

ON SOMETHING

H. BRIDGES



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ON SOMETHING

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

PARIS

HILLS AND THE SEA

EMMANUEL BURDEN, MERCHANT

A CHANGE IN THE CABINET

THE PYRENEES

MARIE ANTOINETTE

ON NOTHING

ON EVERYTHING



ON SOMETHING  
BY  
H. BELLOC

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# ON SOMETHING

## A Plea for the Simpler Drama ~ ~

IT is with the drama as with plastic art and many other things: the plain man feels that he has a right to put in his word, but he is rather afraid that the art is beyond him, and he is frightened by technicalities.

After all, these things are made for the plain man; his applause, in the long run and duly tested by time, is the main reward of the dramatist as of the painter or the sculptor. But if he is sensible he knows that his immediate judgment will be crude. However, here goes.

The plain man sees that the drama of his time has gradually passed from one phase to another of complexity in thought coupled with simplicity of incident, and it occurs to him that just one further step is needed to make something final in British art. We seem to be just on the threshold of something which would give Englishmen in the twentieth century something of the fullness that

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characterized the Elizabethans : but somehow or other our dramatists hesitate to cross that threshold. It cannot be that their powers are lacking : it can only be some timidity or self-torture which it is the business of the plain man to exorcise.

If I may make a suggestion in this essay to the masters of the craft it is that the goal of the completely modern thing can best be reached by taking the very simplest themes of daily life—things within the experience of the ordinary citizen—and presenting them in the majestic traditional cadence of that peculiarly English medium, blank verse.

As to the themes taken from the everyday life of middle class men and women like ourselves, it is true that the lives of the wealthy afford more incident, and that there is a sort of glamour about them which it is difficult to resist. But with a sufficient subtlety the whole poignancy of the lives led by those who suffer neither the tragedies of the poor nor the exaltation of the rich can be exactly etched. The life of the professional middle-class, of the business man, the dentist, the money-lender, the publisher, the spiritual pastor, nay of the playwright himself, might be put upon the stage—and what a vital change would be here ! Here would be a kind of literary drama of which the interest would lie in the

## A Plea for the Simpler Drama

struggle, the pain, the danger, and the triumph which we all so intimately know, and next in the satisfaction (which we now do not have) of the mimetic sense—the satisfaction of seeing a mirror held up to a whole audience composed of the very class represented upon the stage.

I have seen men of wealth and position absorbed in plays concerning gambling, cruelty, cheating, drunkenness, and other sports, and so absorbed chiefly because they saw *themselves* depicted upon the stage; and I ask, Would not my fellows and myself largely remunerate a similar opportunity? For though the rich go repeatedly to the play, yet the middle-class are so much more numerous that the difference is amply compensated.

I think we may take it, then, that an experiment in the depicting of professional life would, even from the financial standpoint, be workable; and I would even go so far as to suggest that a play could be written in which there did not appear one single lord, general, Member of Parliament, baronet, professional beauty, usurer (upon a large scale at least) or Cabinet Minister.

The thing is possible: and I can modestly say that in the little effort appended as an example to these lines it has been done successfully; but here must be mentioned the second point in my thesis—I could never have achieved what I have

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here achieved in dramatic art had I not harked back to the great tradition of the English heroic decasyllable such as our Shakespeare has handled with so felicitous an effect.

The play—which I have called “The Crisis,” and which I design to be the model of the school founded by these present advices—is specially designed for acting with the sumptuous accessories at the disposal of a great manager, such as Mr. (now Sir Henry) Beerbohm Tree, or for the narrower circumstances of the suburban drawing-room.

There is perhaps but one character which needs any long rehearsal, that of the dog Fido, and luckily this is one which can easily be supplied by mechanical means, as by the use of a toy dog of sufficient size which barks upon the pressure of a pneumatic attachment.

In connexion with this character I would have the student note that I have introduced into the dog’s part just before the curtain a whole line of *dactyls*. I hope the hint will not be wasted. Such exceptions relieve the monotony of our English *trochees*. But, saving in this instance, I have confined myself throughout to the example of William Shakespeare, surely the best master for those who, as I fondly hope, will follow me in the regeneration of the British Stage.

# A Plea for the Simpler Drama

## THE CRISIS

PLACE : *The Study at the Vicarage.* TIME *9.15 p.m.*

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE REV. ARCHIBALD HAVERTON : The Vicar.

MRS. HAVERTON : His Wife.

MISS GROSVENOR : A Governess.

MATILDA : A Maid.

FIDO : A Dog.

HERMIONE COBLEY : Daughter of a cottager who takes in washing.

MISS HARVEY : A guest, cousin to Mrs. Haverton, a Unitarian.

(*The REV. ARCHIBALD HAVERTON is reading the "Standard" by a lamp with a green shade.*

*MRS. HAVERTON is hemming a towel. FIDO is asleep on the rug. On the walls are three engravings from Landseer, a portrait of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria, a bookcase with books in it, and a looking-glass.)*

MRS. HAVERTON : My dear—I hope I do not interrupt you—

Helen has given notice.

REV. A. HAVERTON (*looking up suddenly*):

Given notice?

Who? Helen? Given notice? Bless my soul!

(*A pause.*)

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I never thought that she would give us notice.  
(*Ponders and frowns.*)

MRS. HAVERTON: Well, but she has, and now  
the question is,

What shall we do to find another cook?

Servants are very difficult to get. (*Sighs.*)

Especially to come into the country

To such a place as this. (*Sighs.*) No wonder, either!

Oh! Merely! When one comes to think of it,

One cannot blame them. (*Sighs.*) Heaven only  
knows

I try to do my duty! (*Sighs profoundly.*)

REV. A. HAVERTON (*uneasily*): Well, my dear,  
I cannot *make* preferment.

(*Front door-bell rings.*)

FIDO: Bow! wow! wow!

REV. A. HAVERTON (*patting him to soothe him*):

There, Fido, there!

FIDO: Wow! wow!

REV. A. HAVERTON: Good dog, there!

FIDO: Wow,

Wow, wow!

REV. A. HAVERTON (*very nervous*): There!

FIDO: Wow! wow!

REV. A. HAVERTON (*in an agony*): Good dog!

FIDO: Bow! wow! wow!

Wow, wow! Wow!! WOW!!!

MRS. HAVERTON (*very excited*): Oh, Lord, he'll  
wake the children!

## A Plea for the Simpler Drama

REV. A. HAVERTON (*exploding*): How often have  
I told you, Dorothy,  
Not to exclaim "Good Lord!" . . . Apart from  
manners—

Which have their own importance—blasphemy  
(And I regard the phrase as blasphemous)  
Cannot——

MRS. HAVERTON (*uneasily*): Oh, very well! . . .  
Oh, very well!

