the rapid change passed over his face.

"We-ell," he said, "the old man'll be lively, that's sure. I'd stay in the woods, if it was me, but women"—with a large air of observation—"have to have houses."

"We've got a house," broke in Chub, suddenly. We exchanged looks furtively.

"They'll have to take the Vows," I objected. "We've took 'em," said Aaron. "Parson—"

"You'll have to solemn swear," said Moses. "Will you solemn swear?"

"I guess so."

"And if you tell, you hope you drop dead."

The blue-jay flew up the road again, shrieking scornfully. The red squirrel trembled and chattered his teeth on the branch overhead. All else in the woods was silent while Aaron and Silvia took the Vows.

And so we brought them, in excitement and content, to the place of the abandoned gods. Baal lurked far back in his cave, the cliff looked down with lonely forehead, the distant prospect was smooth and smoky. Neither the gods nor the face of the world offered any promise or threat. But Aaron and Silvia seemed to believe in the kindness of not human things. Silvia fell to chattering, laughing, in unforeboding relief from sudden and near-by evil.

Aaron had a surprising number of silver dollars, due to Shore and the fox-skins, by means of which we should bring them supplies from Hagar; and so we left them to the whispering gossip of leaves, the lonely cliff, the lurking Baal, and the smooth, smoky prospect.

No doubt there were times to Aaron and Silvia of trembling awe, dumb delight, conversations not to the point, so that it seemed more successful merely to sit hand in hand and let the moon speak for them, pouring light down silvery gulfs out of the abundant glory within her. There could be seen, too, the dawn, as pink as Silvia's cheeks, but, after all, not so interesting. A hermit-thrush sang of things holy at dawn, far down the woodland, while the birch leaves trembled delicately and the breeze was the sigh of a world in love; and of things quietly infinite at sunset in the growth of rosy gloom.

"It's nice," Silvia might whisper, leaning to Aaron.

"That's a hermit-thrush down there, Silvy. He opens his mouth, and oh! Kingdom's comin'."

"Yes."

"Little brown chap with a scared eye. You don't ever see him hardly."

"You don't want to, do you, Aaron?" after a long silence.

"Don't know as you do."

There would be a tendency, at least, to look at things that way, and talk duskiy as the dusk came on, and we would leave them on the altar-stone to take the trail below.

But early in the afternoon it would be lively enough, except that Silvia had a prejudice against Baal, which might have been dangerous if Baal had minded it; but he did her no harm. She referred to Elijah and those prophets of Baal, and we admitted he had been downed that time, for it took him when he was not ready, and generally he was low in his luck ever since. But we had chosen him first for an exiled dignity, who must needs have a deadly dislike for the other dignity who had once conquered him vaingloriously, and so must be in opposition to much that we opposed, such as Sunday-school lessons, sermons, and limitations of liberty. It might be that our reasonings were not so concrete and determined, but the sense of opposition was strong. We put it to Silvia that she ought to respect people's feelings, and she was reasonable enough.

Old Kincard, it seemed, was an interesting and opinionated heathen, and Silvia had not experienced sermons and Sunday-schools. That explained much. But she had read the Bible, which her mother had owned, before she died; and we could follow her there, knowing it to be a book of naturally strong points, as respects David for instance, Joseph, and parts of Revelation.

Aaron did not care for books, and had no prejudice toward any being or supposition that might find place in the woods. The altar-stone was common to many gods and councils, and we offered it to Silvia, to use as she liked. I judge she used it mostly to sit there with Aaron, and hear the hermit-thrush, or watch the thick moonlight pour down the scoop of the mountain.

That stretch of the Wyantenaug which is called the Haunted Water is quiet and of slow current, by reason of its depth, and dark in color, by reason of the steep fall of the Cattle Ridge and the pines which crowd from

it to the water's edge. The Leather Hermit's hut stood up from the water in the dusk of the pines.

He came to the valley in times within the memories of many who would speak if they were asked, but long enough ago to have become a settled fact; and if any did not like him, neither did they like the Wyantenaug to flood the bottom-lands in spring. The pines and the cliffs belonged to the Sandersons, who cared little enough for either phenomenon.

We often met him on the Cattle Ridge, saw him pass glowering through the thicket with shaggy gray beard and streaming hair. Sometimes he wore a horse-blanket over his leathern vestment. He was apt to be there Sundays, wandering about, and maybe trying to make out in what respect he differed from Elijah the Tishbite; and although we knew this, and knew it was in him to cut up roughly if he found out about Baal, being a prophet himself both in his looks and his way of acting, still he went to and fro for the most part on the other side of the crest, where he had a trail of his own; and you could not see the altar-stone from the top of the cliff, but had to climb down till you came to a jam of bowlders directly over it.

We did not know how long he may have stood there, glowering down on us. The smoke of the sacrifice was beginning to curl up. Baal was backed against a stone, looking off into anywhere and taking things indifferently. Silvia sat aside, twirled her hat scornfully, and said we were "silly." Aaron chewed a birch twig, and was very calm.

We got down on our hands and knees, and said, "O Baal!"

And the Hermit's voice broke over us in thunder and a sound as of falling mountains. It was Sunday, June 26, 1875.

He denounced us under the heads of "idolaters, gone after the abomination of the Assyrians; babes and sucklings, old in sin, setting up strange gods in secret places; idle mockers of holy things, like the little children of Bethel, whereby they were cursed of the prophet and swallowed of she-bears"; three headings with subdivisions.

Then he came down thumping on the left. Silvia shrieked and clung to Aaron, and we fled to the right and hid in the rocks. He fell upon Baal, cast him on the altar-fire, stamping both to extinction, and shouted:

"I know you, Aaron Bees and Silvia Kincard!"

"N-no, you don't," stammered Aaron. "It's Mrs. Bees."

The Hermit stood still and glared on them.

"Why are you here, Aaron and Silvia Bees?"

Aaron recovered himself, and fell to chewing his birch twig.

"We-ell, you see, it's the old man."

"What of him?"

"He'd lick us with a hoe-handle, wouldn't he? And maybe he'd throw us out, after all. What'd be the use? Might as well stay away," Aaron finished, grumbling. "Save the hoe."

The Hermit's glare relaxed. Some recollection of former times may have passed through his rifted mind, or the scent of a new denunciation drawn it away from the abomination of Assyria, who lay split and smoking in the ashes. He leaped from the altar-stone, and vanished under the leafage of the birches. We listened to him crashing and plunging, chanting something incoherent and tuneless, down the mountain, till the sound died away.

Alas, Baal-Peor! Even to this day there are twinges of shame, misgivings of conscience, that we had fled in fear and given him over to his enemy, to be trampled on, destroyed and split through his green jacket and red eye. He never again stood gazing off into anywhere, snuffing the fumes of sacrifice and remembering Babylon. The look of things has changed since then. We have doubted Baal, and found some restraints of liberty more grateful than tyrannous. But it is plain that in his last defeat Baal-Peor did not have a fair chance.

Concerning the Hermit's progress from this point, I can only draw upon guesses and after report. He struck slantingwise down the mountain, left the woods about at the Kincard place, and crossed the fields.

Old Kincard sat in his doorway smoking his pipe, thick-set, deep-chested, long-armed, with square, rough-shaven jaws, and steel-blue eyes looking out of a face like a carved cliff for length and edge. The Hermit stood suddenly before and denounced him under two heads—as a heathen unsoftened in heart, and for setting up the altar of lucre and pride against the will of the Lord that the children of men should marry and multiply. Old Kincard took his pipe from his mouth.

"Where might them marriers and multipliers be just now?"

The Hermit pointed to the most westward cliff in sight from the doorway.

"If you have not in mind to repent, James Kincard, I shall know it."

"Maybe you'd put them ideas of yours again?"

The Hermit restated his position accurately on the subject of heathen hearts and the altar of lucre.

"Ain't no mistake about that, Hermit? We-ell, now—"

The Hermit shook his head sternly, and strode away. Old Kincard gave a subterranean chuckle, such as a volcano might give purposing eruptions, and fixed his eyes on the western cliff, five miles away, a grayish spot in the darker woods.

Alas, Baal-Peor!

Yet he was never indeed a wood-god. He was always remembering how fine it had been in Babylon. He had not cared for these later devotions. He had been bored and weary. Since he was gone, split and dead, perhaps it was better so. He should have a funeral pyre.

"And," said Chub Leroy, "we'll keep his ashes in an urn. That's the way they always did with people's ashes."

We came up the Cattle Ridge Road Monday afternoon, talking of these things. Chub carried the urn, which



had once been a pickle-jar. Life still was full of hope and ideas. The Hermit must be laid low in his arrogance. Apollo, now, had strong points. Consider the pythoness and the oracle. The Hermit couldn't prophesy in the same class with a pythoness. The oracle might run,

“He who dwells by the Haunted Water alone,  
He shall not remain, but shall perish.”

We came then to the hut, but Silvia would have, nothing to do with Baal's funeral, so that she and Aaron wandered away among the birches, that were no older than they, young birches, slim and white, coloring the sunlight pale green with their leaves. And we went up to the altar-stone, and made ready the funeral, and set the urn to receive the ashes, decently, in order. The pyre was built four-square, of chosen sticks. We did not try to fit Baal together much; we laid him on as he came. And when the birch bark was curling up and the pitchy black smoke of it was pouring upward, we fell on our faces and cried: “Alas, Baal! Woe's me, Baal!”

It was a good ceremony. For when you are doing a ceremony, it depends on how much your feelings are worked up, of course, and very few, if any, of those we had done—and they were many—had ever reached such a point of efficiency as the funeral of Baal-Peor. Moses howled mournfully, as if it were in some tooth that his sorrow lay. The thought of that impressiveness and luxury of feeling lay mellow in our minds long after. “Alas, Baal!”

Somebody snorted near by. We looked up. Over our heads, thrust out beyond the edge of the boulders, was a strange old face, with heavy brows and jaws and grizzled hair.

The face was distorted, the jaws working. It disappeared, and we sat up, gasping at one another across the funeral pyre, where the black smoke was rolling up faster and faster.

In a moment the face came out on the altar-stone, and looked at us with level brows.

“What ye doin'?”

“My goodness!” gasped Moses. “You aren't another hermit?”

“What ye doin'?”

Chub recovered himself.

“It's Baal's funeral.”

“Just so.”

He sat down on a stone and wiped his face, which was heated. He carried a notable stick in his hand. “Baal! We-ell, what ailed him?”

“Are you Silvia's old man?” asked Chub.

“Just so—er—what ailed Baal?”

Then we told him—seeing Baal was dead and the Vows would have to be taken over again—we told him about Baal, and about the Leather Hermit, because he seemed touched by it, and worked his face and blinked his sharp hard eyes uncannily. Some hidden vein of grim ideas was coming to a white heat within him, like a suppressed molten stratum beneath the earth, unsuspected on its surface, that suddenly heaves and cracks the faces of stone cliffs. He gave way at last, and his laughter was the rending tumult of an earthquake.

Aaron and Silvia came up through the woods hastily to the altar-stone.

“I say,” cried Chub. “Are you going to lick them? It's two to Aaron for one to Silvia.”

“Been marryin' and multiplying have ye?”

He suppressed the earthquake, but still seemed mainly interested in Baal's funeral.

Aaron said, “She's Mrs. Bees, anyhow.”

“Just so. Baal's dead. That hermit's some lively.”

“We'll get an oracle on him,” said Moses. “What you going to do to Aaron and Silvia?”

Here Silvia cast herself on the old man suddenly and wept on his shoulder. One often noticed how girls would start up and cry on a person.

Maybe the earthquake had brought up subsoils and mellowed things; at least Kincard made no motion to lick some one, though he looked bored, as any fellow might.

“Oh, we-ell, I don't know—er—what's that oracle?”

“He who dwells by the Haunted Water alone,  
He shall not remain, but shall perish.”

“It's going to be like that,” said Chub. “Won't it fetch him, don't you think?”

“It ought to,” said the old man, working his jaw. “It ought to.”

The black smoke had ceased, and flames were crackling and dancing all over the funeral pyre. The clearer smoke floated up against the face of the lonesome cliff. Aaron and Silvia clasped hands unfrightened. The old man now and then rumbled subterraneously in his throat. Peace was everywhere, and presently Baal-Peor was ashes.

## THE LEATHER HERMIT

To know the Wyantenaug thoroughly is to be wise in rivers; which if any one doubts, let him follow it from its springs to the sea—a possible fortnight—and consider then how he is a changed man with respect to rivers. Not that by any means it is the epitome of rivers. It is no spendthrift flood-stream to be whirling over the bottom-lands in April and scarcely able to wet its middle stones in August, but a shrewd and honest river, a canny river flowing among a canny folk, a companionable river, loving both laughter and sentiment, with a taste for the varieties of life and a fine vein of humor. Observe how it dances and sputters down the rapids—not really losing its temper, but pretending to be nervous—dives into that sloping pass where the rocks hang high and drip forever, runs through it like a sleuth-hound, darkly and savagely, and saunters out into the sunlight, as who should say in a guileless manner, “You don't happen to know where I'm going?” Then it wanders about the valley, spreads out comfortably and lies quiet a space, “But it really makes no difference, you know”; and after that gives a chuckle, rounds a bunch of hills and goes scampering off, quite taken up with a new idea. And so in many ways it is an entertaining and friendly river, with a liking for a joke and a pretty notion of dramatic effect.

But, of all times and places, I think it most beautiful in the twilight and along that stretch, called of late the Haunted Water, opposite the village of Preston Plains. The Cattle Ridge with its long heaving spine comes down on the valley from the east, seeming to have it very much in mind to walk over and do something to Preston Plains three miles beyond; but it thought better of that long ago. The Wyantenaug goes close beneath it in sheer bravado: “You try to cross me and you get jolly wet”; for the Wyantenaug is very deep and broad just here. The Cattle Ridge, therefore, merely wrinkles its craggy brows with a puzzled air, and Preston Plains is untroubled save of its own inhabitants. As to that matter the people of the village of Hagar have opinions. The valley road goes on the other side of the river—naturally, for there are the pastures, the feeding cattle, the corn-fields, and farmhouses—and the Cattle Ridge side is steep, and threaded by a footpath only, for a mile or more, up to Hants Corby's place. Hants Corby's is not much of a place either.

In old times the footpath was seldom used, except by the Leather Hermit. No boy in Hagar would go that way for his life, though we often went up and down on the river, and saw the Leather Hermit fishing. The minister in Hagar visited him once or twice, and probably went by the footpath. I remember distinctly how he shook his head and said that the Hermit sought salvation at any rate by a narrow way, and how the miller's wife remonstrated with him for seeming to take the Hermit seriously.

“You don't mean to say he ain't crazy,” she said, in anxious defence of standard reason.

“Oh, I suppose so, yes.”

The minister sighed and rubbed his chin uneasily, and Mrs. Mather recovered her ordinary state of mind, which was a state of suppressed complaint.

I was saying that the footpath was seldom used. Hants Corby would have used it—for he was too shiftless to be afraid—if the river had run the other way. As it was, he preferred to drift down in his boat and row back when he had to. He found that easier, being very shiftless. The Hermit himself went on the river, except in the spring when the current below was too strong.

The opinions of the Leather Hermit may be shown in this way. If you came on him, no matter suddenly, and asked whose land that was across the river, he would answer promptly, “The devil's”; whereas it belonged to Bazilloa Armitage, a pillar of the church in Preston Plains, who quarrelled zealously with the other pillars; so that, as one sees, the Leather Hermit was not in sympathy with the church in Preston Plains.

The people of the valley differed about him according to humor, and he used strong language regarding the people of the valley according to opportunity, especially regarding Bazilloa Armitage. He denounced Bazilloa Armitage publicly in Preston Plains as a hypocrite, a backbiter, and a man with a muck rake—with other language stronger still. Bazilloa Armitage felt hurt, for he was, in fact, rather close, and exceedingly respectable. Besides it is painful to be damned by a man who means exactly what he says.

To speak particularly, this was in the year 1875; for the next year we camped near the spot, and Hants Corby tried to frighten us into seeing the Hermit's ghost. Bazilloa Armitage was denounced in June, and Hants Corby on the second Friday in August, as Hants and the Hermit fished near each other on the river. The Hermit denounced him under three heads—sluggard, scoffer, and beast wallowing in the sty of his own lustful contentment. On Saturday the Hermit rowed up to Hants Corby's place in the rain and denounced him again.

Sunday morning the Hermit rose early, turned his back on the Wyantenaug, and climbed the cliff, onward and up through the pines. The prophets of old went into high places when they prayed; and it was an idea of his that those who would walk in the rugged path after them could do no better. Possibly the day was an anniversary, for it was of an August day many years gone—before ever a charcoal pit was built on the Cattle Ridge—that the Hermit first appeared on the Wyantenaug, with his leather clothes in a bundle on his back, and perhaps another and invisible burden beneath it. A third burden he took up immediately, that of denouncing the sins of Wyantenaug Valley, as I have said.

All that Sabbath day the river went its way, and late in the afternoon the sunlight stretched a thin finger beneath the hemlocks almost to the Hermit's door. Across the river the two children of Bazilloa Armitage, boy and girl, came down to the water's edge. The boy pulled a pole and line out of some mysterious place in the bank. The little girl sat primly on the grass, mindful of her white pinafore.

“You better look out, Cis,” he said. “Any fish you catch on Sunday is devils. You don't touch him. You cut the line and let him dry till Monday.”

“Oh, Tad!” gasped the little girl, “won't the Leather Hermit tell?”

“Well,” said Tad, sturdily, “father said he'd get even, if it took a month of Sundays, and that's six Sundays by this time. There ain't anything bothers the Hermit like catching the fish on Sundays, specially if you catch a lot of 'em. Blamed old fool!” grumbled Tad.

“Oh, Tad,” gasped the little girl again, in awed admiration, “that's swearing.”

But Tad did not mind. "There's Hants Corby," he exclaimed; "he's going to fish, too."

Hants Corby floated down in his old boat, dropped anchor opposite the children, and grinned sociably.

"He daren't touch his boat to-day," he said in a husky whisper. "He'll raise jinks in a minute. You wait."

"Fishes is devils on Sunday, aren't they, Hants?"

"Trout," returned Hants, decisively, "is devils any time."

Both Tad Armitage and Hants Corby ought to have known that the Leather Hermit sometimes went up the Cattle Ridge on Sundays to wrestle with an angel, like Jacob, who had his thigh broken. We knew that much in Hagar—and it shows what comes of living in Preston Plains instead of Hagar.

Hants Corby motioned with his thumb toward the Hermit's hut.

"Him," he remarked, "he don't let folks alone. He wants folks to let him alone particular. That ain't reasonable."

"Father says he's a fernatic," ventured Tad. "What's a fernatic, Hants?"

"Ah," said Hants, thoughtfully, "that's a rattlin' good word."

Time dragged on, and yet no denouncing voice came from the further shore. The door of the hut was a darker hole in the shade of the hemlocks. Hants Corby proposed going over to investigate.

"If he ain't there, we'll carry off his boat."

Tad fell into Hants's boat quite absorbed in the greatness of the thought. It was not a good thing generally to follow Hants Corby, who was an irresponsible person, apt to take much trouble to arrange a bad joke and shiftlessly slip out from under the consequences. If he left you in a trap, he thought that a part of the joke, as I remember very well.

"A-a-a-ow!" wailed Cissy Armitage from the bank; for it dawned on her that something tremendous was going forward, in which Tad was likely to be suddenly obliterated. She sat on the bank with her stubby shoes hanging over, staring with great frightened blue eyes, till she saw them at last draw silently away from the further shore—and behold, the Hermit's boat was in tow. Then she knew that there was no one in the world so brave or so grandly wicked as Tad.

Cissy Armitage used to have fluffy yellow hair and scratches on her shins. She was a sunny little soul generally, but she had a way of imagining how badly other people felt, which interfered with her happiness, and was not always accurate. Tad seldom felt so badly as she thought he did. Tad thought he could imagine most things better on the whole, but when it came to imagining how badly other people felt, he admitted that she did it very well. Therefore when she set about imagining how the Hermit felt, on the other side of the river, with no boat to come across in, to where people were cosy and comfortable, where they sang the Doxology and put the kittens to bed, she quite forgot that the Hermit had always before had a boat, that he never yet had taken advantage of it to make the acquaintance of the Doxology or the kittens, and imagined him feeling very badly indeed.

Bazilloa Armitage held family prayers at six o'clock on Sunday afternoons; and all through them Cissy considered the Hermit.

"I sink in deep waters," read Bazilloa Armitage with a rising inflection. "The billows go over my head, all his waves go over me, Selah," and Cissy in her mind saw the Hermit sitting on the further shore, feeling very badly, calling Tad an "evil generation," and saying: "The billows go over my head, Selah," because he had no boat. She thought that one must feel desperately in order to say: "Selah, the billows go over me." And while Bazilloa Armitage prayed for the President, Congress, the Governor, and other people who were in trouble, she plotted diligently how it might be avoided that the Hermit should feel so badly as to say "Selah," or call Tad an "evil generation"; how she might get the boat back, in order that the Hermit should feel better and let bygones be; and how it might be done secretly, in order that Tad should not make a bear of himself. Afterwards she walked out of the back door in her sturdy fashion, and no one paid her any attention.

The Hermit muttered in the dusk of his doorway.

Leather clothes are stiff after a rain and bad for the temper; moreover, other things than disordered visions of the heavens rolling away as a scroll and the imperative duty of denouncing some one were present in his clouded brain,—half memories, breaking through clouds, of a time when he had not as yet begun to companion daily with judgment to come, nor had those black spots begun to dance before his eyes, which black spots were evidently the sins of the world. He muttered and shifted his position uneasily.

There was once a little white house somewhere in the suburbs of a city. It stood near the end of a half-built street, with a sandy road in front. There was a child, too, that rolled its doll down the steps, rolled after it, wept aloud and laughed through its tears.

The stiff leather rasped the Hermit's skin. The clouds closed in again; he shook himself, and raised his voice threateningly in words familiar enough to the denounced people of the Wyantenaug: "It is written, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'; and your gods are multitudes." He stared with dazed eyes across the dusky river. The little ripples chuckled, sobbed and gurgled in a soft, human way. Something seemed to steal in upon him, like a gentle hand, pleading and caressing. He made an angry motion to thrust it away, and muttered: "Judgment to come—judgment to come." He seemed to hear a sobbing and whispering, and then two infinite things came together in his shattered brain with a crash, leaving him stunned and still.

There was a syringa bush before the little white house, a picket fence, too, white and neat. Who was it that when he would cry, "Judgment to come!" would whisper and sob? That was not a child. That was—no—well, there was a child. Evidently it rolled its doll down the steps and rolled after it. There was a tan-yard, too, and the dressing of hides. He dressed hides across a bench. The other men did not take much interest in judgment to come. They swore at him and burned sulphur under his bench. After that the child rolled its doll down the steps again, and bumped after it pitifully.

The Hermit groaned and hid his face. He could almost remember it all, if it were not for the black spots, the sins of the world. Something surely was true—whether judgment to come or the child bumping down the steps he could not tell, but he thought, "Presently I shall forget one of the two."