(*Exploding in her turn.*)

Upon my soul, you are intolerable!

(*She jumps up and makes for the door. Before  
she gets to it there is a knock and MATILDA  
enters.*)

MATILDA: Please, m'm, it's only Mrs. Copley's  
daughter

To say the washing shall be sent to-morrow,  
And would you check the list again and see,  
Because she thinks she never had two collars  
Of what you sent, but only five, because  
You marked it seven; and Mrs. Copley says  
There must be some mistake.

REV. A. HAVERTON (*pompously*): I will attend  
to it.

MRS. HAVERTON (*whispering angrily*): How can  
you, Archibald! You haven't got  
The ghost of an idea about the washing!  
Sit down. (*He does so.*) (*To Matilda*) Send the  
Girl in here.

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MRS. HAVERTON *sits down in a fume.*

REV. A. HAVERTON: I think . . .

MRS. HAVERTON (*snapping*): I don't care what you think!

(*Groans.*) Oh, dear!

I'm nearly off my head!

*Enter* MISS COBLEY. (*She bows.*)

Good evening, m'm.

MRS. HAVERTON (*by way of reply*):

Now, then! What's all this fuss about the washing?

MISS COBLEY: Please, m'm, the seven collars, what you sent—

I mean the seven what was marked—was wrong, And mother says as you'd have had the washing Only there weren't but five, and would you mind . . .

MRS. HAVERTON (*sharply*): I cannot understand a word you say.

Go back and tell your mother there were *seven*.

And if she sends home *five* she pays for *two*.

So there! (*Snorts.*)

MISS COBLEY (*sobbing*): I'm sure I . . .

MRS. HAVERTON (*savagely*): Don't stand snuffling there!

Go back and tell your mother what I say . . .

Impudent hussy! . . .

(*Exit* MISS COBLEY *sobbing.* *A pause.*)

REV. A. HAVERTON (*with assumed authority*): To return to Helen.



## A Plea for the Simpler Drama

Tell me concisely and without complaints,  
Why did she give you notice?

*(A hand-bell rings in the passage.)*

FIDO: Bow-wow-wow!

REV. A. HAVERTON *(giving him a smart kick)*:  
Shurrup!

FIDO *(howling)*. Pen-an'-ink! Pen-an'-ink  
Pen-an'-ink! Pen-an'-ink!

REV. A. HAVERTON *(controlling himself as well  
as he can, goes to the door and calls into the  
passage)*: Miss Grosvenor!

*(Louder)* . . . Miss Grosvenor! . . . Was that  
the bell for prayers?

Was that the bell for prayers? . . . *(Louder)* Miss  
Grosvenor.

*(Louder)* Miss Gros-ve-nor! *(Tapping with his foot.)*  
Oh! . . .

MISS GROSVENOR *(sweetly and far off)*: Is that  
Mr. Haverton?

REV. A. HAVERTON: Yes! yes! yes! yes! . . .  
Was that the bell for prayers?

MISS GROSVENOR *(again)*: Yes? Is that Mr.  
Haverton? Oh! Yes!

I think it is. . . . I'll see—I'll ask Matilda.

*(A pause, during which the REV. A. HAVERTON  
is in a qualm.)*

MISS GROSVENOR *(rustling back)*: Matilda says it  
is the bell for prayers.

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(*They all come filing into the study and arranging the chairs. As they enter Miss HARVEY, the guest, treads heavily on MATILDA'S foot.*)

MISS HARVEY: Matilda? Was that you? I beg your pardon.

MATILDA (*limping*): Granted, I'm sure, miss!

MRS. HAVERTON (*whispering to the REV. A. HAVERTON*): Do not read the Creed!

Miss Harvey is a Unitarian.

I should suggest some simple form of prayer,  
Some heartfelt word of charity and peace  
Common to every Christian.

REV. A. HAVERTON (*in a deep voice*): Let us pray.

*Curtain.*

## On a Notebook



A DEAR friend of mine (John Abdullah Capricorn, to give him his full name) was commandeered by a publisher last year to write a book for £10. The work was far advanced when an editor offered him £15 and his expenses to visit the more desperate parts of the Sahara Desert, to which spots he at once proceeded upon a roving commission. Whether he will return or no is now doubtful, though in March we had the best hopes. With the month of May life becomes hard for Europeans south of the Atlas, and when my poor dear friend was last heard of he was chancing his popularity with a tribe of Touaregs about two hundred miles south of Touggourt.

Under these circumstances I was asked to look through his notebook and see what could be done; and I confess to a pleased surprise. . . . It would have been a very entertaining book had it been published. It will be a very entertaining book if it is published.

Capricorn seems to have prepared a hotch-potch of information of human follies, of con-

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trasts, and of blunt stupidities of which he intended to make a very entertaining series of pages. I have not his talent for bringing such things together, but it may amuse the reader if I merely put in their order one or two of the notes which most struck me.

I find first, cut out of a newspaper and pasted into the book (many of his notes are in this form), the following really jovial paragraph :

“ Archdeacon Blunderbuss (Blunderbuss is not the real name ; I suppress that lest Capricorn’s widow should lose her two or three pounds, in case the poor fellow has really been eaten). Archdeacon Blunderbuss was more distinguished as a scholar than as a Divine. He was a very poor preacher and never managed to identify himself with any party. Nevertheless, in 1895 the Prime Minister appointed him to a stall in Shoreham Cathedral as a recognition of his great learning and good work at Durham. Two years later the rectory of St. Vacuums becoming vacant and it being within the gift of Archdeacon Blunderbuss, he excited general amazement and much scandal by presenting himself to the living.”

There the paragraph ends. It came in an ordinary society paper. It bore no marks of ill-will. It came in the midst of a column of the usual silly adulation of everybody and every-

## On a Notebook

thing; how it got there is of no importance. There it stood and the keen eye of Capricorn noted it and treasured it for years.

I will make no comment upon this paragraph. It may be read slowly or quickly, according to the taste of the reader; it is equally delicious either way.

The next excerpt I find in the notebook is as follows :

“ More than 15,000,000 visits are paid annually to London pawnbrokers.

“ Jupiter is 1387 times as big as the earth, but only 300 times as heavy.

“ The world's coal mines yield 400,000,000 tons of coal a year.

“ The value of the pictures in the National Gallery is about £1,250,000.”

This tickled Capricorn—I don't know why. Perhaps he thought the style disjointed or perhaps he had got it into his head that when this information had been absorbed by the vulgar they would stand much where they stood before, and be no nearer the end of man nor the accomplishment of any Divine purpose in their creation. Anyhow he kept it, and I think he was wise to keep it. One cannot keep everything of that kind that is printed, so it is well to keep a specimen. Capricorn had, moreover, intended to

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perpetuate that specimen for ever in his immortal prose—pray Heaven he may return to do so!

I next find the following excerpt from an evening paper :

“No more gallant gentleman lives on the broad acres of his native England than Brigadier-General Sir Hammerthrust Honeybubble, who is one of the few survivors of the great charge at Tamulpuco, a feat of arms now half forgotten, but with which England rang during the Brazilian War. Brigadier-General, or, as he then was, plain Captain Hammerthrust Honeybubble, passed through five Brazilian batteries unharmed, and came back so terribly hacked that his head was almost severed from his body. Hardly able to keep his seat and continually wiping the blood from his left eye, he rode back to his troop at a walk, and, in spite of pursuit, finally completed his escape. Sir Hammerthrust, we are glad to learn, is still hale and hearty in his ninety-third year, and we hope he may see many more returns of the day upon his patrimonial estate in the Orkneys.”

To this excerpt I find only one marginal note in Capricorn's delicate and beautiful handwriting : “What day?” But whether this referred to some appointment of his own I was unable to discover.

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I next find a certain number of cuttings which I think cannot have been intended for the book at all, but must have been designed for poor Capricorn's "Oxford Anthology of Bad Verse," which, just before he left England, he was in process of preparing for the University Press. Capricorn had a very fine sense of bad taste in verse, and the authorities could have chosen no one better suited for the duty of editing such a volume. I must not give the reader too much of these lines, but the following quatrain deserves recognition and a permanent memory :

Napoleon hoped that all the world would fall beneath  
his sway.

He failed in this ambition ; and where is he to-day ?

Neither the nations of the East nor the nations of the  
West

Have thought the thing Napoleon thought was to their  
interest.

This is enormous. As philosophy, as history, as rhetoric, as metre, as rhythm, as politics, it is positively enormous. The whole poem is a wonderful poem, and I wish I had space for it here. It is patriotic and it is written about as badly as a poem could conceivably be written. It is a mournful pleasure to think that my dear friend had his last days in the Old Country illuminated by such a treasure. It is but one of many, but I think it is the best.

Another extract which catches my eye is drawn

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from the works of one in a distant and foreign land. Yet it was worth preserving. This personage, Tindersturm by name, issued a pamphlet which fell under the regulations, the very strict regulations, of the Prussian Government, by which any one of its subjects who says or prints anything calculated to stir up religious or racial strife within the State is subject to severe penalties. Now those severe penalties had fallen upon Tindersturm and he had been imprisoned for some years according to the paragraph that followed the extract I am about to give. That the aforesaid Tindersturm did indeed tend to "stir up religious and racial strife," nay, went somewhat out of his way to do it, will be clear enough when you read the following lines from his little broadsheet :

"It is time for us to go for this caddish alien sect. If on your way home from the theatre you meet the blue-eyed, tow-haired, lolloping gang, whether they be youths or ladies, go right up to them and give them a smart smack, left and right, a blow in the eye; and lift your foot and give the tow-headed ones a kick. In this way must we begin the business. My Fatherland, wake up!"

To this extract poor Capricorn has added the word "Excellent," and the same comment he



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makes upon the following conclusion to a letter written to a religious paper and dealing with some politician or other who had done something which the correspondent did not like :

“That his eyes may be opened *while he lives* is the prayer of

“Yours truly,

“AN EARNEST MEMBER OF THE FOLD”

From such a series it is a recreation to turn to the little social paragraphs which gave Capricorn such acute and such continual joy ; as, for instance, this :

“Mrs. Harry Bacon wishes it to be known that she has ceased to have any connection whatsoever with the Boudoir for Lost Dogs. Her address is still Hermione House, Bourton-on-the-Water Fenton Marsh, Worcester.”

There is much more in the notebook with which I could while away the reader's time did space permit of it. I find among the very last entries, for instance, this :

“It was a strenuous and thrilling contest. Some terrible blows were exchanged. In the last round, however, Schmidt landed his opponent a very nasty one under the chin, stretching him out lifeless and breaking his elbow ; whereupon the prize was awarded him.”

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To this joyous gem Capricorn has added a whole foison of annotations. He asks at the end: "Which was 'him'? Important." And he underlines in red ink the word "however," perhaps as mysterious a copulative as has ever appeared in British prose. I should add that Capricorn himself was an ardent sportsman and very rarely missed any of the first-class events of the ring, though personally he did not box, and on the few occasions when I have seen the exercise forced upon him in the public streets he showed the greatest distaste to this form of athletics.

Lastly, I find this note with which I must close: it is taken from the verbatim report of a great case in the courts, now half forgotten, but ten years ago the talk of London:

"The witness then said that he had been promised an independence for life if he could discover the defendant in the act of enclosing any part of the land, or any document or order of his involving such an enclosure. He therefore watched the defendant regularly from June, 1896, to the middle of July, 1900. He also watched the defendant's father and mother, three boys, married daughter, grandmother and grandfather, his two married sisters, his brother, his agent, and his agent's wife — but he had discovered nothing."

## On a Notebook

That such a sentence should have been printed in the English language and delivered by an English mouth in an English witness-box was enough for Capricorn. Give him that alone for intellectual food in his desert lodge and he was happy.

Shall I tempt Providence by any further extracts? . . . It is difficult to tear oneself away from such a feast. So let me put in this very last, really the last, by way of savoury. There it is in black and white and no one can undo it: not all her piety, nor all her wit. It dates from the year 1904, when, Heaven knows, the internal combustion engine and its possibilities were not exactly new, and I give it word for word:

“The Duchess is, moreover, a pioneer in the use of the motor-car. She finds it an agreeable and speedy means of conveyance from her country seat to her town house, and also a very practical way of getting to see her friends at week-ends. She has been heard to complain, however, that a substitute for the pneumatic tyre less liable to puncture than it is would be a priceless boon.”

There! There! May they all rest in peace! They have added to the gaiety of mankind.

## On Unknown People



YOU will often hear it said that it is astonishing such and such work should be present and enduring in the world, and yet the name of its author not known ; but when one considers the variety of good work and the circumstances under which it is achieved, and the variety of taste also between different times and places, one begins to understand what is at first so astonishing.

There are writers who have ascribed this frequent ignorance of ours to all sorts of heroic moods, to the self-sacrifice or the humility of a whole epoch or of particular artists : that is the least satisfactory of the reasons one could find. All men desire, if not fame, at least the one poor inalienable right of authorship, and unless one can find very good reasons indeed why a painter or a writer or a sculptor should deliberately have hidden himself one must look for some other cause.