The sun had set, and the dusk was creeping from the irregular hills beyond, over the village of Preston Plains, over the house of Bazilloa Armitage. Dark storm-clouds were bearing down from the north. A glitter sprang once more into the Hermit's eyes, and he welcomed the clouds, stretching out his hands toward them. Suddenly he dropped his hands, and the glitter died out in a dull stare. Across the last red reflection of the water glided a boat, his own boat, or one like it. A little child in white rose up and stood in the prow, and, as though she were a spirit, the light in the west passed into her hair. It was not the right way for judgment to come. The dark clouds bearing down from the north—that was judgment to come; but the spirit in the boat, that—could not be anything—it was false—unless—unless it rolled down the steps. And then once more the two infinite things came together with a crash. He leaped to his feet; for a moment his hands went to and fro over his head; he babbled mere sounds, and fell forward on his face, groaning.

Cissy Armitage achieved the top of the bank with difficulty, and adjusted her pinafore. The Hermit lay on his face very still. It was embarrassing.

"I—I brought back your boat, so you needn't feel bad. I—I feel bad."

She stopped, hearing the Hermit moan once softly, and then for a time the only sound was the lapping of the water. It was growing quite dark. She thought that he must feel even worse than she had imagined.

"I'm sorry. It's awful lonesome. I—want to go home."

The Hermit made no motion. Cissy felt that it was a bad case. She twisted her pinafore and blinked hard. The lumps were rising in her throat, and she did not know what to say that would show the Hermit how badly she felt—unless she said "Selah." It was strong language, but she ventured it at last.

"I feel awful bad. The—the billows go over my head, Selah!" Then she wished that she had let "Selah" quite alone.

The Hermit lifted his face. It was very white; his eyes were fixed and dead-looking, and he got his feet under him, as if he intended to creep forward. Cissy backed against a tree, swallowed lumps very fast, and decided to kick if he came near. But he only looked at her steadily.

"What is your name?" he said in a slow, plaintive tone, as a man speaks who cannot hear his own voice. Cissy thought it silly that he should not know her name, having seen her often enough,—and this gave her courage. "Cecilia Armitage. I want to go home."

"No!" shouted the Hermit. He sat up suddenly and glared at her, so that the lumps began climbing her throat again faster than ever. "That isn't the name." Then he dropped his head between his knees and began sobbing. Cissy did not know that men ever cried. It seemed to tear him up, and was much worse than "The billows go over me, Selah." On the whole there seemed to be no point in staying longer. She walked to the bank and there hesitated diffidently.

"I want to go home. I—I want you to row me."

There was a long silence; the Hermit's head was still hidden between his knees. Then he came over and got into the boat, not walking upright, but almost creeping, making no noise, nor lifting his head. He took the oars and rowed, still keeping his head down, until the boat came under the old willow, where the bank runs low on the edge of Bazilloa Armitage's ten-acre lot. It struck the bank, but he sat still, with his head down. Cissy Armitage scrambled up the roots of the willow, looked back, and saw him sitting with his head down.

Cissy Armitage was the last to see the Leather Hermit alive, for Hants Corby found him Monday afternoon in shallow water, about a rod from shore. The anchor stone was clasped in his arms, and the anchor rope wound around his waist, which would seem to imply that he was there with a purpose. If that purpose was to discover which of two things were true—judgment to come, or the child that rolled its doll down the steps—every one is surely entitled to an opinion on its success or failure. There was a copy-book, such as children use, found in his hut. On the cover was written, "The Book of Judgment." It contained the record of his denunciations, with other odd things. The people of Wyantenaug Valley still differ, according to humor; but any one of them will give his or her opinion, if you ask it.

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## BLACK POND CLEARING

**I**n those days I knew Hamilton only by the light in the south; for in Hagar men said, "That light in the south is Hamilton," as they would say, "The sunrise in the east, the sunset in the west, the aurora in the north," illuminations that were native in their places. Hamilton was a yellow glimmer on clear nights, and on cloudy nights a larger glow. It crouched low in the sky, pale, secret, enticing.

Also I knew that Hamilton was twenty miles away, like Sheridan's ride. How great and full of palaces and splendors that must be which shone so far! How golden its streets, and jewelled its gates, like the Celestial City, which is described in Revelations and "The Progress" in an unmistakable manner, if not as one would wish in the matter of some details. Yet to speak justly, "The Progress" was considered a passable good story, though not up to the "Arabian Nights"; and Revelations had its points, though any one could see the writer was mixed in his mind, and upset probably by the oddness of his adventures, and rather stumped how to relate them plainly.

But this story does not include the city of Hamilton, although touching on the lights in the south. It left its mark upon me and cast a shadow over many things that did not seem connected with it, being a kind of introduction for me to what might be called the Greater Melancholies.

There are four roads that meet in Hagar: the Cattle Ridge, the Salem, the Windless Mountain, and the Red

Rock. The Salem is broad, level, and straight; the Windless sweeps around the mountain, deep through the pines, the jungle of other woods, and the gorge of the falling Mill Stream; the Red Rock is a high, clean hill road, open and bare; the Cattle Ridge Road comes down from highest of all, from far up on the windy brows of the Ridge, and dips and courtesies all the way into Hagar. Some time I would like to make more plain the nature and influence of the Four Roads. But the adventure began on the Cattle Ridge Road with a wide-armed chestnut tree, where certain red squirrels lived who were lively and had thin tails. I went out over the road on a long limb with Moses Durfey and Chub Leroy, seeing Mr. Cummings driving a load of hay down from the Cattle Ridge: it seemed desirable to drop on the hay when it passed beneath. Mr. Cummings was sleepy. He sat nodding far down in front, while we lit softly on the crest and slid over behind.

And next you are to know that Chub Leroy's feet came down thump on the head of a monstrous man, half buried in the hay, who sat up and looked around, vast, shaggy, black-bearded, smoking a corn-cob pipe, composed, and quite ragged in his clothes.

"Humph!" he said mildly, and rubbed his head.

After a few moments looking us over, he pointed with his thumb through the hay at Mr. Cummings, and leaned toward us and winked.

"Same as me," he whispered, and shook all over his fatness, silently, with the laughter and pleasure he was having inside.

It is a good thing in this world to have adventures, and it is only a matter of looking around a bit in country or city. For each fellow his quest is waiting at the street corner, or hides in the edge of the woods, peering out of green shadows. On all highways it is to be met with and is seldom far to seek—though no harm if it were—because the world is populous with men and animals, and no moment like another. It may be, if you drop on a hay-load, you will have a row with the driver, or you will thump on the head such a free traveller as ours, vast, shaggy, primeval, pipe-smoking, of wonderful fatness.

He seemed a sleepy, contented man, not in point of fact minding thumps on the head. The hay-cart rolled on gently in the dust. Mr. Cummings drowsed in front, unaware, and the Free Traveller drowsed behind, smoking listlessly. The rest of us grew sleepy too and liked everything. For it was odd but pleasant in a way to look down from the secrecy of the hay on familiar things, on the village dooryards and the tops of hats. We seemed to fall into silent league with the Free Traveller, to be interested in things, but not anxious, observing the hats of labor and ambition, careless of appearance, primitive, easy, seeing little importance in where the cart might go, because anywhere was good enough.

Instead of turning east at the cross-roads, Mr. Cummings drove drowsily ahead on the Windless Road, although the Cummings place is east on the Salem; so that the hay was plainly going to the little pasture barn, three miles off, all one to us, and better for the Free Traveller, as it appeared after. But he was not interested then, being in a fair way to sleep. We lay deep in the hay and looked up at the blue of the sky and the white of the creeping clouds, till the pine trees closed suddenly over the road, the cliffs of Windless Mountain on one side and the Mill Stream on the other, deep under its bank. A strong south wind came under the pines, skirting the corner of the mountain, hissed through the pine needles, and rumbled the hay.

And there was a great smoke and blaze about us. "Humph!" said the Free Traveller.

He went off the back of the hay-cart into the middle of the road, and we too fell off immediately, each in his own way, on the pine needles. Mr. Cummings came up over the top of the load with a tumult of mixed language, and the horses ran away.

The great load sped down the green avenue smoking, crackling, blazing, taking with it Mr. Cummings to unknown results, and leaving the Free Traveller sitting up in the middle of the road and looking after it mildly. He heaved himself up puffing. "There!" he said. "There goes my pipe."

"It's all your fault," shouted Moses Durfey. "You shouldn't smoke on hay-loads."

"Maybe Mr. Cummings is a deader," said Chub Leroy, thoughtfully.

The Free Traveller rubbed his leg.

"You're same as me. If he ain't dead he'll come back with a strap and lam some of us. That ain't me. I'm going to light out."

He slid under the rail and down the bank to the stream, handling himself wonderfully for so weighty a man; for he seemed to accommodate himself to obstacles like a jellyfish, and somehow to get around them. So he was over the bowlders and across the stream, which there divides Windless Mountain from the Great South Woods.

We were indignant that he should leave us to be "lammed" for his carelessness. We shouted after, and Moses Durfey said he was a "chump."

"You might come along," retorted the Free Traveller with an injured manner. "What's hindering? I lugs nobody. I lets folks alone."

He was at the wood's edge by this time, where a dim green path went in, looked over his shoulder a moment, and then disappeared. We scrambled down the bank and over the bowlders, for it was not desirable to wait for Mr. Cummings, and Hagar itself would be no refuge. Hagar was a place where criticisms were made, while the green woods have never a comment on any folly, but are good comrades to all who have the temper to like them. We caught up with him by dint of running and followed silently. It grew dusky with the lateness of the afternoon, the pale green light turning dark, and we were solemn and rather low in our minds. The Free Traveller seemed to grow more vast in outline. Being short of wind he wheezed and moaned and what with his swaying as he walked, and his great humpy shoulders and all, he looked less and less like a man, and more and more like a Thing. Sometimes a tree would creak suddenly near at hand, and I fancied there were other people in the woods, whispering and all going the way we went, to see what would come to us in the end.

So it went on till we came on a little clearing, between the forest and a swamp. A black pond, tinted a bit with the sunset, lay below along the edge of the swamp; and we knew mainly where we were, for there was a highway somewhere beyond the swamp, connecting the valleys of the Wyantenaug and the Pilgrim. But none

the less for the highway it seemed a lonely place, fit for congregations of ghosts. The pond was unknown to me, and it looked very still and oily. The forest seemed to crowd about and overhang the clearing. On the western side was a heap of caverned bowlders, and a fire burned in front with three persons sitting beside it.

The Free Traveller slid along the wood's edge noiselessly but without hesitation, and coming to the fire was greeted. One of those who sat there was a tall old man with very light blue eyes and prominent, his beard white and long. As we came to know, he was called the "Prophet." He said:

"How do, Humpy?" so that we knew the Free Traveller was called Humpy, either for the shape of his shoulders or for the word he used to express himself. There was a younger man, with a retreating chin, and a necktie, but no collar, and there was a silent woman with a shawl over her head.

"These are friends o' mine," said the Free Traveller to the older man. "Make you acquainted. That's Showman Bobby, and that's the Prophet."

A vast chuckle of mirth started then from deep within him and surged through his throat,—such a laugh as would naturally come from a whale or some creature of a past age, whose midriff was boundless.

"Ho!" he said. "Bloke with a hay-load lit under him. Ho, Ho!"

"Gen'leman," said the Prophet with a fluent wave of his hand. "Friends of Humpy's. That's enough. Any grub, Humpy?"

The Free Traveller brought out a round loaf and some meat done up in a newspaper. He might have carried a number of such things about him without making any great difference in his contour. The Prophet did not ask about the hay-load, or where the bread and meat came from.

The daylight was fading now in the clearing, and presently a few thin stars were out. It might have occurred to persons of better regulated fancies than ours that they were due at supper long since with other friends of staidier qualities, and that now the wood-paths were too dark to follow. Perhaps it did; but it could not have seemed a fair reason to be troubled, that we were last seen in company with the Free Traveller, so fat and friendly a man. I remember better that the Black Pond reflected no stars, that the gleams from the fire played fearful games along the wood's edge and the bowlders, and how, beyond the Black Pond, the swamp and the close-cuddled hills, the lights of Hamilton crouched low under the sky. Opposite us across the fire sat that woman who said nothing, and her face was shadowed by her shawl.

Showman Bobby and the Free Traveller went to sleep, Bobby on his face and the Free Traveller accommodating himself. The Prophet sat up and kept us company; for we asked him questions naturally, and he seemed interested to answer, and was fluent and striking in his speech. They were a runout Company and very low in their luck; and it seemed that Bobby was the manager, a tumbler himself by profession and in that way of life since childhood; and the Free Traveller was apt to be an Australian giant now, but in earlier years had been given to footing from place to place and living as he might. The Prophet called him a skilful man at getting things out of women, partly by experience, and partly by reason of his size and the mildness of his manners. As for the Black Pond Clearing, it was well known to people of the road, even to orange-men and pack-peddlers, being a hidden place with wood and water and shelter in the caves from rain.

"That light in the south is Hamilton," said Chub Leroy.

The Prophet started and looked anxiously across the fire, but the woman did not move. Then he drew nearer us and spoke lower.

"You look out," he said. "She ain't right in her head. Bobby painted the kid for a pappoose. It took the shakes and died queer. You'd better lie down, Cass," speaking across the fire to the woman, who turned her head and stared at him directly. "You'd better lie down."

She drew back from the fire noiselessly and lay down, wrapping her shawl about her head.

"I ain't been a circus heeler all my time," began the Prophet. "I been a gentleman. Neither has Humpy, I reckon. When I met Bobby it was West and he ran a dime museum. He took me in for being a gifted talker, and I was that low in my luck. She and Bobby was married sometime, and she did acts like the Circassian Beauty, and the Headless Woman, and the Child of the Aztecs. Humpy's gifts lies in his size, and he's a powerful strong man, too, more than you'd think, and he can get himself up for a savage to look like a loose tornado. Look at him now. Ain't he a heap? There was a three-eyed dog in the show that you could n't tell that the extra eye was n't so hardly, and a snake that was any kind of a snake according as you fixed him, his natural color being black. We came East with Forepaugh's. Bobby bought a tent in Chicago, and we came to Hamilton a fortnight ago. Now there's Hamilton that's a-shining off there with its lights. And we run away from it in the night a week come to-morrow, or next day, I forget. We left the tent and outfit which was come down on by a Dutch grocer for debt, and Cassie's baby was dead in the tent. Bobby painted him too thick. And there was a lot of folks looking for us with sticks. Now, that was n't right. Think Bobby'd have poisoned his own kid if he'd known better about painting him, a kid that was a credit to the show! That's what they said. Think folks coming round with sticks and a-howling blasphemous is going to help out any family mourning! That ain't my idea.

"Then a fellow says, 'I don't know anything about it,' he says, 'and I don't want to, but I know you get out of here quick.'

"And they drove us out of Hamilton that night ten miles in a covered cart, and left us in the road. And the Dutch grocer got the outfit. I reckon the circus and the city has buried the kid between 'em. Hey? Sh! She's got a quirk. All I know is Fore-paugh's shook us as if we was fleas."

The Prophet looked over to where Cassie lay, but she did not stir. Anyway, if she heard, it was the Prophet's fault. "They're awful poor company," he said plaintively, "Bobby and Cass. She takes on terrible. She's took a notion that baby ain't buried right. She thinks—well, I don't know. Now that ain't my way of looking at things, but I did n't own the outfit. It was Bobby's outfit, and the Dutch grocer got it."

He was silent for a moment. We could hear the Free Traveller asleep and rumbling in his throat.

"Where might you chaps come from?" asked the Prophet, suddenly. "Not that it's my business. Maybe there might be a town over there? Hey? Yes."

He grumbled in his beard a few moments more, and then lay down to sleep. We drew together and whispered. The three men slept, and the woman said nothing.

It is seen that sometimes your most battered and world-worn of men is the simplest in his way of looking at things. Or else it was because the Prophet was a talker by nature, and Bobby and Cass such poor company, that he fell into speech with us on such equal terms. I have set down but little of what he said, only enough for the story of the Company, and as I happen to recollect it.

It should have been something earlier than nine o'clock when the Prophet lay down to sleep, and half an hour later when we first noticed that the woman, Cass, was sitting up. She had her back to us and was looking toward the lights of Hamilton. There was no moon and the stars only shone here and there between clouds that hurried across the sky, making preparations for the storm that came in the morning. The fire burned low, but there was no need of it for warmth. The outlines of the hills could be seen. The swamp, the pond, and most of the clearing were dark together.

Presently she looked cautiously around, first at the three sleepers, and then at us. She crept nearer slowly and crouched beside the dull fire, throwing back her shawl. Her hair was black and straggled about her face, and her eyes were black too, and glittering. The glow of the embers, striking upward, made their sockets cavernous, but the eyes stood out in the midst of the caverns. One knows well enough that tragedies walk about and exchange agreeable phrases with each other. Your tragedy is yours, and mine is mine, and in the meanwhile see to it that we look sedate, and discuss anything, provided it is of no importance to either. One does not choose to be an inscribed monument to the fame of one's private affair. But Cassie had lost that instinct of reserve, and her desolation looked out of her eyes with dreadful candor. The lines of her face, the droop of her figure and even little motions of the hand, signified but one thought. I suppose all ideas possible to the world had become as one to her, so that three boys cowering away from her seemed only a natural enough part of the same subject. It was all one; namely, a baby painted brown, who died queerly in a side tent in Hamilton Fair Grounds.

We stared at her breathlessly.

"You tell 'em I'm going," she whispered.

"Where?" asked Chub.

"They ain't no right to—to—Who are you?"

But this was only in passing. She did not wait to be answered.

"You tell 'em I'm going."

"What for?" persisted Chub.

"It's six days. Maybe they threwed him where the tin cans are. You tell 'em I'm going."

And she was gone. She must have slipped along the edge of the woods where the shadows were densest.

We listened a moment or two stupidly. Then we sprang up. It seems as if the three men were on their feet at the same instant, wakened by some common instinct or pressure of fear. It was a single sound of splashing we heard off in the darkness. Bobby was gone, then the Free Traveller, then the Prophet. We fell into hollows, over rocks and stumps, and came to the pond. The reflection of a star or two glimmered there. The water looked heavy, like melted lead, and any ripple that had been was gone, or too slight to see. The Free Traveller and Bobby went in and waded about.

"Don't you step on her," said Bobby, hoarsely.

The bottom seemed to shelve steeply from the shore. They moved along chest-deep, feeling with their feet, and we heard them whispering. The Prophet sat down and whimpered softly. They waded a distance along the shore, and back. They came close in, whispered together, and went out again.

"Here! I got it," said the Free Traveller. They came out, carrying something large and black, and laid it on the ground.

"It ain't Cassie!" whimpered the Prophet. "It ain't Cassie, is it?"

They all stood about it. The face was like a dim white patch on the ground.

"Hold your jaw," said Bobby. "Hark!"

There were voices in the woods above, and a crashing of the branches. They were coming nearer and lights were twinkling far back in the wood-path, where we had entered the clearing. I do not know what thought it was—some instinct to flee and hide—that seized the outcasts. They slid away into the darkness together, swiftly and without speaking. The Free Traveller had Cassie's body on his shoulder, carrying it as a child carries a rag doll. The darkness swallowed them at a gulp, and we stood alone by the Black Pond. Several men came into the clearing with lanterns, villagers from Hagar, Harvey Cummings, the minister, and others, who swung their lanterns and shouted.

Now, I suppose that Cassie lies buried to-day somewhere in the South Woods, and it may be that no man alive knows where. For none of the Company were ever seen again in that part of the country, nor have been heard of anywhere now these many years. We can see the lights of Hamilton from Hagar as of old, but we seldom think of the Celestial City, or any palaces and splendors, but of the multitude of various people who go to and fro, each carrying a story.

The coming and going of aliens made little difference with Hagar. I suppose it was more important there, that Harvey Cummings's hay-load went up lawlessly in smoke and flame, and never came to the little pasture barn on the Windless Mountain Road.



# JOPPA

On Friday afternoon, the twenty-eighth of June, Deacon Crockett's horse ran away. It was not a suitable thing, not at all what a settled community had a right to expect of a horse with stubby legs and no mane to speak of, who had grown old in the order of decent conduct. He ran into Mrs. Cullom Sanderson's basket phaeton and spilled Mrs. Cullom on the ground, which was taking a grave responsibility. It was done in the midst of Hagar. Harvey Cummings jumped out of the way and said, "Deb it!" There was no concealment about it. Everybody heard of it and said it was astonishing.

The name of the deacon's horse was Joppa. The deacon's father-in-law, Captain David Brett, had an iron-gray named Borneo. Borneo and Joppa did not agree, on account of Borneo's kicking Joppa in the ribs to show his contempt. It was natural that he should have this contempt, being sleek and spirited himself, with a nautical gait that every one admitted to be taking; and Joppa did not think it unnatural in him to show it. Without questioning the justice of Borneo's position, he disliked being kicked in the ribs.

Borneo had been eating grass by the roadside; Joppa stood harnessed in front of the horse-block; Mrs. Crockett stood on the horse-block; Borneo came around and kicked Joppa in the ribs; Joppa ran away; Mrs. Crockett shrieked; Harvey Cummings said "Deb it!" and Mrs. Cullom Sanderson was spilled. She weighed two hundred pounds and covered a deal of ground when she was spilled.

He crossed the bridge and tore along the Salem Road, his stubby legs pattering under him, and a great fear in his soul of the shouting village behind. Angelica and Willy Flint saw him coming.

"It's a runaway!" shouted Angelica.

Willy Flint continued swinging on the gate. He thought it his place to be self-contained and accurate.

"It's Joppa," he said calmly.

But Angelica did not care for appearances. She shied a clam-shell at Joppa, said "Hi there!" and jumped around.

Joppa swerved sharply, the deacon's buggy turned several sides up, if that is possible, bobbed along behind, and then broke loose at the thills. Joppa fled madly up the side road that leads to Scrabble Up and Down, and disappeared over the crest of the hill, leaving Angelica and Willy Flint to gloat over the wreck of the buggy. It gratified a number of their instincts.

The region called Scrabble Up and Down, as well as the road which leads to it, is distinguished by innumerable small steep hills and hollows. For the rest, it is a sandy and ill-populated district, and a lonely road. Westward of it lies a wilderness of underbrush and stunted trees, rising at last into exultant woods and billowing over the hills mile upon mile to the valley of the Wyantenaug. The South Woods do not belong to Scrabble Up and Down. They are put there to show Scrabble Up and Down what it cannot do.

The road winds around hillocks and down hollows in an aimless fashion; and for that reason it is not possible to see much of it at a time. When the villagers of Hagar reached the top of the first hill, Joppa was nearly a mile away, his stubby legs rather tired, his spirit more tranquil, and himself out of sight of the villagers of Hagar. He saw no point in turning back. Hagar gave him but a dull and unideal life, plodding between shafts before the austere and silent deacon, unaccountably smacked with a whip, and in constant contrast with Borneo's good looks. Joppa had not many ideas and little imagination. He did not feel drawn to go back. Moreover he smelt something damp and fresh in the direction of the woods which absorbed him. He stopped, sniffed, and looked around. The fence was broken here and there, as fences generally were in Scrabble Up and Down. The leaves were budding; there was a shimmer of green on the distant woods; and presently Joppa was wandering through the brush and scrub trees westward. The broken shafts dragged quietly beside him. He lifted his head a little higher than usual and had an odd feeling, as if he were enjoying himself.

A tumult, row, or excitement of any kind was considered by the children of Hagar a thing to be desired, assisted, and remembered gratefully. Some of the elders were much of the same mind. Joppa's action was therefore popular in Hagar, the more so that it was felt to be incongruous; and, when by no search that Friday afternoon nor the following Saturday could he be found, his reputation rose in leaps. He had gone over the hill and vanished like a ghost, commonplace, homely, plodding, downcast Joppa, known to Hagar in that fashion these dozen or more years and suddenly become the loud talk of the day. The road to Scrabble Up and Down and the roads far beyond were searched. Inquiry spread to Salem and to Gilead. On Saturday night notices were posted here and there by happy jokers relating to Joppa, one on the church door of Hagar requesting the prayers of the congregation. Mr. Atherton Bell thought the deacon's horse like "the deacon's one-hoss shay," in that he had lasted an extraordinary time intact, and then disintegrated. Joppa had become a mystery, an excitement, a cause of wit. A definite addition had been made to the hoarded stock of tradition and jest; the lives of all seemed the richer. An atmosphere of deep and tranquil mirth pervaded the village, a kind of mellow light of humor, in the focus of which stood Deacon Crockett, and writhed.

It was hoped that the minister would preach on Joppa. He preached on "human insignificance," and read of the war-horse, "Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" but it was thought not to refer to Joppa.

As for the children of Hagar, did they not dream of him, and hear him thumping and blundering by in the winds of the dim night? They saw no humor in him, nor in the deacon. Rather it was a serious mystery, and they went about with the impression of it on their faces, having faith that the outcome would be worthy of the promise.

Harvey Cummings thought that the war-horse did not refer to Joppa, and said so on the steps of the church. "There wan'd no thudder about him. He was the meekest hoss in Hamilton County. He run away on account of his shyness."

Mr. Cummings had no palate to speak of, and his consonants were uncertain. Mr. Atherton Bell threw out his chest, as an orator should, put his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, and gazed at Mr. Cummings with a kindling eye.

"For a meek horse," he said impressively, "he showed—a—great resolution when he spilled Mrs. Cullom

Sanderson. I declare to you, Harvey, I give you my word, sir, I would not have missed seeing Mrs. Cullom spilled for a government contract."

"Oh, indeed, Mr. Bell!" said Mrs. Cullom Sanderson, rustling past, "clothed with thunder" and black silk. Mr. Atherton Bell recovered himself slowly and moved to a greater distance from the church door. He was a politician and a legislator, but he found diplomacy difficult. Several others gathered around, desiring to hear the statesman. "Now suppose, Harvey, suppose the deacon too should take a notion to run away, knock over Mrs. Cullom, you know, and—a—disappear. Imagine it, Harvey."

Mr. Cummings shook his head.

"Can't do it."

Mr. Bell took off his hat and smiled expansively.

"It's a pleasing thought, ha! He might be translated—a—Elijah, you know. He might leave his mantle to—to me. Hitherto the deacon has lacked dramatic interest. Contact between Mrs. Cullom and Deacon Crockett would—" (here his hearers stirred appreciatively) "would have dramatic interest—Ah, good morning, deacon, good morning, sir. We were speaking of your loss. We—a—trust it will not be permanent."

The deacon moved on without answering. Mr. Atherton Bell's spirit fell again, and he wiped his forehead nervously.

It would be a painful thing if a man were suddenly to enter into full sight of himself as others see him; it is a measure of distress even to have a passing glimpse—not so much because he sees a worse man, but because he sees a stranger.

Deacon Crockett had never asked himself how others saw him. He was not a flexible man. The grooves in which his life ran had been worn slowly in a hard substance. Its purports and ends had always seemed to him accurately measured and bounded. He exacted his rights, paid his dues, and had no doubts about either; held his conscience before him as a sword, dividing truth from falsehood. He stood by the faith of his forefathers, gave up no jot or tittle of it; there were no hazy outlying regions in that faith.

When a man observes himself to be a well-defined thing in certain relations with other well-defined things, has no more doubt of the meaning of his presence on the earth than of the function of a cogwheel in his watch, his footing seems singularly secure; the figure he makes in his own eyes not only grows rigid with habit, but seems logically exact to begin with. To doubt the function of the cog-wheel is to put in question the watch, which is impossible and a sufficient demonstration. Other men's opinions, if worth anything or considered at all, are assumed to be respectful; and the assumption seems just.

Why should he not feel impregnable in his personal dignity, who sees himself sufficiently fulfilling his function in an ordered scheme, a just man, elected to become perfect? Personal dignity is at least not a vulgar ambition. It was the deacon's ambition, the thing which he wished to characterize his life.

The deacon walked down the path from the church. He walked quietly and stiffly as usual, but the spirit within him was worse than angry; it was confused. The whole neighborhood seemed to be laughing at him; his fingers tingled at the thought.

But that was not the source of his confusion. It was, strangely, that there seemed to be no malice in the laughter, only a kind of amused friendliness. An insult and a resentment can be understood by a man of function, within his function; his resentment maintains his equilibrium. But, quite the contrary, his neighbors seemed timidly to invite him into the joke. Of all the hidden ways of laughter one comes last to that in which he may walk and be amused with himself; although it is only there that he is for the first time entirely comfortable in the world. Tim Rae, the town drunkard, met him where the path across the Green joins the road. It was Tim's habit to flee from the deacon's approach with feeble subterfuges, not because the deacon ever lectured him, but because the deacon's presence seemed to foreshorten his stature, and gave him a chill in the stomach, where he preferred "something warm." Yet he ambled amiably across the road, and his air of good-fellowship could not have been greater if they had met in a ditch on equal terms of intoxication.

"What think, deacon," he gurgled. "I was dream-in' las' night, 'bout Joppa comin' down my chimney, damned if he did n't."

The deacon stopped and faced him.

"You may be drunk, sir," he said slowly, "on Saturday night, and you may curse on the Sabbath; but you *may not* expect me to sympathize with you—in either."

Then Tim Rae slunk away foreshortened of stature and cold in the stomach.

Monday morning was the first of May; and on May-day, unless the season were backward and without early flowers, the children of Hagar would go after ground-pine for the May-baskets, and trailing arbutus to fill them with. They would hang the baskets on the door-handles of those who were thought worthy, popular persons such as the minister and Sandy Campbell; on Mr. Atherton Bell's door-handle on account of Bobby Bell, who was a gentleman but not allowed to be out nights because of his inferior age.

Ground-pine grows in many places, but early arbutus is a whimsical flower, as shy as first love. It is nearly always to be found somewhere in the South Woods. And the South Woods are to be reached, not by Scramble Up and Down, but along the Windless Mountain Road, across the Mill Stream, and by cart-paths which know not their own minds.

The deacon drove home from Gilead Monday afternoon, and saw the children noisily jumping the Mill Stream where the line of bowlders dams up the stream and makes deep quiet water above. Their voices, quarrelling and laughing, fell on his ear with an unfamiliar sound. Somehow they seemed significant, at least suggesting odd trains of thought. He found himself imagining how it would seem to go Maying; and the incongruity of it brought a sudden frown of mental pain and confusion to his forehead. And so he drove into Hagar.

But if he had followed the May-day revellers, as he had oddly imagined himself doing, he would have gone by those winding cart-paths, fragrant with early growth, and might have seen the children break from the woods with shouts into a small opening above a sunken pond; he might even have heard the voice of Angelica

Flint rise in shrill excitement:

*"Why, there's Joppa!"*

Some minutes after six, the first shading of the twilight being in the air, the villagers of Hagar, whose houses lay along the north and south road, rose on one impulse and came forth into the street. And standing by their gates and porches, they saw the children go by with lost Joppa in their midst. Around his neck was a huge flopping wreath of ground-pine and arbutus. The arbutus did not stay in very well, and there was little of it—only bits stuck in here and there. Joppa hung his head low, so that the wreath had to be held on. He did not seem cheerful; in fact, the whole cortège had a subdued though important air, as if oppressed by a great thought and conscious of ceremony.

The minister and the other neighbors along the street came out and followed. Some dozen or more at last stood on the brow of the slight hill looking down to the deacon's house; and they too felt conscious of something, of a ceremony, a suspense.

Mr. Atherton Bell met the children and drove his buggy into the ditch, stood up and gazed over the back of it with an absorbed look.

"I feel curious how the deacon will take it," said the minister. "I—I feel anxious."

Mr. Atherton Bell said, it got him. He said something too about "dramatic interest" and "a good betting chance he'll cut up rough"; but no one answered him.

The procession halted outside the deacon's gate. A tendency to giggle on the part of certain girls was sternly suppressed by Angelica Flint. Willy Flint led Joppa cautiously up the board walk and tied him to a pillar of the porch; the company began to retreat irregularly.

Suddenly the deacon, tall and black-coated, stood in the doorway, Mrs. Crockett at his elbow pouring forth exclamations; and the retreat became a flight. Little Nettie Paulus fell behind; she stood in the middle of the road and wailed piteously.

The deacon glared at Joppa and Joppa's grotesque necklace, looked after the fleeing children and saw on the brow of the hill the group of his fellow-townsmen. His forehead flushed and he hesitated. At last he took the wreath awkwardly from Joppa's neck, went into the house and shut the door. The wreath hung in his front window seven months, and fell to pieces about the end of November. Joppa died long after of old age and rheumatism.

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## THE ELDER' SEAT

**B**etween the mill and the miller's house in Hagar the Mill Stream made a broad pool with a yellow bottom of pebbles and sand. It was sometimes called the Mediterranean. If you wished to cross the Mill Stream, there was a plank below, which was good to jounce on also, though apt to tip you into the water. The pool was shallow, about twenty feet across and as long as you might care to go upstream,—as far as the clay bank, anyway, where Chub Leroy built the city of Alexandria. Jeannette Paulus walked all over Alexandria to catch a frog, and made a mess of it, and did not catch the frog. That is the way of things in this world. Alexandria fell in a moment, with all her palaces and towers. But there were other cities, and commerce was lively on the Mediterranean.

On the nearer side, against the gray, weatherbeaten flank of the miller's house was a painted bench, for convenience of the morning sun and afternoon shade; and I call it now the Elders' Seat, because Captain David Brett and others were often to be seen sitting there in the sun or shade. I remember the minister was there, and Job Mather, the miller, whenever his grist ran low, so that he let his stem millstones cease to grind. These were the three to whom the Elders' Seat seemed to us to belong by right of continuance, because our short memories ran not to the contrary. Captain David was well in his seventies, the miller not far behind, and Mr. Royce already gray-haired. They sat and watched the rise and fall of cities, the growth and decay of commerce, the tumult of conquests, and the wreck of high ambition. They noticed that one thing did not change nor cease, namely, the ripple of the stream; just as if, in history, there really were a voice distinguishable that went murmuring forever.

After the fall of Alexandria Damascus was built, but inland, so that it had to be reached by caravan; and Moses Durfey laid the foundations of Byzantium where the pool narrowed into rushing water, and Venice was planted low in a marshy place hard by the seven hills of Rome. But you must know that Bobby Bell built the city of Rome absurdly, and filled it with pot-holes to keep frogs in and floating black bugs, so that it was impossible to hold it against the Carthaginians. There were wars in those days. These were the main marts of trade, but there were quays and fortresses elsewhere; and it should be told sometime how the Barbary pirates came down. Rome was in a bad way, for Bobby had one aquarium in the Campus Martius, and another where the Forum should have been. There was nothing flourishing but the aqueducts.

The three Elders would sit leaning forward, watching the changes of fortune and event that went on from hour to hour by the Mediterranean. The captain smoked his pipe; the minister rested his chin on his cane; the miller's hands were on his knees, his large white face stolid, his heavy lips seldom moving. He was a thinking man, the miller,—a slow-moving, slow-speaking, persistent man, and a fatalist in his way of thinking, though he used no such term; it was his notion of things.

They talked of old history out of Gibbon and Grote and the Seven Monarchies, and they talked of things that had happened to them as men in the world; but the things which they thought of most often, in watching the children and the Mill Stream, they said little about, for these had not happened a thousand or two thousand

years before, nor twenty or thirty, but just sixty or seventy. And this was why they came so often to the Elders' Seat, because something dim and happy seemed to come up to them, like a mist, from the Mill Stream, where the children quarrelled and contrived.

"I'll tell ye what ailed Rome," said Captain David. "She needed to be keeled and scraped. She fouled her bottom!"

The minister answered slowly: "No, she was rotten within. She lost the faith in God and in man that keeps a people sound."

"Ho! Well, then she wa'n't handled right."

The miller rubbed his thumb slowly on the palm of his hand. "She was grinded out," he said. "She couldn't help it. Corn can't keep itself from meal when the stones gets at it. No more a man can't keep his bones from dust, nor a people, either, I'm thinking, when its time comes."

The minister shook his head. "I don't like that."

"I don't know as I do, either. And I don't know as that makes any difference."

"Ho!" said the captain. "Bobby's got a new frog!"

And Chub Leroy cried out in despair: "Look out, Bobby! You're stepping on the Colosseum!"

I would not pretend to say how long the Elders' Seat had stood there, or how many years the Elders had come to it now and again; but I remember that it seemed to us very permanent, in a world of shifting empires, where Alexandria was suddenly walked upon and deserted, and Venice went down the current in a rainy night, and was spoken of no more. We could not remember when it had not stood in its place. It was a kind of Olympus to us, or Delphi, where we went for oracles on shipping and other matters.

Afterward we grew up, and became too old to dabble and make beautiful things of gray clay, except Chub Leroy, who is still doing something of that kind, cutting and building with clay and stone. But the Elders' Seat remained, and the Elders watched other children, as if nothing had happened. Only, Captain David had trouble to keep his pipe in his mouth. So that when the Elders' Seat took its first journey, it seemed very difficult for us to understand,—even for those who were too old to dabble in gray clay.

It was not more than a quarter of a mile from the mill, past the drug store, the Crocketts' house, where Captain David lived, and so on by the crossroads, to the minister's, with the graveyard just beyond. I remember how very yellow and dusty the road was in the summer of '86, so that the clay bottom cracked off in flat pieces, which could be gathered up; and then, if you climbed the wall with care enough, you could scale them at woodchucks. August was sultry and still. The morning-glories drooped on Captain David's porch, and the pigeons on the roof went to sleep more than was natural.

The minister and Job Mather sat, one afternoon, in the Elders' Seat; for Captain David, he had not gone out through his gate those many days. There was history enough in process on the Mediterranean. The Americans and Carthaginians were preparing to have a battle, on account of docks that ran too near together. The Elders discovered that they did not care about it.

The miller got to his feet, and lifted one end of the bench. "Come," he said gruffly. "Let's move it."

"Hey!" said the minister, looking troubled and a bit lost. Then his lips trembled. "Yes, Job. That's so, Job. We'd better move it."

The children came up from the Mediterranean in a body, and stared. It was much to them as if, in Greece, the gods had risen up and gone away, for unknown reasons, taking Olympus with them. The old men went along the yellow, dusty road with very shuffling steps, carrying the Elders' Seat, one at each end, till they turned into Captain David's garden and put it down against the porch. Mrs. Crockett came to the door, and held up her hands in astonishment. Captain David was helped out. He was faded and worn with pain. He settled himself in the Elders' Seat. It did not seem possible to say anything. The captain smoked his pipe; the minister rested his chin on his cane; the miller's hands were on his knees, his large white face stolid and set.

"I'm goin' to shell those peas to-morrow," began the captain at last. Then his voice broke, and a mist came into his eyes.

"I bet ye the Americans are licking the Carthaginians."

On the contrary, the Americans and Carthaginians, with other nations, were hanging over the picket fence, staring and bewildered. What was the use of mere human wars, if primeval things could be suddenly changed? The grass might take a notion to come up pink or the seas to run out at the bottom, and that sort of thing would make a difference.

The sun dropped low in the west, and presently Chub Leroy, who built the city of Alexandria ten years before, came slowly along in the shadow of the maples, and St. Agnes Macree was with him. She was old Caspar Macree's granddaughter, and he was a charcoal-burner on the Cattle Ridge long ago. They were surprised to see the Elders' Seat, and stopped a moment. St. Agnes looked up at him and smiled softly, and Chub's eyes kept saying, "Sweetheart, sweetheart," all the time. Then they went on.

"I remember—" said Captain David, and stopped short.

"Eh! So do I," said the minister.

"You do! Well, Job, do you remember? Ain't it the remarkablest thing!"

The miller's heavy face was changed with a slow, embarrassed smile. And all these three sat a long time very still, while the sunlight slanted among the morning-glories and the pigeons slept on the roof.

There came a day in September when the minister and the miller were alone again on the Elders' Seat, but Captain David lay in his bed near the window. He slept a great deal, and babbled in his half dreams: sometimes about ships and cordage, anchorage in harbors and whaling in the south seas; and at times about some one named "Kitty." I never heard who Kitty was. He said something or other "wasn't right." He took the trouble and the end of things all in good part, and bore no grudge to any one for it; it seemed only natural, like coming to anchor at last.

"When a man gets legs like mine," he said, "it's time he took another way of getting round. Something like a



fish'd be my notion. Parson, a man gets the other side of somewhere, he can jump round lively-like, same as he was a boy, eh?"

The minister murmured something about "our Heavenly Father," and Captain David said softly: "I guess he don't call us nothing but boys. He says, 'Shucks! it ain't natural for 'em to behave.' Don't ye think, parson? Him, he might see an old man like me and tell him, 'Glad to see ye, sonny'; same as Harrier in Doty's Slip. The boys come in after a year out, or maybe three years, and old man Harrier, he says, 'Glad to see ye, sonny'; and the boys gets terrible drunk. He kept a junk-shop, Harrier."

The minister tried to answer, but could not make it out.

"I saw a ship go down sudden-like. It was in '44. It was inside Cape Cod. Something blowed her up inside. Me, I've took my time, I have. What ye grumbling about, parson?"

In the morning the shutters were closed, and all about the house was still. The pigeons were cooing on the roof of the porch; and Captain David was dead, without seeing any reason to grumble. Down at the mill the miller watched his monotonous millstones grinding slowly.

The Elders' Seat was moved once more after Captain David died, not back to the Mediterranean, but further up the yellow road and into the minister's yard, facing westward. From there the captain's white slab could be seen through the cemetery gate. The two Elders occupied the seat some years, and then went in through the gate.

But the Elders' Seat and its journeys from place to place seemed to have some curious meaning, hardly to be spelled. I imagine this far, at least: that at a certain point it became to the two more natural, more quiet and happy, to turn their eyes in the direction the captain had gone than in the direction they had all come. It pleased them then to move the Elders' Seat a little nearer to the gate. And when the late hour came, it was rather a familiar matter. The minister went in to look for his Master, and the miller according to his' notion of things.

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## THE ROMANCE OF THE INSTITUTE

Not quite two centuries of human life have gone quietly in Wimberton, and for the most part it has been on Main and Chester Streets. Main Street is a quarter of a mile long and three hundred feet wide, with double roads, and between them a clean lawn shaded by old elms. Chester Street is narrow and crowded with shops, and runs from the middle of Main down-hill to the railway and the river. It is the business street for Wimberton and the countryside of fifteen miles about. Main Street is surrounded by old houses of honorable frontage, two churches, and the Solley Institute, which used to be called "Solley's Folly" by frivolous aliens.

Mr. Solley, who owned the mines up the river and the foundries that have been empty and silent these many years, founded it in 1840. At the time I remember best the Institute had twenty-one trustees, lady patronesses, matrons, and nurses; and three beneficiaries, or representatives of the "aged, but not destitute, of Hamilton County." That seemed odd to the alien.

Mr. Solley need not have been so rigid about the equipment and requirements of admission, except that he had in mind an institution of dignity. It stood at the head of Main Street, with wide piazzas like a hotel. The aristocracy of old Wimberton used to meet there and pass the summer afternoons. The young people gave balls in the great parlors, and the three beneficiaries looked on, and found nothing to complain of in the management. What matter if it were odd? True Wimberton folk never called the Institute a folly, but only newcomers, before years of residence made them enduring and able to understand Wimberton. Failure is a lady of better manners than Success, who is forward, complacent, taking herself with unpleasant seriousness. Imagine the Institute swarming with people from all parts of the county, a staring success in beneficence!

Mr. Solley's idea was touched with delicacy. It was not a home for Hamilton County poor, but for those who, merely lingering somewhat on the slow descent, found it a lonely road. For there is a period in life, of varying length, when, one's purposes having failed or been unfulfilled, the world seems quite occupied by other people who are busy with themselves. Life belongs at any one time to the generation which is making the most of it. A beneficiary was in a certain position of respectable humility. But I suppose it was not so much Mr. Solley's discrimination as that in 1840 his own house was empty of all but a few servants; and so out of his sense of loneliness grew his idea of a society of the superannuated. That was the Solley Institute.

It is not so difficult to recreate old Wimberton of seventy years back, for the same houses stood on Main Street, and the familiar names were then heard—Solley, Gore, Cutting, Gilbert, Cass, Savage. The elms were smaller, with fewer lights under them at night, and gravel paths instead of asphalt.

One may even call up those who peopled the street, whom time has disguised or hidden away completely. Lucia Gore has dimples,—instead of those faded cheeks one remembers at the Institute,—and quick movements, and a bewildering prettiness, in spite of the skirts that made women look like decanters or tea-bells in 1830. She is coming down the gravel sidewalk with a swift step, a singular fire and eagerness of manner, more than one would suppose Miss Lucia to have once possessed.

And there is the elder Solley, already with that worn, wintry old face we know from his portrait at the Institute, and John Solley, the son, both with high-rolled collars, tall hats, and stiff cravats. Women said that John Solley was reckless, but one only notices that he is very tall.

"I'm glad to see you are in a hurry, too, my dear. We might hurry up the wedding among us all," says the elder Solley, with a grim smile and a bow. "Ha! Glad to see you in a hurry;" and he passes on, leaving the two

together. Lucia flushes and seems to object.

Is not that Mrs. Andrew Cutting in the front window of the gabled house directly behind them? Then she is thinking how considerate it is, how respectful to Main Street, that John and Lucia are to marry.

The past springs up quickly, even to little details. Mrs. Cutting wears a morning cap, has one finger on her cheek, and is wondering why John looks amused and Lucia in a temper. "He will have to behave himself," thinks Mrs. Cutting. "Lucia is—dear me, Lucia is very decided. I don't really know that John likes to behave himself." And all these people of 1830 are clearly interested in their own affairs, and care little for those who will look back at them, seventy years away.

Love climbs trees in the Hesperides, day in and out, very busy with their remarkable fruit, the dragon lying beneath with indifferent jaws. Do we observe how recklessly the young man reaches out, and how slightly he knows the nature of his footing? The branches of such apple trees as bear golden fruit are notoriously brittle. He might drop into the lazy throat of Fate by as easy an accident as the observer into figures of speech, and the dragon care little about the matter. That indifference of Fate is hard, for it seems an expense for no value received by any one. We are advised to be as little melancholy as possible, and charge it to profit and loss.

It is well known that John Solley left Wimberton late one night in October, 1830. In the morning the two big stuccoed houses of Gore and Solley looked at each other across the street under the yellow arch of leaves with that mysterious expression which they ever after seemed to possess to the dwellers on Main Street. And the Gores' housemaid picked up a glittering something from the fell of the bearskin rug on the parlor floor.

"Land! It's Miss Lucia's engagement ring. She's a careless girl!" Plannah was a single woman of fifty, and spoke with strong moral indignation.