Among such causes the first two, I think, are the multiplicity of good work, and its chance character. Not that any one ever does very good work for once and then never again—at least, such

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an accident is extremely rare – but that many a man who has achieved some skill by long labour does now and then strike out a sort of spark quite individual and separate from the rest. Often you will find that a man who is remembered for but one picture or one poem is worth research. You will find that he did much more. It is to be remembered that for a long time Ronsard himself was thought to be a man of one poem.

The multiplicity of good work also and the way in which accident helps it is a cause. There are bits of architecture (and architecture is the most anonymous of all the arts) which depend for their effect to-day very largely upon situation and the process of time, and there are a thousand corners in Europe intended merely for some utility which happen almost without deliberate design to have proved perfect: this is especially true of bridges.

Then there is this element in the anonymity of good work, that a man very often has no idea how good the work is which he has done. The anecdotes (such as that famous one of Keats) which tell us of poets desiring to destroy their work, or, at any rate, casting it aside as of little value, are not all false. We still have the letter in which Burns enclosed "Scots wha' hae," and it is curious to note his misjudgment of the verse; and side by side with that kind of misjudgment

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we have men picking out for singular affection and with a full expectation of glory some piece of work of theirs to which posterity will have nothing to say. This is especially true of work recast by men in mature age. Writers and painters (sculptors luckily are restrained by the nature of their art—unless they deliberately go and break up their work with a hammer) retouch and change, in the years when they have become more critical and less creative, what they think to be the insufficient achievements of their youth : yet it is the vigour and the simplicity of their youthful work which other men often prefer to remember. On this account any number of good things remain anonymous, because the good writer or the good painter or the good sculptor was ashamed of them.

Then there is this reason for anonymity, that at times—for quite a short few years—a sort of universality of good work in one or more departments of art seems to fall upon the world or upon some district. Nowhere do you see this more strikingly than in the carvings of the first third of the sixteenth century in Northern and Central France and on the Flemish border.

Men seemed at that moment incapable of doing work that was not marvellous when they once began to express the human figure. Sometimes their mere name remains, more often it is doubt-

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ful, sometimes it is entirely lost. More curious still, you often have for this period a mixture of names. You come across some astonishing series of reliefs in a forgotten church of a small provincial town. You know at once that it is work of the moment when the flood of the Renaissance had at last reached the old country of the Gothic. You can swear that if it were not made in the time of Francis I or Henry II it was at least made by men who could remember or had seen those times. But when you turn to the names the names are nobodies.

By far the most famous of these famous things, or at any rate the most deserving of fame, is the miracle of Brou. It is a whole world. You would say that either one transcendent genius had modelled every face and figure of those thousands (so individual are they), or that a company of inspired men differing in their traditions and upbringing from all the commonalty of mankind had done such things. When you go to the names all you find is that Coulombe out of Touraine began the job, that there was some sort of quarrel between his head-man and the paymasters, that he was replaced in the most everyday manner conceivable by a Fleming, Van Boghem, and that this Fleming had to help him a better-known Swiss, one Meyt. It is the same story with nearly all this kind of work and its wonderful period.

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The wealth of detail at Louviers or Gisors is almost anonymous; that of the first named perhaps quite anonymous.

Who carved the wood in St. James's Church at Antwerp? I think the name is known for part of it, but no one did the whole or anything like the whole, and yet it is all one thing. Who carved the wood in St. Bertrand de Comminges? We know who paid for it, and that is all we know. And as for the wood of Rouen, we must content ourselves with the vague phrase, "Probably Flemish artists."

Of the Gothic statues where they were conventional, however grand the work, one can understand that they should be anonymous, but it is curious to note the same silence where the work is strikingly and particularly individual. Among the kings at Rheims are two heads, one of St. Louis, one of his grandson. Had some one famous sculptor done these things and others, were his work known and sought after, these two heads would be as renowned as anything in Europe. As it is they are two among hundreds that the latter thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries scattered broadcast; each probably was the work of a different workman, and the author or authors of each remain equally unknown.

I know not whether there is more pathos or



## On Unknown People

more humour or more consolation in considering this ignorance of ours with regard to the makers of good things.

It is full of parable. There is something of it in Nature. There are men who will walk all day through a June wood and come out atheists at the end of it, finding no signature thereupon; and there are others who, sailing over the sea, come back home after seeing so many things still puzzled as to their authorship. That is one parable.

Then there is this : the corrective of ambition. Since so much remains, the very names of whose authors have perished, what does it matter to you or to the world whether your name, so long as your work, survives? Who was it that carefully and cunningly fixed the sights on Gumber Corner so as to get upon a clear day his exact alignment with Pulborough and then the shoulder of Leith Hill, just to miss the two rivers and just to obtain the best going for a military road? He was some engineer or other among the thousands in the Imperial Service. He was at Chichester for some weeks and drew his pay, and then perhaps went on to London, and he was born in Africa or in Lombardy, or he was a Breton, or he was from Lusitania or from the Euphrates. He did that bit of work most certainly without any consideration of fame, for engineers (especially

## On Something

when they are soldiers) are singular among artists in this matter. But he did a very wonderful thing, and the Roman Road has run there for fifteen hundred years—his creation. Some one must have hit upon that precise line and the reason for it. It is exactly right, and the thing done was as great and is to-day as satisfying as that sculpture of Brou or the two boys Murillo painted, whom you may see in the Gallery at Dulwich. But he never thought of any one knowing his name, and no one knows it.

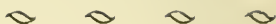
Then there is this last thing about anonymous work, which is also a parable and a sad one. It shows how there is no bridge between two human minds.

How often have I not come upon a corbel of stone carved into the shape of a face, and that face had upon it either horror or laughter or great sweetness or vision, and I have looked at it as I might have looked upon a living face, save that it was more wonderful than most living faces. It carried in it the soul and the mind of the man who made it. But he has been dead these hundreds of years. That corbel cannot be in communion with me, for it is of stone; it is dumb and will not speak to me, though it compels me continually to ask it questions. Its author also is dumb, for he has been dead so long, and I can know nothing about him whatsoever.

## On Unknown People

Now so it is with any two human minds, not only when they are separated by centuries and by silence, but when they have their being side by side under one roof and are companions all their years.

## On a Van Tromp



ONCE there was a man who, having nothing else to do and being fond of that kind of thing, copied with a good deal of care on to a bit of wood the corner of a Dutch picture in one of the public galleries.

This man was not a good artist; indeed, he was nothing but a humpbacked and very sensitive little squire with about £3000 a year of his own and a great liking for intricate amusements. He was a pretty good mathematician and a tolerable fisherman. He knew an enormous amount about the Mohammedan conquest of Spain, and he is, I believe, writing a book upon that subject. I hope he will, for nearly all history wants to be rewritten. Anyhow, he, as I have just said, did copy a corner of one of the Dutch pictures in one of the galleries. It was a Dutch picture of the seventeenth century; and since the laws of this country are very complicated and the sanctions attached to them very terrible, I will not give the name of the original artist, but I will call him Van Tromp.

Van Tromp's have always been recognized, and

## On a Van Tromp

there was a moment about fifty years after the artist's death when they had a considerable vogue in the French Court. Monsieur, who was quite ignorant of such things, bought a couple, and there is a whole row of them in the little pavilion at Louveciennes. Van Tromp has something about him at once positive and elusive; he is full of planes and values, and he interprets and renders, and the rest of it. Nay, he transfers!

About thirty years ago Mr. Mayor (of Hildesheim and London) thought it his duty to impress upon the public how great Van Tromp was. This he did after taking thirteen Van Tromps in payment of a bad debt, and he succeeded. But the man I am writing about cared nothing for all this: he simply wanted to see how well he could imitate this corner of the picture, and he did it pretty well. He begrimed it and he rubbed at it, and then he tickled it up again with a knife, and then he smoked it, and then he put in some dirty whites which were vivid, and he played the fool with white of egg, and so forth, until he had the very tone and manner of the original; and as he had done it on an old bit of wood it was exactly right, and he was very proud of the result. He got an old frame from near Long Acre and stuck it in, and then he took the thing home. He had done several things of this kind, imitating miniatures, and even enamels. It

## On Something

amused him. When he got home he sat looking at it with great pleasure for an hour or two; he left the little thing on the table of his study and went to bed.

Here begins the story, and here, therefore, I must tell you what the subject of this corner of the picture was.

The subject of this corner of the picture which he had copied was a woman in a brown jacket and a red petticoat with big feet showing underneath, sitting on a tub and cutting up some vegetables. She had her hair bunched up like an onion, a fashion which, as we all know, appealed to the Dutch in the seventeenth century, or at any rate to the plebeian Dutch. I must also tell you the name of this squire before I go any further: his name was Hammer—Paul Hammer. He was unmarried.

He went to bed at eleven o'clock, and when he came down at eight o'clock he had his breakfast. He went into his study at nine o'clock, and was very much annoyed to find that some burglars had come in during the night and had taken away a number of small objects which were not without value; and among them, what he most regretted, his little pastiche of the corner of the Van Tromp.

For some moments he stood filled with an acute anger and wishing that he knew who the burglars

## On a Van Tromp

were and how to get at them ; but the days passed, and though he asked everybody, and even gave some money to the police, he could not discover this. He put an advertisement into several newspapers, both London newspapers and local ones, saying that money would be given if the thing were restored, and pretty well hinting that no questions would be asked, but nothing came.

Meanwhile the burglars, whose names were Charles and Lothair Fernal, foreigners but English-speaking, had found some of their ill-acquired goods saleable, others unsaleable. They wanted a pound for the little picture in the frame, and this they could not get, and it was a bother haggling it about. Lothair Fernal thought of a good plan : he stopped at an inn on the third day of their peregrinations, had a good dinner with his brother, told the innkeeper that he could not pay the bill, and offered to leave the Old Master in exchange. When people do this it very often comes off, for the alternative is only the pleasure of seeing the man in gaol, whereas a picture is always a picture, and there is a gambler's chance of its turning up trumps. So the man grumbled and took the little thing. He hung it up in the best room of the inn, where he gave his richer customers food.

Thus it was that a young gentleman who had come down to ride in that neighbourhood,

## On Something

although he did not know any of the rich people round about, saw it one day, and on seeing it exclaimed loudly in an unknown tongue; but he very rapidly repressed his emotion and simply told the innkeeper that he had taken a fancy to the daub and would give him thirty shillings for it.

The innkeeper, who had read in the newspapers of how pictures of the utmost value are sold by fools for a few pence, said boldly that his price was twenty pounds; whereupon the young gentleman went out gloomily, and the innkeeper thought that he must have made a mistake, and was for three hours depressed. But in the fourth hour again he was elated, for the young gentleman came back with twenty pounds, not even in notes but in gold, paid it down, and took away the picture. Then again, in the fifth hour was the innkeeper a little depressed, but not as much as before, for it struck him that the young gentleman must have been very eager to act in such a fashion, and that perhaps he could have got as much as twenty-one pounds by holding out and calling it guineas.

The young gentleman telegraphed to his father (who lived in Wimbledon but who did business in Bond Street) saying that he had got hold of a Van Tromp which looked like a study for the big "Eversley" Van Tromp in the Gallery, and he wanted to know what his father would



## On a Van Tromp

give for it. His father telegraphed back inviting him to spend one whole night under the family roof. This the young man did, and, though it wrung the old father's heart to have to do it, by the time he had seen the young gentleman's find (or *trouvaille* as he called it) he had given his offspring a cheque for five hundred pounds. Whereupon the young gentleman left and went back to do some more riding, an exercise of which he was passionately fond, and to which he had trained several quiet horses.

The father wrote to a certain lord of his acquaintance who was very fond of Van Tromps, and offered him this replica or study, in some ways finer than the original, but he said it must be a matter for private negotiation; so he asked for an appointment, and the lord, who was a tall, red-faced man with a bluff manner, made an appointment for nine o'clock next morning, which was rather early for Bond Street. But money talks, and they met. The lord was very well dressed, and when he talked he folded his hands (which had gloves on them) over the knob of his stick and pressed his stick firmly upon the ground. It was a way he had. But it did not frighten the old gentleman who did business in Bond Street, and the long and short of it was that the lord did not get the picture until he had paid three thousand guineas—not pounds, mind you. For

## On Something

this sum the picture was to be sent round to the lord's house, and so it was, and there it would have stayed but for a very curious accident. The lord had put the greater part of his money into a company which was developing the resources of the South Shetland Islands, and by some miscalculation or other the expense of this experiment proved larger than the revenues obtainable from it. His policy, as I need hardly tell you, was to hang on, and so he did, because in the long run the property must pay. And so it would if they could have gone on shelling out for ever, but they could not, and so the whole affair was wound up and the lord lost a great deal of money.