Some mornings later Mr. Solley came stiffly down his front steps, crossed the street under the yellow elms, and went in between the white pillars of the Gore house. Mr. Gore was a middle-aged man, chubby, benevolent, gray-haired, deliberate. He sank back in his easy-chair in fat astonishment.

"Oh, dear me! I don't know."

Lucia was called.

"Mr. Solley wishes to ask you—a—something."

"I wish to ask if my son has treated you badly," said Mr. Solley, most absurdly.

"Not at all, Mr. Solley."

Lucia's eyes were suddenly hot and shining.

"I beg your pardon, but if John is a scoundrel, you will do me a favor by telling me so."

"Where is he? I shall do nothing of the kind."

"I am about to write to my son."

"And that's nothing to me," she cried, and went swiftly out of the room.

"Oh, I suppose he's only a fool," said Mr. Solley, grimly. "I knew that. Spirited girl, Gore, very. Good morning."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Gore, mildly, rubbing his glasses. "How quickly they do things!"

Elderly gentlemen whose wives are dead and children adventuring in the Hesperides should take advice. Mrs. Cutting might have advised against this paragraph in Mr. Solley's letter:

"I have taken the trouble to inquire whether you have been acting as a gentleman should. Inasmuch as Miss Lucia seemed to imply that the matter no longer interests her, I presume she has followed her own will, which is certainly a woman's right. With respect to the Michigan lands, I inclose surveys. You will do well," etc.

But Mr. Solley had not for many years thought of the Hesperides as a more difficult piece of property to survey than another. Men and women followed their own wills there as elsewhere, and were quite right, so long as they did business honorably. And Mr. Gore had been a managed and advised man all his wedded life, and had not found, that it increased his happiness. That advice had always tended to embark him on some enterprise that was fatiguing.

"A good woman, Letitia," often ran Mr. Gore's reflections; and then, with a sense of furtiveness, as if Letitia somewhere in the spiritual universe might overhear his thought, "a little masterful—a—spirited, very."

But it was hard for Wimberton people to have a secret shut up among them. It was not respectful to Main Street, with John Solley fleeing mysteriously in the night and coming no more to Wimberton, and Lucia going about with her nose in the air, impossible to sympathize with. Some months passed, and Lucia seemed more subdued, then very quiet indeed, with a liking to sit by her father's side, to Mr. Gore's slight uneasiness. She might wish him to do something.

He knew no more than Wimberton what had happened to send John westward and Lucia to sitting beside him in unused silence; but he differed from Wimberton in thinking it perhaps not desirable to know. He would pat her hand furtively, and polish his glasses, without seeming to alter the situation. Once he asked timidly if it were not dull for her.

"No, father."

"I've thought sometimes—sometimes—a—I don't remember what I was going to say."

Lucia's head went down till it almost rested on his knee.

"Father—do you know—where John is?"

"Why—a—of course, Mr. Solley—"

"No, no, father! No!"

"Well, I might inquire around—a—somewhere."

"No! Oh, promise me you won't ask any one! Promise!"

"Certainly, my dear," said Mr. Gore, very much confused.

"It is no matter," said Lucia, eagerly.

Mr. Gore thought for several minutes, but no idea seemed to occur to him, and it relieved him to give it up.

Months have a way of making years by a rapid arithmetic, and years that greet us with such little variety of expression are the more apt to step behind with faint reproach and very swiftly. Mr. Solley founded the Institute in 1840, and died. The Solley house stood empty, and Miss Lucia Gore by that time was living alone, except for the elderly maiden, Hannah. Looking at the old elms of Wimberton, grave and orderly, there is much to be said for a vegetable life. There is no right dignity but in the slow growths of time.

The elms increased their girth; the railway crept up the river; the young men went to Southern battle-fields, and some of them returned; children of a second generation walked in the Hesperides; the Institute was reduced to three beneficiaries; Main Street smelled of tar from the asphalt sidewalks; Chester Street was prosperous. Banks failed in '73, and "Miss Lucia has lost everything," said Wimberton gossip.

The Solley house was alternately rented and empty, the Gore house was sold, Miss Lucia went up to the Institute, and gossip in Wimberton woke again.

"Of course the Institute is not like other places, but then—"

"Miss Lucia was such a lady."

"But it's a charity, after all."

"Very sensible of Miss Lucia, I'm sure."

"She was engaged to old Institute Solley's son once, but it ended with a bump."

"Then Miss Lucia goes to the Institute who might have gone to the Solley house."

"Oh, that is what one doesn't know."

"Miss Lucia a beneficiary! But isn't that rather embarrassing?"

"I wonder if she—"

"My dear, it was centuries ago. One does n't think of love-affairs fifty years old. They dry up."

"Respectable, and you pay a little."

"But a charity really."

That year the public library was built on Main and Gilbert Streets, the great elm fell down in the Institute yard, Mrs. Andrew Cutting died at ninety-eight, with good sense and composure, and here is a letter written by Miss Lucia to Babbie Cutting. Babbie Cutting, I remember, had eyes like a last-century romance, never fancy-free, and her dolls loved and were melancholy, when we were children together under the elms in Wimberton. The letter is written in thin, flowing lines on lavender paper.

*My dear Child:* I am afraid you thought that your question offended me, but it did not, indeed. I was engaged to Mr. John Solley many years ago. I think I had a very hasty temper then, which I think has quite wasted away now, for I have been so much alone. But then I sometimes fell into dreadful rages. Mr. Solley was a very bold man, not easily influenced or troubled, who laughed at my little faults and whims more than I thought he should.

You seemed to ask what sudden and mysterious thing happened to us, but, my dear, one's life is chiefly moved by trifles and little accidents and whims. Mr. Solley came one night, and I fancied he had been neglecting me, for I was very proud, more so than ordinary life permits women to be. I remember that he stood with his hands behind him, smiling. He looked so easy and strong, so impossible to disturb, and said, "You're such a little spitfire, Lucia," and I was so angry, it was like hot flames all through my head.

I cried, "How dare you speak to me so!"

"I don't know," he said, and laughed. "It seems perilous."

I tore his ring from my finger and threw it in his face. It struck his forehead and fell to the floor without any sound. There was a tiny red cut on his forehead.

"That is your engagement ring," he said.

"Take it away. I want nothing more to do with you," I cried—very foolishly, for I did, and my anger was going off in fright. He turned around and went from the house. The maid found the ring in the morning. Mr. Solley had left Wimberton that night. Well, my dear, that is all. I thought he would have come back. It seemed as if he might. I am so old now that I do not mind talking, but I was proud then, and women are not permitted to be very proud. Do your romances tell you that women are foolish and men are sometimes hard on them?

That is not good romance at all, but if you will come to see me again I will tell you much better romances than mine that I have heard, for other people's lives are interesting, even if mine has been quite dull.

Will you put this letter away to remember me by? But do not think of me as a complaining old woman, for I have had a long life of leisure and many friends. I do not think any one who really cares for me will do so the less for my living at the Institute, and only those we love are of real importance to us. It is kind of you to visit me.

*Your Affectionate Friend.*

So half a century is put lightly aside; Miss Lucia has found it quite dull; and here is the year 1885, when, as every one knows, John Solley came back to Wimberton, a tall old man with a white mustache, heavy brows, and deep eyes. Men thought it an honor to the town that the great and rich Mr. Solley, so dignified a man, should return to spend his last days in Wimberton. He would be its ornamental citizen, the proper leader of its aristocracy. But Babbie Cutting thought of another function. What matter for the melancholy waste of years, fifty leagues across? Love should walk over it triumphant, unwearied, and find a fairer romance at the end. Were there not written in the books words to that effect? Babbie moved in a world of dreams, where knights were ever coming home from distant places, or, at least, where every one found happiness after great trouble. She looked up into Mr. Solley's eyes and thought them romantic to a degree. When she heard he had never married the thing seemed as good as proved. And the little old lady at the Institute with the old-fashioned rolled curls above her ears—what a sequel!

It was a white winter day. The elms looked so cold against the sky that it was difficult to remember they had ever been green, or believe it was in them to put forth leaves once more. The wind drove the sharp-edged particles of snow directly in Babbie's face, and she put her head down, covering her mouth with her furs. She turned in at the Solley house, and found herself in the drawing-room, facing that tall, thin, military-looking old man, and feeling out of breath and troubled what to do first. But Mr. Solley was not a man to let any girl whatever be ill at ease, and surely not one with cheeks and eyes and soft hair like Babbie Cutting. Presently they were experienced friends. Babbie sat in Mr. Solley's great chair and stretched her hands toward the fire. Mr. Solley was persuaded to take up his cigar again.

"I had not dared to hope," he said, "that my native place would welcome me so charmingly. I have made so many new friends, or rather they seemed to be friends already, though unknown to me, that I seem to begin life again. I seem to start it all over. I should have returned sooner."

"Oh, I'm sure you should have," said Babbie, eagerly. "And do you know who is living at the Institute now?"

"The Institute? I had almost forgotten the Institute, and I am a trustee, which is very neglectful of duty. Who is living at the Institute now?"

"Miss Lucia Gore."

Mr. Solley was silent, and looked at Babbie oddly under his white eyebrows, so that her cheeks began to burn, and she was not a little frightened, though quite determined and eager.

"Miss Lucia lost all her money when the banks failed, and she sold the Gore house, and got enough interest to pay her dues and a little more; but it seems so sad for Miss Lucia, because people will patronize her, not meaning to. But they 're so stupid—or, at least, it doesn't seem like Miss Lucia."

"I did not know she was living," said Mr. Solley, quietly.

"Oh, how could you—be that way!"

Mr. Solley looked steadily at Babbie, and it seemed to him as if her face gave him a clue to something that he had groped for in the darkness of late, as if some white mist were lifted from the river and he could see up its vistas and smoky cataracts. How could he be that way, to be possible as he is. Up the river he saw a face somewhat like Babbie's, somewhat more imperious, but with the same pathetic eagerness and desire for abundance of life. How could young John Solley become old John Solley? Looking into Babbie's eyes, he seemed able to put the two men side by side.

"At one time, Miss Barbara," he said, "—you will forgive my saying so,—I should have resented your reference. Now I am only thinking how kind it is of you to forget that I am old."

Babbie did not quite understand, and felt troubled, and not sure of her position.

"Mr. Solley," she said, "I—I have a letter from Miss Lucia. Do you think I might show it to you?"

"It concerns me?"

"Y-yes."

He walked down the room and back again.

"I don't know that you ought, but you have tempted me to wish that you would. Thank you." He put on his glasses and read it slowly. Babbie thought he read it like a business letter.

"He ought to turn pale or red," she thought. "Oh, he oughtn't to wear his spectacles on the end of his nose!"

Mr. Solley handed back the letter.

"Thank you, Miss Barbara," he said, and began to talk of her great-grandmother Cutting.

Babbie blinked back her sudden tears. It was very different from a romance, where the pages will always turn and tell you the story willingly, where the hero always shows you exactly how he feels. She thought she would like to cry somewhere else. She stood up to go.

"I'm sorry I'm so silly," she said, with a little gulp and trying to be dignified.

Mr. Solley looked amused, so far as that the wrinkles deepened about his eyes.

"Will you be a friend of mine?" he asked.

"Yes," said Babbie, plaintively, but she did not think she would. How could she, and he so cold, so prosaic! She went out into the snow, which was driving down Main Street from the Institute. It was four by the town clock.

They said in Wimberton that Mr. Solley left his house at seven o'clock in the evening, and that Stephen, the gardener, held an umbrella in front of him to keep off the storm all the way up the hill to the Institute. And they said, too, that the lights were left burning in the Solley house, and the fire on the hearth, and that the book he was reading when Babbie went in lay open on the table. The fire burned itself out. Stephen came in late, closed the book, and put out the lights, and in the morning went about town saying that Mr. Solley was to enter the Institute as a beneficiary.

But it is a secret that on that snowy evening Mr. Solley and Miss Lucia sat in the great east parlor of the Institute, with a lamp near by, but darkness in all the distances about them. His hands were on his gold-headed cane; Miss Lucia's rolls of white curls were very tidy over her ears, and her fingers were knitting something placidly. She was saying it was "quite impossible. One doesn't want to be absurd at seventy-five."

"I suppose not," said Mr. Solley. "I shouldn't mind it. What do you think of the other plan?"

"If you want my permission to be a beneficiary," said Miss Lucia, with her eyes twinkling, "I think it would be a proper humiliation for you. I think you deserve it."

"It would be no humiliation."

"It was for me—some."

"It shall be so no more. I'll make them wish they were all old enough to do the same—hem—confound them!"

"Did you think of it that way, John?"



Mr. Solley was silent for some moments.

"Do you know, I have been a busy man," he said at last, "but there was nothing in it all that I care to think over now. And to-day, for the first time, that seemed to me strange. It was shown to me—that is, I saw it was strange. We have only a few years left, and you will let me be somewhat near you while they pass. Isn't that enough? It seems a little vague. Well, then, yes. I thought of it that way, as you say. Do you mind my thinking of it that way?"

Miss Lucia's eyes grew a little tearful, but she managed to hide it by settling her glasses. Seventy-five years in a small town make the opinions of one's neighbors part of the structure of existence. It was bitter, the thought that Main Street tacitly patronized her.

"Why, no, I don't mind."

She dropped her knitting and laughed suddenly.

"I think, John," she said, "that I missed marrying a very nice man."

Mr. Solley's glasses fell off with surprise. He put them on again and chuckled to himself.

"My father used to call me a—hem—a fool. He used to state things more accurately than you did."

After all, there was no other institute like Wimberton's. The standards of other places were no measure for our conduct, and the fact that such things were not seen elsewhere was a flattering reason why they should be seen in Wimberton; namely, only five beneficiaries, and one of them a rich man and a trustee. It was singular, but it suited Wimberton to be singular. One thing was plain to all, that if Mr. Solley was a beneficiary, then to be a beneficiary was a dignified, well-bred, and suitable thing. But one thing was not plain to all, why he chose to be a beneficiary. Babbie Cutting went up to the Institute, and coming back, wept for pure sentiment in her white-curtained room, with the picture on the wall of Sir Lancelot riding down by the whirling river, the island, and the gray-walled castle of Shalott.

I remember well the great ball and reception that Mr. Solley gave at the Institute to celebrate his entry, and how we all paid our respects to the five beneficiaries, four old men, who were gracious, but patronizing, —one with gold eye-glasses and gold-headed cane,—and Miss Lucia, with the rolled curls over her ears. The Institute, from that time on, looked down on Main Street with a different air, and never lost its advantage. It seemed to many that the second Solley had refounded it for one of those whims that are ornamental in the rich. Babbie Cutting said to her heart, "He refounded it for Miss Lucia."

There was nowhere in Wimberton such dignified society as at the Institute. Even so that the last visitor of all seemed only to come by invitation, and to pay his respects with proper ceremony: "Sir, or madam, I hope it is not an inconvenient time," or similar phrase.

"Oh, not at all. It seems very dark around."

"Will you take my arm? The path is steep and worn, and here is a small matter of a river, as you see. I regret that the water is perhaps a trifle cold. Yes, one hears so much talk about the other side that one hardly knows what to think. There is no hurry. But at this point I say good night and leave you. When you were young you often heard good night said when the morning was at hand. May it be so. Good night."

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## NAUSICAA

**T**he Fourteenth Infantry, volunteers, were mustered out on the last day of April. Sandy Cass and Kid Sadler came that night into the great city of the river and the straits with their heads full of lurid visions which they set about immediately to realize. Little Irish was with them, and Bill Smith, who had had other names at other times. And Sandy woke the next morning in a room that had no furniture but a bed, a washstand, a cracked mirror, and a chair. He did not remember coming there. Some one must have put him to bed. It was not Kid Sadler or Little Irish; they were drunk early, with bad judgment. It must have been Bill Smith. A hat with a frayed cord lay on the floor. "That's Bill's hat," he said. "He's got mine."

The gray morning filled the window, and carts rattled by in the street. He rose and drank from the pitcher to clear the bitterness from his mouth, and saw himself in the glass, haggard and holloweyed. It was a clean-cut face, with straight, thin lips, straight eyebrows, and brown hair. The lips were white and lines ran back from the eyes. Sandy did not think he looked a credit to himself.

"Some of it's yellow fever," he reflected, "and some of it's jag. About half and half. The squire can charge it to the yellow."

He wondered what new thing Squire Cass would find to say to his "rascally nephew, that reprobate Ulysses." Squire Cass was a red-faced gentleman and substantial citizen of that calm New England town of Wimberton, which Sandy knew very well and did not care for. It was too calm. But it would be good for his constitution to go there now. He wondered if his constitution would hold out for another night equally joyful; "Maybe it might;" then how much of his eighty dollars' back pay was blown in. He put on his clothes slowly, feeling through the pockets, collected two half-dollars on the way, came to the last and stopped.

"Must have missed one;" and began again. But that crumpled wad of bills was gone altogether. "Well, if I ain't an orphan!"

He remembered last a place with bright glass chandeliers, a gilt cupid over the bar, a girl in a frowzy hat, laughing with large teeth, and Kid Sadler singing that song he had made up and was so "doggone stuck on":

“Sandy Cass! A-alas!  
We 'll be shut up  
In the lockup  
If this here keeps on.”

It got monotonous, that song.

“Sandy Cass! A-alas!  
A comin' home,  
A bummin home—”

He liked to make poetry, Kid Sadler. You would not have expected it, to look at his sloppy mustache, long dry throat, and big hands. The poetry was generally accurate. Sandy did not see any good in it, unless it was accurate.

“Little Irish is a Catholic, he come from I-er-land;  
He ain't a whole cathedral, nor a new brass band;  
He got religion in 'is joints from the hoonin of a shell,  
An 'is auburn hair's burned bricky red from leanin over  
hell”

That was accurate enough, though put in figures of speech, but the Kid was still more accurate regarding Bill Smith:

“Nobody knows who Bill Smith is,  
His kin nor yet his kith,  
An nobody cares who Bill Smith is,  
An neither does Bill Smith;”

which was perfectly true. Anyhow the Kid could not have taken the wad, nor Little Irish. It must have been Bill Smith.

“It was Bill,” he decided.

He did not make any special comments. Some thing or other happens to a man every day. He went downstairs, through a dim narrow hallway.

“Hope there don't any one want something of me. I don't believe they 'll get it.”

There were sounds in the basement, but no one met him. In the street the Ninth Avenue car rolled by, a block away. He saw a restaurant sign which said fearlessly that a stew cost ten cents, went in and breakfasted for fifteen, waited on by a thin, weary woman, who looked at his blue coat and braided hat with half-roused interest.

The cobble-stones on Sixth Avenue were shining and wet. Here and there some one in the crowd turned to look after him. It might have been the uniform, the loafer's slouch of the hat, taken with the face being young and too white.

The hands of the station clock stood at ten. He took a ticket to the limit of eighty-five cents, heard dimly the name of a familiar junction; and then the rumble of the train was under him for an hour. Bill Smith had left him his pipe and tobacco. Bill had good points. Sandy was inclined to think kindly of Bill's thoughtfulness, and envy him his enterprise. The roar of the car-wheels sounded like Kid Sadler's voice, hoarse and choky, “A-alas, a-alas!”

It was eleven o'clock at the junction. The mist of the earlier morning had become a slow drizzle. Trains jangled to and fro in the freight yards. He took a road which led away from the brick warehouses, streets of shady trees and lawns, and curved to the north, along the bank of a cold, sleepy river.

There was an unpainted, three-room house somewhere, where a fat woman said “Good land!” and gave him a plate full of different things, on a table covered with oil-cloth. He could not remember afterward what he ate, or what the woman said further. He remembered the oil-cloth, which had a yellow-feverish design of curved lines, that twisted snakily, and came out of the cloth and ran across the plate. Then out in the gray drizzle again.

All the morning his brain had seemed to grow duller and duller, heavy and sodden; but in the afternoon red lights began dancing in the mist. It might have been five miles or twenty he had gone by dusk; the distinction between miles and rods was not clear—they both consisted of brown mud and gray mist. Sometimes it was a mile across the road. The dusk, and then the dark, heaved, and pulsed through blood-red veins, and peeled, and broke apart in brilliant cracks, as they used to do nights in the field hospital. There seemed to be no hope or desire in him, except in his feet, which moved on. The lights that travelled with him got mixed with lights on each side of a village street, and his feet walked in through a gate. They had no reason for it, except that the gate stood open and was painted white. He pushed back the door of a little garden tool-house beside the path, and lay down on the floor. He could not make out which of a number of things were happening. The Fourteenth Infantry appeared to be bucking a steep hill, with the smoke rolling down over it; but on the other hand Kid Sadler was singing hoarsely, but distinctly, “A-alas, a-alas!” and moreover, a dim light shone through a white-curtained window somewhere between a rod and a mile away, and glimmered down the wet

path by the tool-house. Some one said, "Some of it's jag and some of it's the yellow. About half and half." He might have been making the remark himself, except that he appeared to be elsewhere. The rain kept up a thin whisper on the roof of the tool-house. Gasps, shouts, thumping of feet, clash of rifle and canteen. The hill was as steep as a wall. Little Irish said, "His legs was too short to shtep on the back av his neck wid the shtepness av the hill."

"A-alas! A comin' home."

"Oh, shut up, Kid!"

"A-alas, a-alas!" The dark was split with red gashes, as it used to be in the field hospital. The rain whispered on the roof and the wet path glimmered like silk.

It was the village of Zoar, which lies far back to the west of Wyantenaug Valley, among low waves of hills, the house the old Hare Place, and Miss Elizabeth Hare and Gracia lived there behind the white gateway.

That gateway had once been an ancient arch overhead, with a green wooden ball topping it. Some one cut a face on the ball, that leered into the street. It did not in the least resemble Miss Elizabeth, whose smile was gentle and cool; but it was taken down from its station of half a century; and Gracia cried secretly, because everything would needs be disconsolate without an arch and a proper wooden ball on top of it, under which knights and witch ladies might come and go, riding and floating. It seemed to break down the old garden life. Odd flowers would not hold conversations any more, tiger-lilies and peonies bother each other, the tigers being snappish and the peonies fat, slow, and irritating. Before Gracia's hair had abandoned yellow braids and become mysterious, when she learned neat sewing and cross-stitch, she used to set the tigers and peonies quarrelling to express her own feelings about neat sewing and cross-stitch. Afterward she found the memory of that wickedness too heavy, and confessed it to Miss Elizabeth, and added the knights and witch ladies. Miss Elizabeth had said nothing, had seemed disinclined to blame, and, going out into the garden, had walked to and fro restlessly, stopping beside the tigers and peonies, and seeming to look at the arched gateway with a certain wistfulness.

Miss Elizabeth had now a dimly faded look, the charm of a still November, where now and then an Indian summer steals over the chill. She wore tiny white caps, and her hair was singularly smooth; while Gracia's appeared rather to be blown back, pushed by the delicate fingers of a breeze, that privately admired it, away from her eager face, with its gray-blue eyes that looked at you as if they saw something else as well. It kept you guessing about that other thing, and you got no further than to wonder if it were not something, or some one, that you might be, or might have been, if you had begun at it before life had become so labelled and defined, so plastered over with maxims.

The new gateway was still a doubtful quantity in Gracia's mind. It was not justified. It had no connections, no consecrations; merely a white gate against the greenery.

It was the whiteness which caught Sandy Cass's dulled eyes, so that he turned through, and lay down in the tool-house, and wondered which of a number of incongruous things was really happening: Little Irish crying plaintively that his legs were too short—"A-alas, a-alas!"—or the whisper of the rain on the roof.

Gracia lifted the white curtains, looked out, and saw the wet path shining.

"Is it raining, Gracia?"

"It drizzles like anything, and the tool-house door is open, and, oh, aunty! the path shines quite down to the gate."

"It generally shines in the rain, dear."

"Oh!" said Gracia, thoughtfully. She seemed to be examining a sudden idea, and began the pretence of a whistle which afterward became a true fact.

"I wish it wouldn't be generally, don't you? I wish things would all be specially."

"I wouldn't wi—I wouldn't whistle, if I were you," said Miss Elizabeth, gently.

"Oh!" Gracia came suddenly with a ripple and coo of laughter, and dropped on her knees by Miss Elizabeth. "You couldn't, you poor aunty, if you tried. You never learned, did you?"

Miss Elizabeth hesitated.

"I once tried to learn—of your father. I used to think it sounded cheerful. But my mother would n't allow it. What I really started to say was, that I wouldn't, if I were you, I wouldn't wish so many things to be other than they are. I used to wish for things to be different, and then, you know, when they stay quite the same, it's such a number of troubles."

Gracia clasped her fingers about one knee, studied the neatly built fire and the blue and white tiles over it, and thought hard on the subject of wishes. She thought that she had not wished things to be different, so much as to remain the same as of old, when one wore yellow braids, and could whistle with approval, and everything happened specially. Because it is sad when you begin to suspect that the sun and moon and the growths of spring do not care about you, but only act according to habits they have fallen into, and that the shining paths, which seem to lead from beyond the night, are common or accidental and not meant specially. The elder romancers and the latest seers do insist together that they are, that such highways indeed as the moon lays on the water are translunary and come with purposes from a celestial city. The romancers have a simple faith, and the seers an ingenious theory about it. But the days and weeks argue differently. They had begun to trouble the fealty that Gracia held of romance, and she had not met with the theory of the seers.

Sandy Cass went through experiences that night which cannot be written, for there was no sequence in them, and they were translunary and sub-earthly; some of them broken fragments of his life thrown up at him out of a kind of smoky red pit, very much as it used to be in the field hospital. His life seemed to fall easily into fragments. There had not been much sequence in it, since he began running away from the house of the squire at fifteen. It had ranged between the back and front doors of the social structure these ten years. The squire used to storm, because it came natural to him to speak violently; but privately he thought Sandy no more than his own younger self, let loose instead of tied down. He even envied Sandy. He wished he would come oftener to entertain him. Sandy was a periodical novel continued in the next issue, an irregular and

barbarous Odyssey, in which the squire, comparing with his Pope's translation, recognized Scylla and Charybdis, Cyclops and Circe, and the interference of the quarrelling gods. But that night the story went through the Land of Shadows and Red Dreams. Sandy came at last to the further edge of the Land; beyond was the Desert of Dreamless Sleep; and then something white and waving was before his eyes, and beyond was a pale green shimmer. He heard a gruff voice:

"Hm—Constitution, Miss Hare. That chap had a solid ancestry. He ought to have had a relapse and died, and he 'll be out in a week."

Another voice said in an awed whisper:

"He's like my Saint George!"

"Hm—Legendary? This St. G. looks as if he'd made up with his devil. Looks as if they'd been tolerably good friends."

A third voice remonstrated:

"Doctor!"

"Hm, hm—My nonsense, Miss Gracia, my nonsense."

The two ladies and the doctor went out.

It was a long, low room, white, fragrant, and fresh. Soft white curtains waved in open windows, and outside the late sunlight drifted shyly through the pale green leaves of young maples. There were dainty things about, touches of silk and lace, blue and white china on bureau and dressing-table, a mirror framed with gilded pillars at the sides and a painted Arcadia above.

"Well, if I ain't an orphan!" grumbled Sandy, feebly.

An elderly woman with a checked apron brought him soup in a bowl. She was quite silent and soon went out.

"It's pretty slick," he thought, looking around. "I could n't have done better if I'd been a widow."

The drifting quiet of the days that Sandy lay there pleased him for the time. It felt like a cool poultice on a wound. The purity and fragility of objects was interesting to look at, so long as he lay still and did not move about among them. But he wondered how people could live there right along. They must keep everything at a distance, with a feather-duster between. He had an impression that china things always broke, and white things became dirty. Then it occurred to him that there might be some whose nature, without any worry to themselves, was to keep things clean and not to knock them over, to touch things in a feathery manner, so that they did not have to stay behind a duster. This subject of speculation lasted him a day or two, and Miss Elizabeth and Gracia began to interest him as beings with that special gift. He admired any kind of capability. Miss Elizabeth he saw often, the woman in the checked apron till he was tired of her. But Gracia was only now and then a desirable and fleeting appearance in the doorway, saying:

"Good morning, Saint George."

She never stayed to tell him why "Saint George." It came to the point that the notion of her yellow hair would stay by him an hour or more afterward. He began to wake from his dozes, fancying he heard "Good morning, Saint George," and finally to watch the doorway and fidget.

"This lying abed," he concluded, "is played out." He got up and hunted about for his clothes. His knees and fingers trembled. The clothes hung in the closet, cleaned and pressed, in the extraordinary neighborhood of a white muslin dress. Sandy sat down heavily on the bed. Things seemed to be whizzing and whimpering all about him. He waited for them to settle, and pulled on his clothes gradually. At the end of an hour he thought he might pass on parade, and crept out into the hall and down the stairs. The sunlight was warm in the garden and on the porch, and pale green among the leaves. Gracia sat against a pillar, clasping one knee. Miss Elizabeth sewed; her work-basket was fitted up inside on an intricate system. Gracia hailed him with enthusiasm, and Miss Elizabeth remonstrated. He looked past Miss Elizabeth to find the yellow hair.

"This lying abed," he said feebly, "is played out."

Sitting in the sunlight, Sandy told his story gradually from day to day. It was all his story, being made up of selections. He was skilful from practice on the squire, but he saw the need of a new principle of selection and combination. His style of narrative was his own. It possessed gravity, candor, simplicity, an assumption that nothing could be unreasonable or surprising which came in the course of events, that all things and all men were acceptable. Gracia thought that simplicity beautiful, that his speech was like the speech of Tanneguy du Bois, and that he looked like Saint George in the picture which hung in her room—a pale young warrior, such as painters once loved to draw, putting in those keen faces a peculiar manhood, tempered and edged like a sword. Sandy looked oddly like him, in the straight lines of brow and mouth. Saint George is taking a swift easy stride over the dead dragon, a kind of level-eyed daring and grave inquiry in his face, as if it were Sandy himself, about to say, "You don't happen to have another dragon? This one wasn't real gamy. I'd rather have an average alligator." She laughed with ripples and coos, and struggled with lumps in her throat, when Sandy through simplicity fell into pathos. It bewildered her that the funny things and pathetic things were so mixed up and run together, and that he seemed to take no notice of either of them. But she grew stern and indignant when Bill Smith, it was but probable, robbed the unsuspecting sleep of his comrade.

"You see," said Sandy, apologetically, "Bill was restless, that was the reason. It was his enterprise kept bothering him. Likely he wanted it for something, and he could n't tell how much I might need without waking me up to ask. And he couldn't do that, because that'd have been ridiculous, would n't it? Of course, if he'd waked me up to ask how much I wanted, because he was going to take the rest with him, why, of course, I'd been obliged to get up and hit him, to show how ridiculous it was. Of course Bill saw that, and what could he do? Because there wasn't any way he could tell, don't you see? So he left the pipe and tobacco, and a dollar for luck, and lit out, being—a—restless."

And Gracia wondered at and gloried in the width of that charity, that impersonal and untamed tolerance.

Then Sandy took up the subject of Kid Sadler. He felt there was need of more virtue and valor. He took Kid Sadler and decorated him. He fitted him with picturesque detail. The Kid bothered him with his raucous



voice, froth-dripped mustache, lean throat, black mighty hands, and smell of uncleanness. But Sandy chose him as a poet. It seemed a good start. Gracia surprised him by looking startled and quite tearful, where the poet says:

“Nobody cares who Bill Smith is,  
An neither does Bill Smith;”

which had seemed to Sandy only an accurate statement.

But the Kid's poetry needed expurgation and amendment. Sandy did it conscientiously, and spent hours searching for lines of similar rhyme, which would not glance so directly into byways and alleys that were surprising.

“A comin' home,  
A roamin' home—”

“I told the Kid,” he added critically, “roamin' wasn't a good rhyme, but he thought it was a pathetic word.”

“Oh, when I was a little boy 't was things I did n't know,  
An when I growed I knowed a lot of things that was n't so;  
An now I know a few things that's useful an selected:  
As how to put hard liquor where hard liquor is expected—”

and so on, different verses, which the Kid called his “Sing Song.” Sandy's judgment hung in doubt over this whether the lines were objectionable. He tempered the taste of the working literary artist for distinct flavor, and his own for that which is accurate, with the cautions of a village library committee, and decided on,

“An puts them things in moral verse to uses onexpected.”

“I don't know what he meant by 'onexpected,’” Sandy commented with a sense of helplessness, “but maybe he meant that he didn't know what he did mean. Because poets,” getting more and more entangled, “poets are that kind they can take a word and mean anything in the neighborhood, or something that'll occur to 'em next week.”

Gracia admired the Kid, though Miss Elizabeth thought she ought to refer to him as Mr. Sadler, which seemed a pity. And she declared a violent love for Little Irish, because “his auburn hair turned bricky red with falling down a well,” and because he wished to climb hills by stepping on the back of his neck. It was like Alice's Adventures, and especially like the White Knight's scheme to be over a wall by putting his head on top and standing on his head.

After all humors and modifications, Sandy's story was a wild and strange thing. It took new details from day to day, filling in the picture. To Gracia's imagination it spread out beyond romance, full of glooms, flashes, fascinations, dangers of cities, war and wilderness, and in spite of Sandy's self-indifference, it was he who dominated the pilgrimage, coloring it with his comment. The pilgrim appeared to be a person to whom the Valley of the Shadow of Death was equally interesting with Vanity Fair, and who entering the front gate of the Celestial City with rejoicing would presently want to know whither the back gate would take him. It seemed a pilgrimage to anywhere in search of everything, but Gracia began to fancy it was meant to lead specially to the new garden gate that opened so broadly on the street, and so dreamed the fancy into belief. She saw Sandy in imagination coming out of the pit-black night and lying down in the tool-house by the wet shining path. The white gate was justified.

Sandy's convalescence was not a finished thing, but he was beginning to feel energy starting within him. Energy! He knew the feeling well. It was something that snarled and clawed by fits.

“I'm a wildcat,” he said to himself reflectively, “sitting on eggs. Why don't he get off? Now,” as if addressing a speculative question for instance to Kid Sadler, “he could n't expect to hatch anything, could he?”

It was such a question as the Kid would have been pleased with, and have considered justly. “Has he got the eggs?”

“I don't know. It's a mixed figure, Kid.”

“Does he feel like he wanted to hatch 'em?”

“What'd he do with 'em hatched? That's so, Kid.”

“*Is* he a wildcat?”

“Yep.”

“He is. Can a wildcat hatch eggs? No, he can't.”

“A wildcat”—the Kid would have enjoyed following this figure—“ain't an incubator. There ain't enough peacefulness in him. He'd make a yaller mess of 'em an' take to the woods with the mess on his whiskers. It stands to reason, don't it? He ain't in his own hole on a chickadee's nest.”

Sandy stood looking over the gate into the village street, which was shaded to dimness by its maples, a still, warm, brooding street.

“Like an incubator,” he thought, and heard Gracia calling from up the path:

“Saint George!”

Sandy turned. She came down the path to the gate.

"Aren't you going to fix the peony bed?"

"Not," said Sandy, "if you stay here by the gate."

Gracia looked away from him quickly into the street.

"It's warm and quiet, isn't it? It's like—"

Zoar was not to her like anything else.

"Like an incubator," said Sandy, gloomily, and Gracia looked up and laughed.

"Oh, I shouldn't have thought of that."

"Kid Sadler would have said it, if he'd been here."

"Would he?"

"Just his kind of figure. And he'd be saying further it was time Sandy Cass took to the woods."

He had an irritating spasm of desire to touch the slim white fingers on the gate. Gracia moved her hands nervously. Sandy saw the fingers tremble, and swore at himself under his breath.

"Why, Saint George?"

"Thinking he was a wildcat and he'd make a yel—a—Maybe thinking he didn't look nat—I mean," Sandy ended very lamely, "the Kid'd probably use figures of speech and mean something that'd occur to him by and by."

"You're not well yet. You're not going so soon," she said, speaking quite low.

Sandy meditated a number of lies, and concluded that he did not care for any of them. He seemed to dislike them as a class.

This kind of internal struggle was new and irritating. He had never known two desires that would not compromise equably, or one of them recognize its place and get out of the road. The savage restlessness in his blood, old, well-known, expected, something in brain and bone, had always carried its point and always would. He accounted for all things in all men by reference to it, supposing them to feel restless, the inner reason why a man did anything. But here now was another thing, hopelessly fighting it, clinging, exasperating; somewhere within him it was a kind of solemn-eyed sorrow that looked outward and backward over his life, and behold, the same was a windy alkali desert that bore nothing and was bitter in the mouth; and at the ends of his fingers it came to a keen point, a desire to touch Gracia's hair and the slim fingers on the gate.

Gracia looked up and then away.

"You're not well yet."

"You've been uncommonly good to me, and all—"

"You mustn't speak of it that way. It spoils it." It seemed to both as if they were swaying nearer together, a languid, mystical atmosphere thickening about them. Only there was the drawback with Sandy of an inward monitor, with a hoarse voice like Kid Sadler's, who would be talking to him in figures and proverbs.

"Keep away from china an' lace; they break an' stain; this thing has been observed. Likewise is love a bit o' moonlight, sonny, that's all, an' a tempest, an' a sucked orange. Come out o' that, Sandy, break away; for, in the words o' the prophet, 'It's no square game,' an' this here girl, God bless her! but she plays too high, an' you can't call her, Sandy, you ain't got the chips. Come away, come away."

"And that," Sandy concluded the council, "is pretty accurate. I'm broke this deal."

He stood up straight and looked at Gracia with eyes drawn and narrowed.

She felt afraid and did not understand.

"You don't know me. If you knew me, you'd know I have to go."

The wind rose in the afternoon, and blew gustily through street and garden. The windows of Miss Elizabeth's sitting-room were closed. The curtains hung in white, lifeless folds. But in Gracia's room above the windows were open, and the white curtains shook with the wind. Delicate and tremulous, they clung and moulded themselves one moment to the casement, and then broke out, straining in the wind that tossed the maple leaves and went up and away into the wild sky after the driving clouds.

Sandy turned north up the village street, walking irresolutely. It might be thirty miles to Wimberton. The squire had sent him money. He could reach the railroad and make Wimberton that night, but he did not seem to care about it.

Out of the village, he fell into the long marching stride, and the motion set his blood tingling. Presently he felt better; some burden was shaken off; he was foot-loose and free of the open road, looking to the friction of event. At the end of five miles he remembered a saying of Kid Sadler's, chuckled over it, and began humming other verses of the "Sing Song," so called by the outcast poet.

"Oh, when I was a little boy, I laughed an then I cried,  
An ever since I done the same, more privately, inside.  
There's a joke between this world an me 'n it's tolerable grim,  
An God has got his end of it, an some of it's on him.

For he made a man with his left han, an the rest o' things  
with his right;  
An the right knew not what the left han did, for he hep  
it out o' sight.  
It's maybe a Wagner opery, it ain't no bedtime croon,  
When the highest note in the universe is a half note out

"That appears to be pretty accurate," he thought. "Wonder how the Kid comes to know things."

He swung on enjoying the growth of vigor, the endless, open, travelled road, and the wind blowing across his face.

## SANDERSON OF BACK MEADOWS

Back Meadows lies three miles to the northwest of Hagar, rich bottom-lands in Sanderson Hollow, and the Cattle Ridge shelters it on the north. Five generations of Sandersons have added to the Sanderson accumulation of this world's goods, without sensible interference on the part of moths or rust or thieves that break through and steal. Cool, quiet men, slow of speech and persistent of mood, they prospered and lived well where other families, desiring too many things or not desiring anything enough, found nothing at all desirable and drifted away. The speculative traveller, hunting "abandoned farms," or studying the problem of the future of New England's outlying districts, who should stand on the crest of the Cattle Ridge overlooking the sheltered valley, would note it as an instance of the problem satisfactorily solved and of a farm which, so far from abandonment, smiled over all its comfortable expanse in the consciousness of past and certainty of future occupancy. These were ready illustrations for his thesis, if he had one: the smooth meadows, square stone walls and herds of fawn-colored cattle, large bams and long stables of the famous Sanderson stud; also the white gabled house among the maples with spreading eaves on either side, suggesting a position taken with foresight and carefully guarded and secured—a house that, recognizing the uncertainties and drifting currents of the world, had acted accordingly, and now could afford to consider itself complacently. The soul of any individual Sanderson might be required of him, and his wisdom relative to eternity be demonstrated folly, but the policy of the Sanderson family had not so far been considered altogether an individual matter. Even individually, if the question of such inversion of terms ever occurred to a Sanderson, it only led to the conclusion that it was strictly a Pickwickian usage, and, in the ordinary course of language, the policy of building barns, stowing away goods and reflecting complacently thereon, still came under the head of wisdom.

Mrs. Cullom Sanderson, sister of Israel Sanderson of the last generation and married into a distant branch of the Sanderson family, carried her materialism with an unconscious and eccentric frankness that prevented the family from recognizing in her a peculiar development of its own quality. When Israel's gentle wife passed from a world which she had found too full of unanswered questions, it was Mrs. Cullom who plunged bulkily into the chamber of the great mystery and stopped, gulping with astonishment.

"I just made her some blanc-mange," she gasped. "Isn't that too bad! Why, Israel!"

Israel turned from the window and contemplated her gravely with his hands clasped behind him.

"I think you had better move down to the Meadows, Ellen," he said. "If you will contrive to say as little as possible to me about Marian, and one or two other matters I will specify, we shall get along very well."

He went out with slow step and bent head, followed by Mrs. Cullom trying vainly to find an idea on the subject suggested, which she was quite positive she had somewhere about her. What Israel may have thought of the thing that had whispered within his doors in an unknown tongue, and had taken away what was his without receipt or equivalent exchange, it were hard to say; equally hard even to say what he had thought of Marian these twenty years. If her cloistral devotions and visionary moods had seemed to him, in uninverted terms, folly, he had never said so. Certainly he had liked her quiet, ladylike ways, and possibly respected a difference of temperament inwardly as well as outwardly. At any rate, tolerance was a consistent Sanderson policy and philosophy of life.

There was a slight movement in the chamber, after the silence which followed the departing footsteps of Israel and Mrs. Cullom. A small person in pinafores crept stealthily from under the bed and peered over the edge. It was a hard climb but he persisted, and at last seated himself on it panting, with his elbows on his knees, gravely considering. A few hours since, the silent lips had whispered, among many things that came back to his memory in after years like a distant chime of bells, only this that seemed of any immediate importance: "I shall be far away to-night, Joe, but when you say your prayers I shall hear." The problem that puckered the small brow was whether prayers out of regular hours were real prayers. Joe decided to risk it and, getting on his knees, said over all the prayers he knew. Then he leaned over and patted the thin, cold cheek (Joe and his mother always tacitly understood each other), slid off the bed with a satisfied air, and solemnly trotted out of the room.

Mrs. Cullom Sanderson was a widow; "Which," Israel remarked, "is a pity. Cullom would have taken comfort in outliving you, Ellen."

"Well," remonstrated Mrs. Cullom, "I'm sure I don't know what you mean, Israel. I've always respected his memory."

Israel, gravely regarding her, observed, "You'd better not try to train Joe," and departed, leaving her to struggle with the idea that between Joe and Cullom's comfort Israel was getting very disconnected. Disconnection of remark did not imply any changeableness in Israel's temperament. He observed a silent sequence of character, and possibly a sequence of thought of which he did not care to give evidence, on matters which he found no profit in discussing. Twelve years later the mystery again whispered within his doors, and he rose and followed it in his usual deliberate and taciturn way, without disclosing any opinion on

the question of the inversion of terms. The story of each generation is put away when its time comes with a more or less irrelevant epitaph, whether or not its threads be gathered into a satisfactory finale. The Spirit-of-things-moving-on is singularly indifferent to such matters. Its only literary principle seems to be, to move on. The new Sanderson of Back Meadows grew up a slight, thin-faced young fellow. The Sanderson men were always slight of build, saving a certain breadth of shoulders. A drooping mustache in course of time hid the only un-Sanderson feature, a sensitive mouth. The cool gray eyes, slightly drawing speech, and deliberate manner were all Sanderson, indicating "a chip of the old block," as Mr. Durfey remarked to the old Scotchman who kept the drag store in Hagar. If the latter had doubts, he kept them to himself.

The Sanderson stud sprang from a certain red mare, Martha, belonging to Blake Sanderson of Revolutionary times. They were a thin-necked, generally bad-tempered breed, with red veins across the eyes, of high repute among "horsey" men. Blake Sanderson was said to have ridden the red mare from Boston in some astonishingly quick time on some mysterious errand connected with the evacuation of New York, whereby her descendants were at one time known as the Courier breed; but as no one seemed to know what the errand was, it was possibly not a patriotic one. Three of these red, thinnecked mares and a stallion were on exhibition at the Hamilton County Fair of '76. Notable men of the county were there, mingled with turfmen of all shades of notoriety; several immaculately groomed gentlemen, tall-hatted, long-coated, and saying little, but pointed out with provincial awe as coming from New York and worth watching; a few lean Kentuckians, the redness of whose noses was in direct ratio with their knowledge of the business, and whose artistic profanity had a mercantile value in expressing contempt for Yankee horse-flesh. There was the Honorable Gerald and the some-say Dishonorable Morgan Map, originally natives of Hagar, with young Jacob Lorn between them undergoing astute initiation into the ways of the world and its manner of furnishing amusement to young men of wealth; both conversing affably with Gypsy John of not even doubtful reputation, at present booming Canadian stock in favor of certain animals that may or may not have seen Canada. Thither came the manager of the opera troupe resident in Hamilton during the Fair, and the Diva, popularly known as Mignon, a brown-haired woman with a quick Gallic smile and a voice, "By gad, sir, that she can soak every note of it in tears, the little scamp," quoth Cassidy, observing from a distance. Cassidy was a large fleshy man with a nickel shield under his coat.

"A face to launch a thousand ships,  
And burn the topless towers of Ilium"

misquoted a tall, thin personage with an elongated face and sepulchral voice. "The gods made you poetical, Mr. Cassidy. Do you find your gift of sentiment of use on the force?"

"Yes, sir," shouted Cassidy, inadvertently touched on one of innumerable hobbies and beginning to pound one hand excitedly with the fist of the other. "In fine cases, sir, the ordinary detective slips up on just that point. Now let me tell you, Mr. Maverick—"

"Tell me whether that is not Mignon's 'mari.' What sort of a man is he?"

"Mignon's what? Oh—Manager Scott. He isn't married, further than that he's liable to rows on account of Mignon, who—has a face to upset things as you justly observe, not to speak of a disposition according. At least, I don't know but what they may be married. If they are, they're liable to perpetuate more rows than anything else."