Under these circumstances he bethought him of the toiling millions who never see a good picture and who have no more vivid appetite than the hunger for good pictures. He therefore lent his collection of Van Tromps with the least possible delay to a public gallery, and for many years they hung there, while the lord lived in great anxiety, but with a sufficient income for his needs in the delightful scenery of the Penines at some distance from a railway station, surrounded by his tenants. At last even these—the tenants, I mean—were not sufficient, and a gentleman in the Government who knew the value of Van Tromps proposed that these Van

## On a Van Tromp

Tromps should be bought for the nation; but a lot of cranks made a frightful row, both in Parliament and out of it, so that the scheme would have fallen through had not one of the Van Tromps—to wit, that little copy of a corner which was obviously a replica of or a study for the best-known of the Van Tromps—been proclaimed false quite suddenly by a gentleman who doubted its authenticity; whereupon everybody said that it was not genuine except three people who really counted, and these included the gentleman who had recommended the purchase of the Van Tromps by the nation. So enormous was the row upon the matter that the picture reached the very pinnacle of fame, and an Australian then travelling in England was determined to get that Van Tromp for himself, and did.

This Australian was a very simple man, good and kind and childlike, and frightfully rich. When he had got the Van Tromp he carried it about with him, and at the country houses where he stopped he used to pull it out and show it to people. It happened that among other country houses he stopped once at the hunchback squire's, whose name, as you will remember, was Mr. Hammer, and he showed him the Van Tromp one day after dinner.

Now Mr. Hammer was by this time an old man,

## J On Something

and he had ceased to care much for the things of this world. He had suffered greatly, and he had begun to think about religion; also he had made a good deal of money in Egyptians (for all this was before the slump). And he was pretty well ashamed of his pastiches; so, one way and another, the seeing of that picture did not have the effect upon him which you might have expected; for you, the reader, have read this story in five minutes (if you have had the patience to get so far), but he, Mr. Hammer, had been changing and changing for years, and I tell you he did not care a dump what happened to the wretched thing. Only when the Australian, who was good and simple and kind and hearty, showed him the picture and asked him proudly to guess what he had given for it, then Mr. Hammer looked at him with a look in his eyes full of that not mortal sadness which accompanies irremediable despair.

“I do not know,” he answered gently and with a sob in his voice.

“I paid for that picture,” said the Australian, in the accent and language of his native clime, “no less a sum than £7500 . . . and I’d pay it again to-morrow!” Saying this, the Australian hit the table with the palm of his hand in a manner so manly that an aged retainer who was putting coals upon the fire allowed the coal-scuttle to drop.

## On a Van Tromp

But Mr. Hammer, ruminating in his mind all the accidents and changes and adventures of human life, its complexity, its unfulfilled desires, its fading but not quite perishable ideals, well knowing how men are made happy and how unhappy, ventured on no reply. Two great tears gathered in his eyes, and he would have shed them, perhaps to be profusely followed by more—he was nearly breaking down—when he looked up and saw on the wall opposite him seven pastiches which he had made in the years gone by. There was a Titian and a George Morland, a Chardin, two cows after Cooper, and an impressionist picture after some Frenchman whose name he had forgotten.

“You like pictures?” he said to the Australian, the tears still standing in his eyes.

“I do!” said the Australian with conviction.

“Will you let me give you these?” said Mr. Hammer.

The Australian protested that such things could not be allowed, but he was a simple man, and at last he consented, for he was immensely pleased.

“It is an ungracious thing to make conditions,” said Mr. Hammer, “and I won’t make any, only I *should* be pleased if, in your island home . . .”

“I don’t live on an island,” said the Australian.

## On Something

Mr. Hammer remembered the map of Australia, with the water all round it, but he was too polite to argue.

“No, of course not,” he said; “you live on the mainland; I forgot. But anyhow, I *should* be so pleased if you would promise me to hang them all together, these pictures with your Van Tromp, all in a line! I really should be so pleased!”

“Why, certainly,” said the Australian, a little bewildered; “I will do so, Mr. Hammer, if it can give you any pleasure.”

“The fact is,” said Mr. Hammer, in a breaking voice, “I had that picture once, and I intended it to hang side by side with these.”

It was in vain that the Australian, on hearing this, poured out self-reproaches, offered with an expansion of soul to restore it, and then more prudently attempted a negotiation. Mr. Hammer resolutely shook his head.

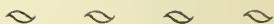
“I am an old man,” he said, “and I have no heirs; it is not for me to take, but to give, and if you will do what an old man begs of you, and accept what I offer; if you will do more and of your courtesy keep all these things together which were once familiar to me, it will be enough reward.”

The next day, therefore, the Australian sailed off to his distant continental home, carrying with him not only the Chardin, the Titian, the Cooper,

## On a Van Tromp

the impressionist picture, and the rest, but also the Van Tromp. And three months after they all hung in a row in the great new copper room at Warra-Mugga. What happened to them later on, and how they were all sold together as "the Warra-Mugga Collection," I will tell you when I have the time and you the patience. Farewell.

## His Character



A CERTAIN merchant in the City of London, having retired from business, purchased for himself a private house upon the heights of Hampstead and proposed to devote his remaining years to the education and the establishment in life of his only son.

When this youth (whose name was George) had arrived at the age of nineteen his father spoke to him after dinner upon his birthday with regard to the necessity of choosing a profession. He pointed out to him the advantages of a commercial career, and notably of that form of useful industry which is known as banking, showing how in that trade a profit was to be made by lending the money of one man to another, and often of a man's own money to himself, without engaging one's own savings or fortune.

George, to whom such matters were unfamiliar, listened attentively, and it seemed to him with every word that dropped from his father that a wider and wider horizon of material comfort and worldly grandeur was spreading out before him. He had hitherto had no idea that such great



## His Character

rewards were attached to services so slight in themselves, and certainly so valueless to the community. The career sketched out for him by his father appealed to him most strongly, and when that gentleman had completed his advice he assured him that he would follow it in every particular.

George's father was overjoyed to find his son so reasonable. He sat down at once to write the note which he had planned, to an old friend and connection by marriage, Mr. Repton, of Repton and Greening ; he posted it that night and bade the lad prepare for the solemnity of a private interview with the head of the firm upon the morrow.

Before George left the house next morning his father laid before him, with the pomp which so great an occasion demanded, certain rules of conduct which should guide not only his entry into life but his whole conduct throughout its course. He emphasized the value of self-respect, of a decent carriage, of discretion, of continuous and tenacious habits of industry, of promptitude, and so forth ; when, urged by I know not what demon whose pleasure it is ever to disturb the best plans of men, the old gentleman had the folly to add the following words as he rose to his feet and laid his hand heavily upon his son's shoulder :

“Above all things, George, tell the truth. I

## On Something

was young and now am old. I have seen many men fail, some few succeed ; and the best advice I can give to my dear only son is that on all occasions he should fearlessly and manfully tell the truth without regard of consequence. Believe me, it is not only the whole root of character, but the best basis for a successful business career even to-day."