"Does something smack, something grow to, has a kind of taste?"

"Eh?" said Cassidy, inquiringly.

Sanderson, standing silently by, as silently turned and walked toward the crowd drifting back and forth in front of the stables. Portly Judge Carter of Gilead, beaming through gold-rimmed glasses, side-whiskered and rubicund, stopped him to remark tremendously that he had issued an injunction against the stallion going out of the state. "A matter of local patriotism, Joe, eh?"

"Hear, hear," commented the Honorable Gerald Map. A crowd began to gather anticipating a conference of notables. Sanderson extricated himself and walked on, and two small boys eventually smacked each other over the question whether Judge Carter was as great a man as Mr. Sanderson.

Maverick's eyes followed him speculatively.

"What's the particular combination that troubles the manager's rest?"

"Eh?" said Cassidy. "Oh, I don't know. Bob Sutton mostly. He's here somewhere. Swell young fellow in a plush vest, fashionable proprietor of thread mills."

The yellow, dusty road ran between the stables and a battle line of sycamores and maples. Over the stables loomed the brick wall of the theatre, and at the end of them a small green door for the private use of exhibitors gave exit from the Fair Grounds. Sanderson stopped near a group opposite it, where Mignon stood slapping her riding-boot with her whip.

"Mr. Sanderson," said Mignon, liquidly, "how can I get out through that door?"

Sanderson considered and suggested opening it.

"But it's locked! Ciel! It's locked!"

Sanderson considered again. "Here's a key," he said hopefully.

"There!" shouted the plush vest. "I knew there'd be some solution. You see, mademoiselle, what Ave admire in Sanderson is his readiness of resource. Mademoiselle refused to melt down the fence with a smile or climb over it on a high C, and we were quite in despair."

Outside the gate, in the paved courtyard between the theatre and the hotel, Mignon lifted her big brown eyes which said so many things, according to Cassidy, that were not so, and observed demurely, "If you were to leave me that key, Mr. Sanderson, well, I should steal in here after the performance tonight and ride away on the little red mare, certainly."

Sanderson gravely held out the key, but Mignon drew back in sudden alarm and clasped her hands



tragically.

"Oh, no! You would be on guard and, what! cut up? Yes. Ah, dreadfully! You are so wise, Mr. Sanderson, and secret."

And Jack Mavinger, following slowly after, chuckled sepulchrally to himself. "Pretty cool try sting. Peace to the shades of Manager Scott. I couldn't have done it better myself."

The Fair Grounds were as dark and lonely at eleven o'clock as if the lighted street were not three hundred feet away with its gossipy multitude going up and down seeking some new thing. The stands yawned indifferently from a thousand vacant seats and the race-track had forgotten its excitement. Horses stamped and rustled spectrally in their stalls. The shadow under the maples was abysmal and the abyss gave forth a murmur of dialogue, the sound of a silken voice.

"Oh," it sighed in mock despair, "but Americans, they are so very impassive. Look! They make love in monosyllables. They have no passion, no action. They pull their mustachios, say 'Damn!'—so, and it is tragedy. They stroke their chins, so, very grave. They say 'It is not bad, and it is comedy. Ah, please, Joe, be romantic!'"

"Why," drawled the other voice, "I'll do whatever you like, except have spasms."

"Indifferent! Bah! That's not romantic. How would I look in the house of your fathers?"

"You'd look like thunder."

"Would I?" The silken voice sank low and was quiet for a moment. "Well then, listen. This shall you do. You shall give me that key and an order to your man that I ride the little mare of a Sunday morning, which is tomorrow, because she is the wind and because you are disagreeable. Is it not so?"

A ripple of low laughter by the green door, and "There then. You drive a hard bargain in love, monsieur." The door opened and she stepped with a rustle of skirts into and through the paved courtyard, now unlit by lamps at the theatre entrance, dark enough for the purposes of Manager Scott, in an angle of the entrance pulling his mustache and speaking after the manner described by Mignon as tragedy.

In the valley of the Wyantenaug many stopped and listened breathlessly by barn-yard and entry door to a voice that floated along the still air of the Sabbath morning, now carolling like a bobolink, now fluting like a wood-thrush, now hushed in the covert of arching trees, and now pealing over the meadows by the river bank; others only heard a rush of hoofs and saw a little red horse and its rider go by with the electric stride of a trained racer. Each put his or her interpretation thereon, elaborately detailed after the manner of the region, and approximated the fact of Mignon and her purposes as nearly as might be expected. Delight in the creation of jewelled sounds as an end in itself; delight in the clear morning air of autumn valleys, the sight of burnished leaves and hills in mad revelry of color; delight in following vagrant fancies with loose rein, happy, wine-lipped elves that rise without reason and know no law; delight in the thrill and speed of a sinewy horse compact of nerves; however all these may have entered in the purposes of Mignon, they are not likely to have entered the conjectures of the inhabitants of Wyantenaug Valley, such pleasures of the flesh. Mignon let the mare choose her road, confining her own choice to odd matters of going slow or fast or not at all, pausing by the river bank to determine the key and imitate the quality of its low chuckle, and such doings; all as incomprehensible to the little red mare as to the inhabitants of Wyantenaug Valley.

The valley is broad with cup-shaped sides, save where the crowding of the hills has thrust one forward to stand in embarrassed projection. Some twenty miles above Hamilton rises Windless Mountain on the right, guarding from the world the village of Hagar behind it. Northward from Windless lie irregular hills, and between them and the long westward-inclining tumulus of the Cattle Ridge a narrow gorge with a tumbling brook comes down. Up this gorge goes a broad, well-kept road, now bridging the brook, now slipping under shelving ledges, everywhere carpeted with the needles of pines, secret with the shadows of pines, spicy and strong with the scent of pines, till at the end of half a mile it emerges from beneath the pines into Sanderson Hollow. The little red mare shot from the gloom into the sunlight with a snort and shake of the head that seemed to say: "Oh, my hoofs and fetlocks! Deliver me from a woman who makes believe to herself she is n't going where she is, or if she is that it's only accidental."

Mrs. Cullom Sanderson ponderously made ready for church, not with a mental preparation of which the minister would have approved unless he had seen as clearly as Mrs. Cullom the necessity of denouncing in unmeasured terms the iniquity of Susan. Susan was a maid who tried to do anything that she was told, and bumped her head a great deal. Her present iniquity lay in her fingers and consisted in tying and buttoning Mrs. Cullom and putting her together generally so that she felt as if she had fallen into her clothes from different directions. A ring at the door-bell brought Mrs. Cullom down from heights of sputtering invective like an exhausted sky-rocket, and she plumped into a chair whispering feebly, "Goodness, Susan, who's that?" Susan vaguely disclaimed all knowledge of "that."

"You might find out," remonstrated Mrs. Cullom, the reaction precluding anything but a general feeling of injury. Susan went down-stairs and bumped her head on the chandelier, opened the door and bumped it on the door.

"Ouch," she remarked in a matter-of-fact tone. "Please, ma'am, Miss Sanderson wants to know, who's that?"

"Ah," said the trim little lady in riding-habit, "will you so kindly ask Miss Sanderson that I may speak to her?"

But Mrs. Cullom was already descending the stairs, each step appearing to Mignon to have the nature of a plunge. "My goodness, yes. Come in." Mignon carried her long skirt over the lintel.

"I am quite grieved to intrude, mademoi—" Mrs. Cullom's matronly proportions seemed to discountenance the diminutive, "a—madame. Mr. Sanderson permitted me to ride one of his horses. He is so generous. And the horse brought me here, oh, quite decisively," and Mignon laughed such a soft, magical laugh that Susan grinned in broad delight. "It is such a famous place, this, is it not,—Back Meadows? I thought I might be allowed to—to pay tribute to its fame."

Mrs. Cullom's cordiality was such that if, strictly speaking, two hundred pounds can flutter, she may be said

to have fluttered. She plunged through two sombre-curtained parlors, Mignon drifting serenely in the wake of her tumult. Something in the black, old colonial furniture sent a feeling of cold gruesomeness into her sunny veins, and she was glad when Mrs. Cullom declared it chilly and towed her into the dining-room, where a warm light sifted through yellow windows of modern setting high over a long, irregular sideboard, and mellowed the portraits of departed Sandersons on the walls: honorables numerous of colonial times (Blake, first of the horse-breeding Sandersons, booted and spurred but with too much thinness of face and length of jaw for a Squire Western type), all flanked by dames, with a child here and there, above or below—all but the late Israel, whose loneliness in his gilt frame seemed to have a certain harmony with his expression.

"That was Joseph's father, my brother Israel," said Mrs. Cullom, as Mignon's eyes travelled curiously along and rested on the last. "Joseph keeps his mother hung up in his den."

"Hung up? Den?" cried Mignon, with a recurrence of the gruesome feeling of the parlors. "Oh, ciel! What does he keep there? Bones?"

"Bones! Goodness no. Books."

Mrs. Cullom pushed open a door to the right and entered a long, low room piled to the ceiling and littered with books, which, together with the leathern chair and red-shaded lamp before the fireplace, gave a decided air of studious repose, nothing suggesting a breeder of fancy stock. An oil painting of a lady hung over the mantel, and near it some mediæval Madonna, not unressembling the portrait in its pale cheeks, unworldly eyes, and that faint monastic air of vigil and vision and strenuous yearning of the soul to throw its dust aside. Nevertheless the face of the lady was a sweet face, quiet and pure, such as from many a Madonna of the Old World in tawdry regalia looks pityingly down over altar and winking tapers, seeming to say with her tender eyes, "Is it very hard, my dear, the living? Come apart then and rest awhile." Mignon turned to Mrs. Cullom. "You are dressed for going out, madame," she said, looking at that lady's well-to-do black silk. "Am I not detaining you?"

"Oh, I was going to church. Goodness, are n't you going to church?" A sudden thought struck her and she added severely: "And you've been riding that wicked little mare on Sunday. And she might have thrown you, and how'd you look pitched headfirst into heaven dressed so everybody ud know you weren't going to church!"

"Oh," cried Mignon, "but I was good when I was a child. Yes! I went to mass every day, and had a little priedieu, oh, so tiny!"

"Mass!" gasped Mrs. Cullom. "Well, I declare. What's a pray-do?"

Mignon surveyed her riding-skirt regretfully. "Would it not be appropriate, madame? I should so like to go with you," she said plaintively.

"Goodness! I'll risk it if you will. I'd like to see the woman who'd tell me what to wear to church." She plunged suddenly out of the room, leaving Mignon thinking that she would not like to be the woman referred to. She listened to the ponderous footsteps of Mrs. Cullom climbing the stairs, and then sank into the leathern chair facing the picture. Possibly the living and the dead faced each other on a point at issue; they seemed to debate some matter gravely and gently, as is seldom done where both are living. Possibly it was Mignon's dramatic instinct which caused her to rise at last, gathering up her riding-skirt, at the approaching footsteps of Mrs. Cullom, and bow with Gallic grace and diminutive stateliness to the pure-faced lady with the spiritual eyes. "C'est vrai, madame," she said, and passed out with her small head in the air.

The congregation that day in the little church of the bended weather-vane, where Hagar's cross-roads meet, heard certain ancient hymns sung as never before in the church of the bended weather-vane. "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," pleaded the silken voice, like a visitant invisible, floating from fluted pillar to fluted pillar, calling at some unseen door, "Let me in! Ah, let me in!" Somewhat too much of rose leaves and purple garments in the voice for that simple, steadfast music. The spirit seemed pleading rather for gratification than rest. The congregation stopped singing, save Mrs. Cullom, who flatted comfortably on unnoticed. Deacon Crockett frowned ominously over his glasses at a scandalous scene and a woman too conspicuous; Captain David Brett showed all the places where he had no teeth; Mr. Royce looked down from the pulpit troubled with strange thoughts, and Miss Hettie Royce dropped her veil over her face, remembering her youth.

How should Mignon know she was not expected to be on exhibition in that curious place? Of course people should be silent and listen when an artist sings. Mignon hardly remembered a time when she was not more or less on exhibition. That volatile young lady cantered along the Windless Mountain Road somewhat after twelve o'clock not in a very good humor. She recognized the ill humor, considered ill humor a thing both unpleasant and unnecessary and attributed it to an empty stomach; dismounted before an orchard and swung herself over the wall reckless of where her skirts went or where they did not.

"Them apples is mine," growled a gray-bearded person behind a barn-yard fence.

"Then why didn't you get them for me, pig?" returned Mignon sharply, and departed with more than her small hands could conveniently carry, leaving the gray-bearded person turning the question over dubiously in his mind.

It happened to have occurred to Sanderson that certain business of his own pointed to Back Meadows that Sunday morning. The up-train on Sunday does not leave till after eleven, and he took the valley road on the red stallion of uncertain temper. The inhabitants of Wyantenaug Valley heard no more carolling voices, or fitful rush and clatter of hoofs. The red stallion covered his miles with a steady stride and the rider kept his emotions, aesthetic or otherwise, to himself. The twain swung into the Hollow about eleven o'clock, and Sanderson presently found himself in his leathern chair debating a question at issue with the lady of the spiritual eyes. What passed between them is their own secret, quite hopeless of discovery, with one end of it on the other side of the "valley of the shadow," and the other buried in close coverts of Sanderson reserve. When the door-bell rang and Susan appearing bumped her head against the casing and announced, "Mr. Joe, it's a red-haired gentleman," having no dramatic instinct, he passed into the dining-room without salutation to the lady of the spiritual eyes.

"How are you, Scott? Sit down," he drawled placidly.

"I suppose you know what I'm here for," said the other, with evident self-restraint.

"Can't say I do," returned Sanderson, cheerfully. "It needn't be anything in particular, need it?" He sat down, stretched his legs under the dining-room table and his arms on top of it. Manager Scott paced the floor nervously. Suddenly he stooped, picked up something and flung it on the table—a strip of thin gray veil. "You can save yourself a lie, Mr. Sanderson."

Sanderson gravely regarded the delicate article which seemed to be put forth both as an accusation and a proof of something. Then he leaned forward and rang the bell. "I will overlook that implication for the present, Mr. Scott," he remarked. "If it's a bluff, it's a good one. I take it it is n't. Susan, has any one been here this morning?" as that maiden tumbled into the room in a general tangle of feet.

"Yes, sir, and she's gone. My! She ain't comin' back to dinner! Lady rode the little mare and she went to church with Miss Sanderson."

"Mademoiselle Mignon," drawled Sanderson, turning to Manager Scott, "asked permission to ride the mare this morning. I was not aware she intended making an excursion to Back Meadows or I should have asked permission to attend her. It seems she went to Hagar with my aunt and proposes to ride back to Hamilton from there. It's my turn now, old man, and I'd like to know what was the necessity of making your visit so very tragic."

"Oh, I presume I'm an ass," returned the other, with a noticeable nervous twitching of the mouth and fingers, "and I presume I owe you an apology. I shall probably shoot the man that comes between Mignon and me, if he doesn't shoot first, which is all very asinine."

"Quite irrespective of what mademoiselle may think about it?"

"Oh, quite."

"Well," said Sanderson, after a pause, "I rather sympathize with your way of looking at it. I shouldn't wonder if I had some of that primeval brutality myself."

"Look here, Sanderson," said the manager. "Without going into humiliating details as to how I came by the fact, which I don't know why you take so much pains to conceal, I know as well as you do that the issue is between you and me."

"You don't mean to threaten, do you, Scott?"

"Oh, no. I'm going back to Hamilton. I was looking for a row, and you don't give me enough to go on."

"Can't do it just now, old man," said Sanderson, gently, shaking hands with him at the door. "I'll let you know when I can. In that case we 'll have it out between us."

The manager strode off across the Hollow and down the Gorge to the valley station, and Sanderson mounted and took the road to Hagar. He passed the village about one. The red stallion thundered through the pine avenues at the foot of Windless and swept around the curve into Wyantenaug Valley, but it was not till within a few miles of Hamilton that the speedy little mare, even bothered as she was by her rider's infirmity of purpose, allowed herself to be overtaken. The road there turned away from the river and went covered with crisp autumn leaves through chestnut woods. Mignon looked up and laughed, and the two horses fell sympathetically into a walk.

"Don't you think you owe me an explanation?" asked Sanderson, in a low tone.

"Indeed, sir, I owe you nothing, not even for this ride. It was paid for," rippled the silken voice, and stopped suddenly in a little sob. Sanderson turned quickly and bent over her.

"By the living God," he said solemnly, "I swear I love you. What barrier is strong enough to face that?"

"It is because you do not know me, that. Listen, Joe. I have not been what you call good nor pure in the past and shall not in the future. No, hush. I know what I am and what I shall be always. If I swore by your living God that I loved you now, it would not mean that I should to-morrow, and the next day, oh, not at all. There are no deeps in me, nor what you call a faith or principle in life. Listen, Joe. That lady whose portrait I saw is your guardian angel. Look, I reverence now. To-morrow I shall mock both her and you. This that I speak now is only a mood. The wind is now one thing and then quite another, Joe. It has no centre and no soul. I am an artist, sir. I have moods but no character. Morals! I have none. They go like the whiff of the breeze. Nothing that I do lowers or lifts me. It passes through me and that is all. Do you not understand?" which indeed was hard to do, for the brown eyes were very soft and deep.

"If any one else had told me this," said Sanderson, between his teeth, "man or woman, it would never have been said but once."

"It is harder for you than for me, for to-morrow I shall not care and you, you will care perhaps a long time. You are fast like these hills. Listen. Now, sir, this is our last ride together. We are a cavalier and his lady. They are gallant and gay. They wear life and love and death in their hair like flowers. They smile and will not let their hearts be sad, for they say, 'It is cowardly to be sad: it is brave only to smile.' Is it not so?"

Sanderson's New England reserve fled far away, and he bent over her hand.

"It shall be as you say."

And to-morrow seemed far enough away, and an hour had its eternal value. But the steady old hills could not understand that kind of chronology.

The Salem Road is a dusty road. Perhaps it is not really any dustier than other roads, but it is straighter than most roads about Hagar. You can see more of it at a time, and in that way you can see more dust. Along this road one day many years ago came Dr. Wye of Salem in his buggy, which leaned over on one side; and the dust was all over the buggy-top, all over the big, gray, plodding horse, and all over the doctor's hat and coat. He was tired and drowsy, but you would not have suspected it; for he was a red-faced, sturdy man, with a beard cut square, as if he never compromised with anything. He sat up straight and solid, so as not to compromise with the tipping of the buggy.

"Come, Billy," said the doctor, "no nonsense, now."

He prided himself on being a strict man, who would put up with no nonsense, but every one knew better. Billy, the gray horse, knew as well as any one.

"Come now, Billy, get along."

A tall, dusty, black-bearded man rose up beside the road, and Billy stopped immediately.

A large pack lay against the bank.

"You ain't seen a yeller dog?"

"No," said the doctor, gruffly. He was provoked with Billy. "There aren't any yellow dogs around here."

"He hadn't no tail," persisted the stranger, wistfully. "And there were a boy a-holdin' him. He chopped it off when he were little."

"Who chopped it off?"

"Hey? He's a little cuss, but the dog's a good dog."

"Get up, Billy," growled the doctor. "All boys are little cusses. I have n't seen any yellow dog. Nonsense! I wonder he did n't ask if I'd seen the tail."

But somehow the doctor could not get rid of the man's face, and he found himself looking along the roadside for boys that were distinctly "little cusses" and yellow dogs without tails, all the rest of the day.

In the evening twilight he drove into Salem village. Very cool and pleasant looked the little white house among the trees. Mother Wye stood on the porch in her white apron and cap, watching for him. She was flying signals of distress—if the word were not too strong—she was even agitated. He tramped up the steps reassuringly.

"Oh," whispered Mother Wye, "you've no idea, Ned! There's a boy and a dog, a very large dog, my dear, on the back steps."

"Well," said the doctor, gallantly, "they've no business to be anywhere frightening my little mother. We'll tell them to do something else." The doctor tramped sturdily around to the back steps, Mother Wye following much comforted.

The dog was actually a yellow dog without any tail to speak of—a large, genial-looking dog, nevertheless; the boy, a black-eyed boy, very grave and indifferent, with a face somewhat thin and long. "Without doubt," thought the doctor, "a little cuss. Hullo," he said aloud, "I met a man looking for you."

The boy scrutinized him with settled gravity. "He's not much account," he said calmly. "I'd rather stay here."

"Oh, you would!" grumbled the doctor. "Must think I want somebody around all the time to frighten this lady. Nice folks you are, you and your dog."

The boy turned quickly and took off his cap. "I beg your pardon, madam," he said with a smile that was singularly sudden and winning. The action was so elderly and sedate, so very courtly, surprising, and incongruous, that the doctor slapped his knee and laughed uproariously; and Mother Wye went through an immediate revulsion, to feel herself permeated with motherly desires. The boy went on unmoved.

"He's an easy dog, ma'am. His name's Poison, but he never does anything;"—which started the doctor off again.

"They said you wanted a boy."

"Ah," said the doctor, growing grave, "that's true; but you're not the boy."

The boy seemed to think him plainly mistaken. "Stuff!" growled the doctor, "I want a boy I can send all around the country. I know a dozen boys that know the country, and that I know all about. I don't want you. Besides," he added, "he said you were a little cuss."

The boy paid no attention to the last remark. "I'll find it out. Other boys are thick-headed."

"That's true," the doctor admitted; "they are thick-headed." Indeed this young person's serenity and confidence quite staggered him. A new diplomatic idea seemed to occur to the young person. He turned to Mother Wye and said gravely: "Will you pull Poison's ear, ma'am, so he'll know it's all right?"

Mother Wye, with some trepidation, pulled Poison's ear, and Poison wagged the whole back end of himself to make up for a tail, signifying things that were amicable, while the doctor tugged at his beard and objected to nonsense.

"Well, young man, we'll see what you have to say for yourself. Tut! tut! mother,"—to Mrs. Wye's murmur of remonstrance,— "we'll have no nonsense. This is a practical matter;" and he tramped sturdily into the house, followed by the serious boy, the amicable dog, and the appeased, in fact the quite melted, Mother Wye.

"Now, boy," said the doctor, "what's your name?"

"Jack."

"Jack what? Is that other fellow your father?"

"I reckon maybe he is," returned Jack, with a gloomy frown. "His name's Baker. He peddles."

The doctor tugged at his beard and muttered that "at any rate there appeared to be no nonsense about it. But he's looking for you," he said. "He'll take you away."

"He's looking for the dog," said Jack, calmly. "He can't have him."



The East End Road, which circles the eastern end of the Cattle Ridge, is not at all like the Salem Road. It is wilder and crooked, to begin with, but that is a superficial matter. It passes through thick woods, dips into gullies, and changes continually, while along the Salem Road there is just the smoky haze on the meadows and dust in the chalices of the flowers; there too the distance blinks stupidly and speculation comes to nothing. But the real point is this: the Salem Road leads straight to Hagar and stops there; the East End Road goes over somewhere among the northern hills and splits up into innumerable side roads, roads that lead to doorways, roads that run into footpaths and dwindle away in despair, roads of which it must be said with sorrow that there was doubt in Salem whether they ever ended or led anywhere. Hence arose the tale that all things which were strange and new, at least all things which were to be feared, came into Salem over the East End Road; just as in Hagar they came down from the Cattle Ridge and went away to the south beyond Windless Mountain.