Having so spoken, the old man, more moved than he cared to show, went upstairs to read his newspaper, and George, beautifully dressed, went out by the front door towards the Tube, pondering very deeply the words his father had just used.

I cannot deny that the impression they produced upon him was extraordinary—far more vivid than men of mature years can easily conceive. It is often so in early youth when we listen to the voice of authority : some particular chance phrase will have an unmeasured effect upon one. A worn tag and platitude solemnly spoken, and at a critical moment, may change the whole of a career. And so it was with George, as you will shortly perceive. For as he rumbled along in the Tube his father's words became a veritable obsession within him : he saw their value ramifying in a multitude of directions, he perceived the strength and accuracy of them in a hundred aspects. He knew well that the interview he was approaching was one in

## His Character

which this virtue of truth might be severely tested, but he gloried in the opportunity, and he came out of the Tube into the fresh air within a step of Mr. Repton's office with set lips and his young temper braced for the ordeal.

When he got to the office there was Mr. Repton, a kindly old gentleman, wearing large spectacles, and in general appearance one of those genial types from which our caricaturists have constructed the national figure of John Bull. It was a pleasure to be in the presence of so honest a man, and in spite of George's extreme nervousness he felt a certain security in such company. Moreover, Mr. Repton smiled paternally at him before putting to him the few questions which the occasion demanded. He held George's father's letter between two fingers of his right hand, moving it gently in the air as he addressed the lad :

"I am very glad to see you, George," he said, "in this old office. I've seen you here before, Chrm ! as you know, but not on such important business, Chrm !" He laughed genially. "So you want to come and learn your trade with us, do you? You're punctual I hope, Chrm?" he added, his honest eyes full of good nature and jest.

George looked at him in a rather gloomy manner, hesitated a moment, and then, under

## On Something

the influence of an obvious effort, said in a choking voice, "No, Mr. Repton, I'm not."

"Hey, what?" said Mr. Repton, puzzled and a little annoyed at the young man's manner.

"I was saying, Mr. Repton, that I am not punctual. I have dreamy fits which sometimes make me completely forget an appointment. And I have a silly habit of cutting things too fine, which makes me miss trains and things. I think I ought to tell you while I am about it, but I simply cannot get up early in the morning. There are days when I manage to do so under the excitement of a coming journey or for some other form of pleasure, but as a rule I postpone my rising until the very latest possible moment."

George having thus delivered himself closed his lips and was silent.

"Humph!" said Mr. Repton. It was not what the boy had said so much as the impression of oddness which affected that worthy man. He did not like it, and he was not quite sure of his ground. He was about to put another question, when George volunteered a further statement:

"I don't drink," he said, "and at my age it is not easy to understand what the vice of continual drunkenness may be, but I shouldn't wonder if that would be my temptation later on, and it is only fair to tell you that, young as I am, I have twice grossly exceeded in wine; on one occasion,

## His Character

not a year ago, the servants at a house where I was stopping carried me to bed."

"They did?" said Mr. Repton drily.

"Yes," said George, "they did." Then there was a silence for a space of at least three minutes.

"My dear young man," said Mr. Repton, rising, "do you feel any aptitude for a City career?"

"None," said George decisively.

"Pray," said Mr. Repton (who had grown-up children of his own and could not help speaking with a touch of sarcasm—he thought it good for boys in the lunatic stage), "pray," said he, looking quizzically down at the unhappy but firm-minded George as he sat there in his chair, "is there any form of work for which you do feel an aptitude?"

"Yes, certainly," said George confidently.

"And what is that?" said Mr. Repton, his smile beginning again.

"The drama," said George without hesitation, "the poetic drama. I ought to tell you that I have received no encouragement from those who are the best critics of this art, though I have submitted my work to many since I left school. Some have said that my work was commonplace, others that it was imitative; all have agreed that it was dull, and they have unanimously urged me to abandon every thought of such composition. Nevertheless I am convinced that I have the

## On Something

highest possible talents not only in this department of letters but in all."

"You believe yourself," said Mr. Repton, with a touch of severity, "to be an exceptional young man?"

George nodded. "I do," he said, "quite exceptional. I should have used a stronger term had I been speaking of the matter myself. I think I have genius, or, rather, I am sure I have; and, what is more, genius of a very high order."

"Well," said Mr. Repton, sighing, "I don't think we shall get any forrader. Have you been working much lately?" he asked anxiously—"examinations or anything?"

"No," said George quietly. "I always feel like this."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Repton, who was now convinced that the poor boy had intended no discourtesy. "Well, I wonder whether you would mind taking back a note to your father?"

"Not at all," said George courteously.

Mr. Repton in his turn wrote a short letter, in which he begged George's father not to take offence at an old friend's advice, recalled to his memory the long and faithful friendship between them, pointed out that outsiders could often see things which members of a family could not, and wound up by begging George's father to give George a good holiday. "Not alone," he con-

## His Character

cluded; "I don't think that would be quite safe, but in company with some really trustworthy man a little older than himself, who won't get on his nerves and yet will know how to look after him. He must get right away for some weeks," added the kind old man, "and after that I should advise you to keep him at home and let him have some gentle occupation. Don't encourage him in writing. I think he would take kindly to *gardening*. But I won't write any more: I will come and see you about it."

Bearing that missive back did George reach his home. . . . All this passed in the year 1895, and that is why George is to-day one of the best electrical engineers in the country, instead of being a banker; and that shows how good always comes, one way or another, of telling the truth.

## On Thruppenny Bits



PHILIP, King of Macedon, destroyer of the liberties of Greece, and father to Alexander who tamed the horse Bucephalus, called for the tutor of that lad, one Aristotle (surnamed the Teacher of the Human Race), to propound to him a question that had greatly troubled him ; for in counting out his money (which was his habit upon a washing day, when the Queen's appetite for afternoon tea and honey had rid him of her presence) he discovered mixed with his treasure such an intolerable number of thruppenny bits as very nearly drove him to despair.

On this account King Philip of Macedon, destroyer of the liberties of Greece, sent for Aristotle, his hanger-on, as one capable of answering any question whatsoever, and said to him (when he had entered with a profound obeisance) :

“Come, Aristotle, answer me straight ; what is the use of a thruppenny bit ?”