Along this road, a month later than the last incident, came the black-bearded peddler with his pack, whistling; and indeed his pack, though large, seemed to weigh singularly little; also the peddler seemed to be in a very peaceful frame of mind. And along this road too came the plodding gray horse, with the serious boy driving, and the yellow dog in the rear; all at a pace which slowly but surely overtook the peddler. The peddler, reaching a quiet place where a bank of ferns bordered the brushwood, sat down and waited, whistling. The dog, catching sight of him, came forward with a rush, wagging the back end of himself; and Billy, the gray horse, came gently to a standstill.

"How goes it?" said the peddler, pausing a moment in his whistling. "Pretty good?"

"Mostly."

The peddler took a cigar-case from his pocket, a cigar wrapped in tin-foil from the case, and lay back lazily among the ferns, putting his long thin hands behind his head. "My notion was," he murmured, "that it would take a month, a month would be enough."

The serious boy said nothing, but sat with his chin on his fists looking down the road meditatively.

"My notion was," went on the peddler, "that a doctor's boy, particularly that doctor's boy, would get into all the best houses around—learn the lay of things tolerably neat. That was my notion. Good notion, wasn't it, Jack?" Jack muttered a subdued assent. The peddler glanced at him critically. "For instance now, that big square house on the hill north of Hagar."

Jack shook his head. "Nothing in it. Old man, name Map, rich enough, furniture done up in cloth, valuables stored in Hamilton; clock or two maybe; nothing in it."

"Ah," said the other, "just so;" and again he glanced critically through his half-closed eyes. "But there are others." Again Jack muttered a subdued assent.

"Good?"

"Good enough."

The apparent peddler smoked, quite at his ease among the ferns, and seemed resolved that the boy should break the silence next.

"Are you banking on this business, dad?" said the latter, finally.

"Ah—why, no, Jack, not really. It's a sort of notion, I admit." He lifted one knee lazily over the other. "I'm not shoving you, Jack. State the case." A long silence followed, to which the conversation of the two seemed well accustomed.

"I never knew anything like that down there," nodding in the direction of Salem. "Those people.—It's different."

"That's so," assented the apparent peddler, critically. "I reckon it is. We make a point not to be low. Polish is our strong point, Jack. But we're not in society. We are not, in a way, on speaking terms with society."

"It ain't that."

"Isn't," corrected the other, gently. "Isn't, Jack. But I rather think it is."

"Well," said Jack, "it's different, and"—with gloomy decision—"it's better."

The apparent peddler whistled no more, but lay back among the ferns and gazed up at the drooping leaves overhead. The gray horse whisked at the wood-gnats and looked around now and again inquiringly. The yellow dog cocked his head on one side as if he had an opinion worth listening to if it were only called for.

"I suppose now," said the apparent peddler, softly, "I suppose now they're pretty cosy. I suppose they say prayers."

"You bet."

"You mean that they do, Jack. I suppose," he went on dreamily, "I suppose the old lady has white hair and knits stockings."

"She does that," said Jack, enthusiastically, "and pincushions and mats."

"And pincushions and mats. That's so."

The lowing of cattle came up to them from hidden meadows below; for the afternoon was drawing near its close and the cattle were uneasy. The chimney and roof of a farmhouse were just visible through a break in the sloping woods. The smoke that mounted from the chimney seemed to linger lovingly over the roof, like a symbol of peace, blessing the hearth from which it came. The sentimental outcast puffed his excellent cigar meditatively, now and again taking it out to remark, "Pincushions and mats!" indicating the constancy of his thoughts.

The serious boy motioned in the direction of Salem. "I think I'll stay there," he said. "It's better."

"Reckon I know how you feel, Jack,—know how you feel. Give me my lowly thatched cottage, and that sort of thing." After a longer silence still, he sat up and threw away his cigar. "Well, Jack, if you see your way—a—if I were you, Jack," he said slowly, "I wouldn't go half and half; I'd go the whole bill. I'd turn on the hose and inquire for the ten commandments, that's what I'd do." He came and leaned lazily on the carriage wheel. "That isn't very plain. It's like this. You don't exactly abolish the old man; you just imagine him comfortably

buried; that's it, comfortably buried, with an epitaph,—flourishy, Jack, flourishy, stating"—here his eyes roamed meditatively along Billy's well-padded spine—"stating, in a general way, that he made a point of polish."

The serious boy's lip trembled slightly. He seemed to be seeking some method of expression. Finally he said: "I'll trade knives with you, dad. It's six blades"; and the two silently exchanged knives.

Then Billy, the gray horse, plodded down the hill through the woods, and the apparent peddler plodded up. At one turn in the road can be seen the white houses of Salem across the valley; and here he paused, leaning on the single pole that guarded the edge. After a time he roused himself again, swung his pack to his shoulder, and disappeared over the crest of the hill whistling.

The shadows deepened swiftly in the woods; they lengthened in the open valley, filling the hollows, climbed the hill to Salem, and made dusky Dr. Wye's little porch and his tiny office duskiest still. The office was so tiny that portly Judge Carter of Gilead seemed nearly to fill it, leaving small space for the doctor. For this or some other reason the doctor seemed uncomfortable, quite oppressed and borne down, and remonstrating with the oppression. The judge was a man of some splendor, with gold eye-glasses and cane.

"There really is no doubt about it," he was saying, with a magnificent finger on the doctor's knee, "no doubt at all."

The conversation seemed to be most absorbing. The doctor pulled his beard abstractedly and frowned.

The serious boy drove by outside in the dusk, and after a while came up from the bam. He sat down on the edge of the porch to think things over, and the judge's voice rolled on oracularly. Jack hardly knew yet what his thoughts were; and this was a state of mind that he was not accustomed to put up with, because muddle-headedness was a thing that he especially despised. "You don't exactly abolish the old man," he kept hearing the peddler say; "you just imagine him comfortably buried—with an epitaph—flourishy—stating—"

"Clever, very," said the judge. "Merriwether was telling me—won't catch him, too clever—Merri-wether says—remarkable—interesting scamp, very." The doctor growled some inaudible objection.

"Why did he show himself!" exclaimed the judge. "Why, see here. Observe the refined cleverness of it! It roused your interest, didn't it? It was unique, amusing. Chances are ten to one you would n't have taken the boy without it. Why, look here—"

"Stuff!"—Here the doctor raised his voice angrily. "The boy ran away from him, of course."

"Maybe, doctor, maybe," said the judge, soothingly. "But there are other things—looks shady—consider the man is known. Dangerous, doctor, dangerous, very. You ought to be careful." Then the words were a mere murmur.

Jack sat still on the porch, with his chin on his hands. Overhead the night-hawks called, and now and then one came down with a whiz of swooping wings. Presently he heard the chairs scrape; he rose, slipped around to the back porch and into the kitchen.

The little bronze clock in the dining-room had just told its largest stint of hours,—and very hard work it made of it. It was a great trial to the clock to have to rouse itself and bluster so. It did not mind telling time in a quiet way. But then, every profession has its trials. It settled itself again to stare with round, astonished face at the table in the centre of the room.

Jack sat at the table by a dim lamp, the house dark and silent all around him, writing a letter. He leaned his head down almost on a level with the paper.

"I herd him and you," he wrote in a round hand with many blots. "I lied and so did he I mean dad. I can lie good. Dad sed I must learn the ten comandments. The ten comandments says diferent things. You neednt be afraid. There dont anithing happen cep to me. I do love Mother Wye tru." The clock went on telling the time in the way that it liked to do, tick-tick-tick. Overhead the doctor slept a troubled sleep, and in Gilead Judge Carter slept a sound sleep of good digestion.

Far off the Salem Road led westward straight to Hagar, and stopped, and the moonlight lay over it all the way; but the East End Road led through the shadows and deep night over among the northern hills, and split up into many roads, some of which did not seem ever to end, or lead anywhere.

Jack dropped from the window skilfully, noiselessly, and slid away in the moonlight. At the Corners he did not hesitate, but took the East End Road.

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## A VISIBLE JUDGMENT

**H**e bore the name of Adam Wick. There seemed to be something primitive in his temperament to fit it. By primitive we mean of such times as may have furnished single-eyed passions that did not argue. He was a small, thin, stooping man, with a sharp nose and red-lidded eyes. Sarah Wick, his daughter, was a dry-faced woman of thirty, and lived with him.

His house stood on a hill looking over the village of Preston Plains, which lay in a flat valley. In the middle of the village the church-steeple shot up tapering and tall.

It was a bickering community. The church was a centre of interest. The outlines of the building were clean and shapely, but in detail it stood for a variety of opinions. A raised tracery ran along the pseudo-classic frieze of its front, representing a rope of flowers with little cupids holding up the loops. They may have been cherubs. The community had quarrelled about them long ago when the church was building, but that subject had given way to other subjects.

The choir gallery bulged over the rear seats, as if to dispute the relative importance of the pulpit. That was nothing. But it needed bracing. The committee decided against a single pillar, and erected two, one of them in the middle of Adam Wick's pew.

Adam looked at things simply. It seemed to his simplicity that the community had conspired to do him injustice. The spirit of nonconformity stirred within him. He went to the minister.

"Andrew Hill, nor any other man, nor committeeman's got no rights in my pew."

The minister was dignified.

"The pew, Mr. Wick, belongs to the church."

"No such thing! I sat twenty-four years in that pew."

"But that, though very creditable—"

"No such thing! I'll have no post in my pew, for Andrew Hill nor no minister neither."

"Mr. Wick—"

"You take that post out o' my pew."

He stumped out of the minister's green-latticed doorway and down the gravel path. His eyes on either side of his sharp nose were like those of an angry hawk, and his stooping shoulders, seen from behind, resembled the huddled back of the hawk, caged and sullen.

The minister watched him. Properly speaking, a primitive nature is an unlimited monarchy where ego is king, but the minister's reflections did not run in these terms. He did not even go so far as to wonder whether such primitive natures did not render the current theory of a church inaccurate. He went so far as to wonder what Adam Wick would do.

One dark, windy night, near midnight, Adam Wick climbed in at the vestibule window of the church, and chopped the pillar in two with an axe. The wind wailed in the belfry over his head. The blinds strained, as if hands were plucking at them from without. The sound of his blows echoed in the cold, empty building, as if some personal devil were enjoying the sacrilege. Adam was a simple-minded man; he realized that he was having a good time himself.

It was three days before the church was opened. What may have been Adam's primitive thoughts, moving secretly among his townsmen? Then a sudden rumor ran, a cry went up, of horror, of accusation, of the lust of strife. Before the accusation Adam did not hesitate to make his defiance perfect. The primitive mind was not in doubt. With a blink of his red eyelids, he answered:

"You tell Andrew Hill, don't you put another post in my pew."

A meeting was held; a majority voted enthusiastically to strike his name from the rolls for unchristian behavior and to replace the pillar. A minority declared him a wronged man. That was natural enough in Preston Plains. But Adam Wick's actions at this point were thought original and effective by every one.

He sat silently through the proceedings in the pew with the hacked pillar, his shoulders hunched, his sharp eyes restless.

"Mr. Wick," said the minister, sternly, "have you anything to say?"

Adam rose.

"I put fifty-six dollars into this meetin'-house. Any man deny that?"

No man denied it.

"Humph!" said Adam.

He took the hymn-book from the rack, lifted the green cushion from the seat, threw it over his shoulder, and walked out.

No man spoke against it.

"There's no further business before this meeting," said Chairman Hill.

It was a Sunday in August and nearly noon. From the side porch of Adam Wick's house on the hill the clustered foliage of the village below was the centre of the landscape. The steeple and ridgepole of the church rose out of the centre of the foliage.

The landscape could not be fancied without the steeple. The dumb materials of the earth, as well as the men who walk upon it, acquire habits. You could read on the flat face of the valley that it had grown accustomed to Preston Plains steeple.

On the side porch stood a long, high-backed bench. It was a close imitation of the pews in the church below among the foliage, with the long green cushion on the seat and a chair facing it with a hymn-book on it. Adam sat motionless on the bench. His red-lidded eyes were fixed intently on the steeple.

A hen with a brood of downy yellow chickens pecked about the path. A turkey strutted up and down. The air was sultry, oppressive. A low murmur of thunder mingled with the sleepy noises of creaking crickets and clucking hen.

Adam Wick's bench and rule of Sabbath observance had been common talk in Preston Plains. But it had grown too familiar, for subjects of dispute ever gave way there to other subjects. Some one said it was pathetic. The minority thought it a happy instance to throw in the face of the bigoted majority, that they had driven from the church a man of religious feeling. The minister had consulted Andrew Hill, that thick-set man with the dry mouth and gray chin-beard.

"Not take out that pillar!" said Andrew Hill. "Ah," said the minister, "I'm afraid that wouldn't do. It would seem like—"

"I wouldn't move that pillar if the whole town was sidin' with him."

"Oh, now—"

"Not while I'm alive. Adam Wick, he's obstinate." Mr. Hill shut his mouth grimly.

"Religious! Humph! Maybe he is."

The minister moved away. They were a stiff-necked people, but after all he felt himself to be one of them. It was his own race. He knew how Andrew Hill felt, as if something somewhere within him were suddenly clamped down and riveted. He understood Adam too, in his private pew on the side porch, the hymn-book on the chair, his eyes on Preston Plains steeple, fixed and glittering. He thought, "We don't claim to be altogether lovely."

Adam was in his own eyes without question a just man suffering injustice. His fathers in their Genesis and Exodus had so suffered, faced stocks, pillory, the frowning edge of the wilderness, and possessed their souls with the same grim congratulation. No generation ever saw visions and sweat blood, and left a moderate-minded posterity. Such martyrs were not surer that the God of Justice stood beside them than Adam was sure of the injustice of that pillar in that pew, nor more resolved that neither death nor hell should prevail against the faithfulness of their protest.

And the turkey strutted in the yard, the chickens hurried and peeped, the thunder muttered at intervals as if the earth were breathing heavily in its hot sleep.

The church-bell rang for the end of the morning service. It floated up from the distance, sweet and plaintive.

Adam rose and carried the cushion, chair, and hymn-book into the house.

The storm was rising, darkening. It crouched on the hills. It seemed to gather its garments and gird its loins, to breathe heavily with crowded hate, to strike with daggers of lightning right and left.

Adam came out again and sat on the bench. The service being over, it was no longer a pew.

Carriages, one after another, drove out of the foliage below, and along the five roads that ran out of Preston Plains between zigzag fences and low stone walls. They were hurrying, but from that distance they seemed to crawl.

The Wick carriage came up the hill and through the gate—creaking wheels, a shambling white horse, Sarah jerking the reins with monotonous persistence. She stepped down and dusted off her cotton gloves. Adam walked out to take the horse.

"Wherefore do ye harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?"

Adam seemed puzzled, blinked his eyes, seemed to study carefully the contents of his own mind.

"I do' know," he said at last.

"First Samuel, seven, six," said Sarah.

Adam led the horse away despondently. Halfway to the bam he stopped and called out:

"Did he preach at me?"

"No."

The minister had chosen a text that Adam did not know, and made no reference to him, although the text was a likely one. Adam felt both slights in a dim way, and resented them. He came back to the house and sat in the front room before the window.

The valley was covered with a thick veil of gray rain. The black cloud above it cracked every moment with sudden explosions, the echoes of them tumbling clumsily among the hills. Preston Plains steeple faded away and the foliage below it became a dim blot. A few drops struck the window-pane at Adam's face, then a rush and tumult of rain. Dimmer still the valley, but the lightning jabbed down into it incessantly, unseen batteries playing attack and defence over Preston Plains steeple.

It was a swift, sudden storm, come and gone like a burst of passion. The imminent crack and crash of the thunder ceased, and only rumblings were heard, mere memories, echoes, or as if the broken fragments of the sky were rolling to and fro in some vast sea-wash. The valley and the village trees came slowly into view.

"Dinner's ready," said Sarah, in the next room.

She had a strident voice, and said dinner was ready as if she expected Adam to dispute it. There was no answer from the window.

"Pa! Aren't you comin'?"

No answer. Sarah came to the door.

"Pa!"

His face was close to the rain-washed window-pane. Something rattled in his throat. It seemed like a suppressed chuckle. He rested his chin on his hand and clawed it with bony fingers.

"Pa!"

He turned on her sternly.

"You needn't be shoutin' on the Lord's day. Meetin'-house steeple's a-fire."

From Adam Wick's nothing could be seen but the slow column of smoke rising and curling around the slender steeple. But under the foliage Preston Plains was in tumult.

By night the church was saved, but the belfry was a blackened ruin within. The bell had fallen, through floor, cross-beams, and ceiling, and smashed the front of the choir gallery, a mass of fallen pillar, railing, and broken plaster on the floor.

Andrew Hill called a meeting. Adam Wick came, entered his cluttered pew and sat on the pillar that lay prostrate across it. He perched on it like a hawk, with huddled back and red-lidded eyes blinking. It was the sense of the meeting that modern ideas demanded the choir should sit behind the minister. The ruined gallery must be removed. Adam Wick rose.

"You've got no place in this meetin'," said Andrew Hill. "Set down."

Adam kept his place scornfully.

"Can't I subscribe twenty dollars to this church?" The chairman stroked his beard and a gleam of acrid humor lit his face for a moment.



"Well," he said slowly, "I suppose you can."

And the eyes of all present looked on Adam Wick favorably.

The minister rose to speak the last word of peace.

"My friends, the Lord did it. He is righteous—"

"That's my idea!" said Adam Wick, like a hawk on his fallen pillar, red-lidded, complacent. "He did what was right."

The minister coughed, hesitated, and sat down. Andrew Hill glowered from his chair.

"There's no further business before this meetin'."

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## THE EMIGRANT EAST

The old book-shop on Cripple Street in the city of Hamilton was walled to its dusky ceiling with books. Books were stacked on the floor like split wood, with alleys between. The long table down the centre was piled with old magazines and the wrecks of paper-covered novels. School arithmetics and dead theologies; Annuals in faded gilt, called "Keepsake," or "Friendship's Offering"; little leathern nubbins of books from the last century, that yet seemed less antique than the Annuals which counted no more than forty years—so southern and early-passing was the youth of the Annual; Bohn's translations, the useful and despised; gaudy, glittering prints of the poets and novelists; all were crowded together without recognition of caste, in a common Bohemia. Finding a book in that mystical chaos seemed to establish a right to it of first discovery. The pretty girl, who sat in one of the dim windows and kept the accounts, looked Oriental but not Jewish, and wore crimson ribbons in her black hair and at her throat. She read one of the Annuals, or gazed through the window at Cripple Street. A show-case in the other window contained stamp collections, Hindoo, Chinese, and Levantine coinage.

Far back in the shop a daring explorer might come upon a third window, gray, grimy, beyond which lay the unnamable backyards between Cripple and Academy Streets. It could not be said to "open on" them, for it was never opened, or "give a view" of them, being thick with gray dust. But if one went up to it and looked carefully, there in the dim corner might be seen an old man with a long faded black coat, rabbinical beard, dusky, transparent skin, and Buddha eyes, blue, faint, far away, self-abnegating, such as under the Bo-tree might have looked forth in meek abstraction on the infinities and perceived the Eightfold Principle. It was always possible to find Mr. Barria by steering for the window. So appeared the old bookshop on Cripple Street, Mr. Barria, the dealer, and his granddaughter, Janey.

Nature made Cripple Street to be calm and dull; for the hand of man, working through generations, is the hand of nature, as surely as in nature the oriole builds its nest or the rootlets seek their proper soil. Cripple Street ran from Coronet to Main Street and its paving was bad. There were a few tailors and bookbinders, a few silent, clapboarded houses.

But two doors from the corner on Coronet Street stood Station No. 4, of the Fire Brigade, and Cripple Street was the nearest way to Main Street, whither No. 4 was more likely to be called than elsewhere. So that, though nature made Cripple Street to be calm and dull, No. 4, Fire Brigade, sometimes passed it, engine, ladder, and hose, in the splendor of the supernatural, the stormy pageantry of the gods; and one Tommy Durdo drove the engine.

Durdo first came into Mr. Barria's shop in search of a paper-covered novel with a title promising something wild and belligerent. It was a rainy, dismal day, and Janey sat among the dust and refuse of forgotten centuries.

"My eyes!" he thought. "She's a peach."

He lost interest in any possible belligerent novel, gazed at her with the candor of his youthfulness, and remarked, guilefully:

"I bet you've seen me before now."

"You drive the engine," said Janey, with shining eyes.

"Why, this is my pie," thought Durdo, and sat down by her on a pile of old magazines. He was lank, muscular, with a wide mouth, lean jaws, turn-up nose, and joyful eyes. The magazines contained variations on the loves of Edwards, Eleanors, and other people, well-bred, unfortunate, and possessed of sentiments. Durdo was not well-bred, and had not a presentable sentiment in his recollection. He had faith in his average luck, and went away from Mr. Barria's shop at last with a spot in the tough texture of his soul that felt mellow.

"J. Barria, bookdealer," he read from the sign. "J! That's Janey, ain't it? Hold on. She ain't the bookdealer. She ain't any ten-cent novel either. She's a Rushy bound, two dollar and a half a copy, with a dedication on the fly-leaf, which"—Tommy stopped suddenly and reflected—"which it might be dedicated to Tommy."

It came near to being a sentiment. The possibility of such a thing rising from within him seemed impressive. He walked back to No. 4 thoughtfully, and thrust himself into a fight with Hamp Sharkey, in which it was proved that Hamp was the better man. Tommy regained his ordinary reckless cheerfulness. But when a man is in a state of mind that it needs a stand-up and knock-down fight to introduce cheerfulness, he cannot hope to conceal his state of mind.

Cripple Street drowsed in the sunshine one August afternoon. A small boy dug bricks out of the sidewalk with a stick. It seemed to emphasize the indifferent calm that no one took that interest in Cripple Street to come and stop him. The clangor of the fire-bells broke across the city. For a moment the silence in Cripple

Street seemed more deathly than before. Then the doors of the tailors and bookbinders flew open. The Fire Company came with leap and roar, ladder, engine, and hose, rattle of wheels and thud of steam. Passing Mr. Barria's Durdo turned his head, saw Janey in the door, and beamed on her.

"Hooray," he shouted.

"It's Tommy's girl," thundered Hamp Sharkey, from the top of his jingling ladders. Fire Brigade No. 4 cheered, waved its helmet, wherever it had a hand free, and in a moment was gone, leaving the drift of its smoke in the air, the tremble of its passing, and Janey flushed and thrilled. Hook and ladder and all had hailed her with honor as Tommy's girl. A battalion of cavalry, with her lover at the head, dashing up to salute, say, her battlemented or rose-embowered window—both terms occur in the Annuals—and galloping away to the wars, might have been better theoretically, but Janey was satisfied. She had no defence against such battery. Power, daring, and danger were personified in Tommy. He had brought them all to her feet. This it was to live and be a woman. She turned back into the dim shop, her eyes shining. The backs of the dusty books seemed to quiver and glow, even those containing arithmetic, dead philosophies, and other cool abstractions, as if they forgot their figures and rounded periods, and thought of the men who wrote them, how these once were young.

Durdo found it possible, by spending his off hours in Mr. Barria's shop, to keep cheerful without fighting Hamp Sharkey. A row now and then with a smaller man than Hamp was enough to satisfy the growing mellowness of his soul. His off hours began at four. He passed them among the Annuals and old magazines in a state of puzzled and flattered bliss. He fell so far from nature as to read the Annuals where Janey directed, to conclude that what was popularly called "fun" was vanity and dust in the mouth; that from now on he would be decent, and that any corner or hole in the ground which contained Janey and Tommy would suit him forever. No doubt he was wrong there.

Mr. Barria's memories of all that had befallen him within or without, in the journey of this life, before his entry on the Path of Quietness, and his consciousness of all external objects and occurrences since, were clear enough, but only as little white clouds in the open sky are clear, whose business it is to be far away and trouble us with no insistent tempest. They never entered the inner circle of his meditation. They appeared to be distant things. He had no sense of contact with them. His abstractions had formed a series of concentric spheres about him. In some outer sphere lay a knowledge of the value of books as bought and sold, which enabled him to buy and sell them with indifferent profit, but it entered his central absorption no more than the putting on and off of his coat.

He was not absorbed in books. He did not seem to care for them, beyond the fourscore or more worn volumes that were piled about his table by the gray window, many of them in tattered paper covers bearing German imprints, some lately rebound by a Cripple Street bookbinder. He did not care for history or geography, not even his own. He did not care where he was born or when, where he was now, or how old.

Once—whether forty years gone or four hundred, would have seemed to him a question of the vaguest import—he had taught Arabic and Greek in a university town, which looks off to mountains that in their turn look off to the Adriatic Sea. There was a child, a smaller Julian Barria. Somewhere about this time and place he began explorations in more distant Eastern languages. The date was unnoted, obscure, traditional. The interest in language soon disappeared. It was a period of wonder and searching. After the moral fierceness of the Arab and Mohammedan, the Hindoo's and Buddhist's calm negations and wide mental spaces first interested him by contrast, then absorbed him. He began to practise the discipline, the intense and quiet centring on one point, till the sense of personality should slip away and he and that point be one. There was no conviction or conversion, for the question never seemed put to him, or to be of any value, whether one thing was true and another not true. But the interest gradually changed to a personal issue. All that he now heard and saw and spoke to, objects in rest or in motion, duties that called for his performance, became not so much vaguer in outline as more remote in position. In comparison with his other experiences they were touched with a faint sense of unreality. The faces of other men were changed in his eyes. He sometimes noticed and wondered, passingly, that they seemed to see no change in him, or if any change, it was one that drew them more than formerly to seek his sympathy. He observed himself listening to intimate confessions with a feeling of patient benevolence that cost him no effort, and seemed to him something not quite belonging to him as a personal virtue, but which apparently satisfied and quieted the troubled souls that sought him.

About this later time—a reference to the histories would fix the date at 1848—a civil war swept the land, and the University was closed. The younger Julian Barria was involved in the fall of the revolutionists and fled from the country. The late teacher of Greek and Arabic crossed the ocean with him. It was a matter of mild indifference. He gave his sympathy to all, gently and naturally, but felt no mental disturbance. Neither did the change of scene affect him. Everywhere were earth beneath and sky above, and if not it were no matter. Everywhere were men and women and children, busy with a multitude of little things, trembling, hurrying, crying out among anxieties. It was all one, clear enough, but remote, touched with the same sense of unreality, and like some sad old song familiar in childhood and still lingering in the memory.

The book-shop on Cripple Street at one time dealt also in newspapers and cigars. They were more to the younger Barria's talent, more to his taste the stirring talk of men who live in their own era and congregate wherever there are newspapers and tobacco. Afterward he went away into the West, seeking a larger field for his enterprise than Cripple Street, and the newspaper and cigar business declined and passed away. The show-case fell to other uses. The elder Barria sat by the square rear window, and the gray dust gathered and dimmed it. Ten years flowed like an unruffled stream; of their conventional divisions and succeeding events he seemed but superficially conscious. Letters came now and then from the West, announcing young Barria's journeys and schemes, his marriage in the course of enterprise, finally his death. The last was in a sprawling hand, and said:

"Jules missus is ded to an thars a kid. Jules sez take her to the ol man Jake when ye go est in the spring. I am Jake. He is wooly in his hed sez he but he is a good man sez he. He got a soul like Mondays washin on Tewsday mornin sez he spekin in figgers an menin you. Them was Jules last word."

The large, bony person called Jake, slouch-hatted and rough-bearded, brought the child in time, and departed, muttering embarrassment. She stood among the Annuals and old magazines with a silver dollar from Jake clasped in each hand, and a roll of fifty-dollar bills in her tiny pocket, probably representing young Barria's estate and the end of Jake's duties as executor. She might have been two or three years old. That was not a matter of interest to Mr. Barria, in whose conception the soul of every creature was, in a way, more ancient than the hills.

She seemed to believe in his good intentions and came to him gravely. She did not remember any mother, and for her own name it had apparently been "chicken" when her father had wanted her, and "scat" when he did not. Mr. Barria envied a mind so untrammelled with memories, and named her Jhana, which means a state of mystical meditation, of fruitful tranquillity, out of which are said to come six kinds of supernatural wisdom and ten powers. The name sometimes appeared to him written Dhyana, when his meditations ran in Sanskrit instead of Pali. Cripple Street called her Janey, and avoided the question with a wisdom of its own. It had grown used to Mr. Barria. Scholars came from near-by universities to consult him, and letters from distant countries to Herr, Monsieur, or Signor Doctor Julian Barria, but Cripple Street, if it knew of the matter, had no stated theory to explain it and was little curious. His hair and beard grew white and prophetic, his skin more transparent. A second decade and half a third glided by, and Janey and Tommy Durdo sat hand in hand among the Annuals.

"You must ask him, Tommy," Janey insisted, "because lovers always ask parents."

"An' the parents is horthy and they runs away hossback. Say, Janey, if his whiskers gets horthy, I 'll faint. Say, Janey, you got to go 'n ask my ma if you can have me."

"Would she be haughty?"

Janey always bubbled with pleasure, like a meadow spring, when Tommy "got on a string," as he called it, fell to jesting circumstantially. "You bet. She'd trun you down. An' yet she's married second time, she has," he went on, thoughtfully, "an' she didn't ask my consent, not either time. I would n't a given it the first, if she had, 'cause dad was no good. I'd a been horthy. I'd a told her he wa'n't worthy to come into any family where I was comin', which he wa'n't."

"Oh, Tommy!"

"Yep. Dad was more nuisance'n mosquitoes."

Mr. Barria came out of the distant retreat of his meditation slowly, and looked up. It did not need all the subtle instinct of a pundit to read the meaning of the two standing hand in hand before him.

Tommy looked and felt as one asking favors of a spectre, and Mr. Barria had fallen into a silent habit of understanding people.

"Little Jhana iss a woman so soon?" he said softly. "She asks of her birthright."

He rose and looked quietly, steadily at Tommy, who felt himself growing smaller inside, till his shoes seemed enormous, even his scalp loose and his skull empty.

"Mr.—"

"It's Tommy Durdo," said Janey.

"You will always remember to be a little kinder than seems necessary, Mr. Durdo? It iss a good rule and very old."

"He didn't ask whether I was a burglar or a lunatic by profesh," grumbled Tommy, later. "Ain't a reasonable interest. He might a asked which."

"Never mind," said Janey. "I'll tell that."

There were four rooms over the shop, where the three lived in great peace. Tommy never made out whether Mr. Barria thought him a burglar or a lunatic. As regards Janey he felt more like a burglar, as regards Mr. Barria more like a lunatic. He dodged him reverentially. Only at the station, where his duties kept him for the most part, did he feel like a natural person and a fireman. He confided in Hamp Sharkey, and brought him to the shop and the little up-stairs sitting-room for the purpose of illustration. Hamp's feelings resembled Tommy's. They fell into naïve sympathy. Hamp admired Tommy for his cleverness, his limber tongue, the reckless daring of his daily contact with Mr. Barria and Janey, two mysteries, differing but both remote. She was not like the shop-girls on Main Street. Hamp would carry away the memory of her shining eyes lifted to Tommy's irregular, somewhat impish face, and growl secretly over his mental bewilderment. Tommy admired Hamp for his height and breadth and dull good-nature.

On an afternoon in the early summer the fire-bells rang call after call. Engine No. 4 went second. The freight houses by the harbor were burning, and the tall furniture factory that backed them. About dusk the north wall of the factory fell into the street with a roar and rattle of flying bricks.

The book-shop was dark in the centre. The two lamps in the front windows were lit, and Mr. Barria's lamp in his hidden corner.

It came upon Mr. Barria in his absorption that there had been a moment before the sound of the trampling of heavy feet in the front of the shop, and a sudden cry. The trampling continued and increased. He came forward with his lamp. Men were crowding up the narrow stairs that began in the opposite corner. One of them swung a lantern overhead.

"'Twere a brick," said some one in the dark centre of the shop. "Took him over the ear. Dented him in like a plug hat."

"Where's some water?"

"Knocked her over quicker 'n the brick."

"Sh! What's that?"

"It's the old man."

The light of the lamp, lifted in Mr. Barria's hand, fell over his head with its flowing white hair, rabbinical beard, and spectral face. Three-men, one of them a policeman, drew back to one side of the shop, looking

startled and feebly embarrassed. On the other side the window lamp shone on Janey, where she lay fallen among the old Annuals.

He lifted her head and muttered:

"Jhana, Jhana."

The three men slipped through the door; those above came down; a doctor bustled in, satchel in hand, and after him several women; Janey was carried up; the shop was empty, except for Mr. Barria sitting by his lamp and muttering softly.

"She could not find it, the peace that is about, and her little happiness it would not stay beside her."

Presently the doctor spoke over him.

"I think Mrs. Durdo should be taken to the hospital. St. James, you know. It's not far."

"You think—"

"She is approaching confinement, and the shock, you know."

"Whatever iss desirable, Herr Doctor. There iss no need, sir, of the economy in respect to—to whatever iss desirable."

"Quite right, Mr. Barria. Quite right."

This was in June. Late in the fall Janey came back from St. James's Hospital, pale, drooping, and alone.

She sat in a black dress by the front window and kept the accounts as before, gazed through the dim panes at Cripple Street, which was made by nature to be dull, but read the Annuals no more, which was perhaps a pity.

Mr. Barria from the rear of the shop watched Janey, sitting among the Annuals and looking out on Cripple Street. He had not entered on the Path himself as a cure for sorrow and suffering; he had come to it from another direction. Yet the first purpose of its system had been the solution of these. It was written:

"Sorrow and suffering will be overcome when this thirst for life is quenched, which makes for continuance, and that desire of separateness and hunger after selfhood are put aside. They will fall away as drops from a lotus leaf."

And Janey was a type of them as they walk abroad. The measure of her trouble was the measure of the yearning and attainment that had been hers.

"Desire not more than of yearning or attainment, of sight or touch, of life in variety or abundance, but desire none at all, and turning within, the dwelling you build there dwell in it, until both desire and separateness shall in turn disappear."

He went forward and drew a chair beside her.

"Little Jhana," he said, "there was once a woman and young who brought her dead child to the wisest of men, and asked so of him, 'Do you know one medicine that will be good for this child?' It was the custom then for the patients or their friends to provide the herbs which the doctors require, so that when she asked what herbs he would wish, and he answered, 'Mustard-seed,' she promised with haste to bring it, for it was a common herb. 'And it must come,' he said, 'only from some house where no child, no husband, no wife, no parent, no friend has died.' Then she went in great hope, carrying the dead child; but everywhere they said, 'I have lost,' and again, 'We have lost,' and one said, 'What is this you say; the living are few but the dead are many.' She found so no house in that place from which she might take the mustard-seed. Therefore she buried the child, and came, and she said, 'I have not found it; they tell me the living are few and the dead many.' And he showed her how that nothing endured at all, but changed and passed into something else, and each was but a changing part of a changing whole, and how, if one thought more of the whole, one so ceased to be troubled much of the parts, and sorrow would fade away quietly." Janey stared at him with wide, uncomprehending eyes. There was a certain comfort always in Mr. Barria himself, however oddly he might talk. She dropped her head on his knee and whispered:

"I don't know about all that. I want Tommy and the baby."

He touched her hair with thin fingers gently. "Then I wonder, little Jhana," he said, looking to the magazines and Annuals, "if you have found among these one, a poet of the English, who calls it to be better to love and lose than not to love."

"I don't know. I don't remember."

He smoothed her hair again and went away. The winter passed and the spring came with a scatter of sunshine and little showers. Janey still sat by the window. If she had been able to generalize, to see that Tommy and the baby represented hunger after life, and that this was the root of sorrow, it would perhaps have still seemed to her that love and loss were the better choice. Perhaps not. But she could not generalize. Her thoughts were instincts, fancies, and little shining points of belief. She could not see herself in any figure of speech; that she was one of a multitude of discordant notes in the universe, whose business it was to tune themselves to the key of a certain large music and disappear in its harmony, where alone was constant happiness. It did not seem to mention Tommy or the baby, and if not there was no point in it.

Spring slipped away. Cripple Street was filled to the brim with bland summer. Janey went every day to the cemetery with flowers. In September she began to come back with flowers in her belt.

It was a rainy, dismal day in October. Mr. Barria had a remote sense of hearing Janey's laugh. It seemed to him there was a strange presence in the shop. He peered out, and saw Hamp Sharkey outlined against the window, large, slow-moving, and calm, a man who seemed to avoid all troubles of the flesh by virtue of having enough flesh, and solid bone beneath. Janey looked up at him and laughed. Around her were the old Annuals, containing the loves of Edwards and Eleanors.

Mr. Barria leaned back in his chair. Some untraced suggestion led him to counting his years idly. He made them out to be nearly eighty. They seemed suddenly to rest on his shoulders like a weight. If one considered them at all, they were heavy, the years. And for this human life, it was only intelligible in the abstract. Of its details there were too many.



The shop grew duskier, and the rain beat on the windows with an incessant pattering, a multitude of tiny details, sounding accordingly as one might listen. For either it would seem a cheerful, busy sound of the kindly water, humble and precious and clean, needful in households, pleasant in the fulness of rivers, comfortable, common, familiar; or it was the low sigh of the driven rain, the melancholy iteration and murmur of water circling like everything else its wheel of change, earth and ocean and sky, earth and ocean and sky, and weary to go back to its vague, elemental vapor, as before the worlds were shaped.

Mr. Barria turned back to his volume, bound in gray paper with a German imprint. To his ears the sound of the two voices talking became as abstract as the rain. Hamp Sharkey's laugh was like the lowing of a contented ox, and Janey's, as of old, like the ripple of a brook in a meadow.

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## TOBIN'S MONUMENT

I was a student then and lived on the second floor of a brick dormitory with foot-worn stones and sagging casements. The windows looked across one end of the campus on ivy-covered walls of other buildings, on a bronze statue whose head was bent to indicate that the person represented had taken life seriously in his day. Near at hand was a street of unacademic noises, horse-cars, shops, German bands, newsboys, people who bought and sold without higher mathematics and seldom mentioned Horatius Flaccus.

But there were drifts and eddies of the street that would turn aside and enter the dormitories commercially. Tobin was one of these. He came to my door by preference, because of the large crack in the panel. For, if one entered the dormitory commercially and knocked at the doors, one never knew—it might be Horatius Flaccus, a volume of size and weight. But with a crack in the panel one could stand outside at ease and dignity, looking through it, and crying, "*M'lás ca-andy!* Peanuts!" Then, if anything arrived, without doubt it arrived. A man might throw what he chose at his own door.

He was thin in the legs and shoulders, but round of face and marked there with strange designs that were partly a native complexion; but, if one is a candy boy, in constant company with newsboys, shiners, persons who carry no such merchandise but are apt to wish for it violently, one's complexion of course varies from day to day.

"Say, but I hit *him!* He bled on his clo's." Tobin sometimes made this comment, "him" meaning different persons. There was a vein of fresh romance in him. Did not Sir Balin, or his like, smite Sir Lanceor, so that the blood flowed over his hauberk, and afterward speak of it with enthusiasm?

It was a cold December day in the year 188-, when the snow whirled without rest from morning chapel till the end of the day was signified by the first splutter of gas-jets. Among the hills where I was born that office was left to the sunsets and twilights, who had a manner of doing it, a certain broad nobility, a courtesy and grace. "One of God's days is over. This is our sister, the night." The gas-jets were fretful, coquettish, affected. "It is an outrage! One is simply turned on and turned off!" Horatius Flaccus was social and intimate with me that day. "*Exegi monumentum,*" he remarked. "You will find it not easy to forget me."

Monuments! At the University we lived among commemorative buildings; many a silent dusty room was dim with accumulation of thought; and there men labored for what but to make a name?

The statue outside represented one who took life seriously in his day, now with the whirling snow about it, the gas-jet in front snapping petulantly. "One is simply turned on and turned off!"

"*Exegi monumentum,*" continued Horatius Flaccus. "This is my work, and it is good. I shall not all die, *non omnis moriar.*" It seemed natural to feel so. But how honorably the sunsets and twilights used to go their ways among the hills, contented and leaving not a wrack behind.

It was a better attitude and conduct, that serene security of clouds in their absolute death. "*Non omnis moriar*" was not only a boast, but a complaint and a protest.

Still, as to monuments, one would rather be memorialized by one's own work than by the words of other men, or the indifferent labor of their chisels.

"*M'lás ca-andy!*"

"Come in, Tobin!"

He opened the door and said, tentatively, "Peanuts."

He always spoke in a more confident tone of the candy than of the peanuts. There was no good reason for his confidence in either.

"Tobin," I said, "you don't want a monument?"

He kicked his feet together and murmured again, "Peanuts."

His shoes were cracked at the sides. The cracks were full of snow.

The remark seemed to imply that he did not expect a monument, having no confidence in his peanuts. As a rule they were soggy and half-baked.

Tobin's life, I thought, was too full of the flux of things; candy melted, peanuts decayed, complexion changed from day to day, his private wars were but momentary matters. I understood him to have no artificial desires. Death would be too simple an affair for comment. He would think of no comment to make. Sunsets and twilights went out in silence; Tobin's half of humanity nearly as dumb. It was the other half that was fussy on the subject.

"Your feet are wet, Tobin. Warm them. Your shoes are no good."

Tobin picked the easiest chair with good judgment, and balanced his feet over the coals of the open stove, making no comment.

"I won't buy your peanuts. They're sloppy. I might buy you another pair of shoes. What do you think?"

He looked at me, at the shoes, at the wet basket on his knees, but nothing elaborate seemed to occur to him. He said:

"A'right." He had great mental directness. I had reached that point in the progress of young philosophy where the avoidance of fussiness takes the character of a broad doctrine: a certain Doric attitude was desired. Tobin seemed to me to have that attitude.

"If I give you the money, will you buy shoes or cigarettes?"

"Shoes."

"Here, then. Got anything to say?"

He put the bill into his pocket, and said:

"Yep, I'll buy 'em."

His attitude was better than mine. The common wish to be thanked was pure fussiness.

"Well, look here. You bring me back the old ones."

Even that did not disturb him. The Doric attitude never questions other men's indifferent whims.

"A'right."

I heard him presently on the lower floor, crying, "*M'las ca-andy!* Peanuts."

"I shall be spoken of," continued Horatius Flaccus, calmly, "by that wild southern river, the Aufidus, and in many other places. I shall be called a pioneer in my own line, *princeps Æolium carmen deduxisse.*"

The night was closing down. The gas-light flickered on the half-hidden face of the statue, so that its grave dignity seemed changed to a shifty, mocking smile.

I heard no more of Tobin for a month, and probably did not think of him. There were Christmas holidays about, and that week which is called of the Promenade, when one opens Horatius Flaccus only to wonder what might have been the color of Lydia's hair, and to introduce comparisons that are unfair to Lydia.

It was late in January. Some one came and thumped on the cracked panel. It was not Tobin, but a stout woman carrying Tobin's basket, who said in an expressionless voice:

"Oi! Them shoes."

"What?"

"You give 'im some shoes."

"Tobin. That's so."

"I'm Missus Tobin."

She was dull-looking, round-eyed, gray-haired. She fumbled in the basket, dropped something in wet paper on a chair, and seemed placidly preparing to say more. It seemed to me that she had much of Tobin's mental directness, the Doric attitude, the neglect of comment. I asked: "How's Tobin?"

"Oi! He's dead."

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Tobin. May I—"

"Oi! Funeral's this afternoon. He could'n' be round. He was sick. Five weeks three days."

She went out and down the stair, bumping back and forth between the wall and the banister.

On the misty afternoon of that day I stood on that corner where more than elsewhere the city and the University meet; where hackmen and newsboys congregate; where a gray brick hotel looks askance at the pillared and vaulted entry of a recitation hall. The front of that hall is a vainglorious thing. Those who understand, looking dimly with halfshut eyes, may see it change to a mist, and in the mist appear a worn fence, a grassless, trodden space, and four tall trees.

The steps of the hall were deserted, except for newsboys playing tag among the pillars. I asked one if he knew where Tobin lived.

"He's havin' a funeral," he said.

"Where?"

"10 Clark Street."

"Did you know him?"

The others had gathered around. One of them said:

"Tobin licked him."

The first seemed to think more than ordinary justice should be done a person with a funeral, and admitted that Tobin had licked him.

No. 10 Clark Street was a door between a clothing shop and a livery stable. The stairway led up into darkness. On the third landing a door stood open, showing a low room. A painted coffin rested on two chairs. Three or four women sat about with their hands on their knees. One of them was Mrs. Tobin.

"Funeral's over," she said, placidly.

The clergyman from the mission had come and gone. They were waiting for the city undertaker. But they seemed glad of an interruption and looked at me with silent interest.

"I want to ask you to tell me something about him, Mrs. Tobin."

Mrs. Tobin reflected. "There ain't nothin'."

"He never ate no candy," said one of the women, after a pause.

Mrs. Tobin sat stolidly. Two large tears appeared at length and rolled slowly down.

"It made him dreadful sick when he was little. That's why."

The third woman nodded thoughtfully.

"He said folks was fools to eat candy. It was his stomach."

"Oi!" said Mrs. Tobin.

I went no nearer the coffin than to see the common grayish pallor of the face, and went home in the misty dusk.

The forgotten wet bundle had fallen to the floor and become undone.

By the cracks in the sides, the down-trodden heels, the marks of keen experience, they were Tobin's old shoes, round-toed, leather-thonged, stoical, severe.

Mrs. Tobin had not commented. She had brought them merely, Tobin having stated that they were mine.

They remained with me six months, and were known to most men, who came to idle or labor, as "Tobin's Monument." They stood on a book-shelf, with other monuments thought to be *aere perennius*, more enduring than brass, and disappeared at the end of the year, when the janitor reigned supreme. There seemed to be some far-off and final idea in the title, some thesis which never got itself rightly stated. Horatius Flaccus was kept on the shelf beside them in the notion that the statement should somehow be worked out between them. And there was no definite result; but I thought he grew more diffident with that companionship.

"*Exegi monumentum*. I suppose there is no doubt about that," he would remark. "*Ære perennius*. It seems a trifle pushing, so to trespass on the attention of posterity. I would rather talk of my Sabine farm."

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## THE CONCLUSION BY THE WAYFARERS

All honest things in the world we greet  
With welcome fair and free;  
A little love by the way is sweet,  
A friend, or two, or three;

Of the sun and moon and stars are glad,  
Of the waters of river and sea;  
We thank thee, Lord, for the years we've had,  
For the years that yet shall be.

These are our brothers, the winds of the airs;  
These are our sisters, the flowers.  
Be near us at evening and hear our prayers.,  
O God, in the late gray hours.

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