“Dread sire,” said Aristotle, standing in his presence with respect, “the thruppenny bit is not to be despised. Men famous in no way for their style, nor even for their learning, have main-



## On Thruppenny Bits

tained life by inscribing within its narrow boundaries the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, while others have used it as a comparison in the classes of astronomy to illustrate the angle subtended by certain of the orbs of heaven. The moon, whose waxing and waning is doubtless familiar to Your Majesty, is indeed but just hidden by a thruppenny bit held between the finger and the thumb of the observer extended at the full length of any normal human arm."

"Go on," said King Philip, with some irritation; "go on; go on!"

"The thruppenny bit, Your Majesty, illustrates, as does no other coin, the wisdom and the aptness of the duodecimal system to which the Macedonians have so wisely clung (in common with the people of Scythia and of Thrace, and the dumb animals) while the too brilliant Hellenes ran wild in the false simplicity of the decimal system. The number twelve, Your Majesty . . ."

"Yes, yes, I know," said King Philip impatiently, "I have heard it a thousand times! It has already persuaded me to abandon the duodecimal method and to consign to the severest tortures any one who mentions it in my presence again. My ten fingers are good enough for me! Go on, go on!"

"Sovran Lord!" continued Aristotle, "the thruppenny bit has further been proved in a

## On Something

thousand ways an adjuvator and prime helper of the Gods. For many a man too niggardly to give sixpence, and too proud to give a copper, has dropped this coin among the offerings at the Temple, and it is related of a clergyman in Armagh (a town of which Your Majesty has perhaps never heard) that he would frequently address his congregation from the rails of the altar, pointing out the excessive number of thruppenny bits which had been offered for the sustenance of the hierarchy, threatening to summon before him known culprits, and to return to them the insufficient oblation. Again, the thruppenny bit most powerfully disciplines the soul of man, for it tries the temper as does no other coin, being small, thin, wayward, given to hiding, and very often useless when it is discovered. Learn also, King of Macedon, that the thruppenny bit is of value in ritual phrases, and particularly so in objurgations and the calling down of curses, and in the settlement of evil upon enemies, and in the final expression of contempt. For to compare some worthless thing to a farthing, to a penny, or to tuppence, has no vigour left in it, and it has long been thought ridiculous even among provincials; a threadbare, worn, and worthless sort of sneer; but the thruppenny bit has a sound about it very valuable to one who would insist upon his superiority. Thus were

## On Thruppenny Bits

some rebel or some demagogue of Athens (for example) to venture upon the criticism of Your Majesty's excursions into philosophy, in order to bring those august theses into contempt, his argument would never find emphasis or value unless he were to terminate its last phrase by a snap of the fingers and the mention of a thruppenny bit.

“King Philip of Macedon, most prudent of men, learn further that a thruppenny bit, which to the foolish will often seem a mere expenditure of threepence, to the wise may represent a saving of that sum. For how many occasions are there not in which the inconsequent and lavish fool, the spendthrift, the young heir, the commander of cavalry, the empty, gilded boy, will give a sixpence to a messenger where a thruppenny bit would have done as well? For silver is the craving of the poor, not in its amount, but in its nature, for nature and number are indeed two things, the one on the one hand . . .”

“Oh, I know all about that,” said King Philip; “I did not send for you to get you off upon those rails, which have nothing whatever to do with thruppenny bits. Be concrete, I pray you, good Aristotle,” he continued, and yawned. “Stick to things as they are, and do not make me remind you how once you said that men had thirty-six, women only thirty-four, teeth. Do not wander in the void.”

## On Something

“Arbiter of Hellas,” said Aristotle gravely, when the King had finished his tirade, “the thruppenny bit has not only all that character of usefulness which I have argued in it from the end it is designed to serve, but one may also perceive this virtue in it in another way, which is by observation. For you will remember how when we were all boys the fourpenny bit of accursed memory still lingered, and how as against it the thruppenny bit has conquered. Which is, indeed, a parable taken from nature, showing that whatever survives is destined to survive, for that is indeed in a way, as you may say, the end of survival.”

“Precisely,” said King Philip, frowning intellectually; “I follow you. I have heard many talk in this manner, but none talk as well as you do. Continue, good Aristotle, continue.”

“Your Majesty, the matter needs but little exposition, though it contains the very marrow of truth,” said the philosopher, holding up in a menacing way the five fingers of his left hand and ticking them off with the forefinger of his right. “For it is first useful, second beautiful, third valuable, fourth magnificent, and, fifthly, consonant to its nature.”

“Quite true,” said King Philip, following carefully every word that fell from the wise man’s lips, for he could now easily understand.

“Very well then, sire,” said Aristotle in a live-

## On Thruppenny Bits

lier tone, charmed to have captivated the attention of his Sovereign. "I was saying that which survives is proved worthy of survival, as of a man and a shark, or of Athens and Macedonia, or in many other ways. Now the thruppenny bit, having survived to our own time, has so proved itself in that test, and upon this all men of science are agreed.

"Then, also, King Philip, consider how the thruppenny bit in another and actual way, not of pure reason but, if I may say so, in a material manner, commends itself: for is it not true that whereas all other nations whatsoever, being by nature servile, will use a nickel piece or some other denomination for whatever is small but is not of bronze, the Macedonians, being designed by the Gods for the command of all the human race, have very tenaciously clung to the thruppenny bit through good and through evil repute, and have even under the sternest penalties enforced it upon their conquered subjects? For when Your Majesty discovered (if you will remember) that the people of Euboea, in manifest contempt of your Crown, paid back into Your Majesty's treasury all their taxes in the shape of thruppenny bits . . ."

At this moment King Philip gave a loud shout, uttering in Greek the word "Eureka," which signifies (to those who drop their aitches) "I've got it."

## On Something

“Got what?” said the philosopher, startled into common diction by the unexpected interjection of the despot.

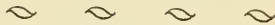
“Get out!” said King Philip. “Do you suppose that any rambling Don is going to take up my time when by a sheer accident his verbosity has started me on a true scent? Out, Aristotle, out! Or, stay, take this note with you to the Captain of the Guard”—and King Philip hastily scribbled upon a parchment an order for the immediate execution of the whole of the inhabitants of Euboea, saving such as could redeem themselves at the price of ten drachmae, the said sum upon no account whatsoever to be paid in coin containing so much as one thruppenny bit.

But the offended philosopher had departed, and being well wound up could not, any more than any other member of the academies, cease from spouting; so that King Philip was intolerably aggravated to hear him as he waddled down the Palace stairs still declaiming in a loud tone:

“And, sixteenthly, the thruppenny bit has about it this noble quality, that it represents an aliquot part of that sum which is paid to me daily from the Royal Treasury in silver, a metal upon which we have always insisted. And, seventeenthly . . .”

But King Philip banged the door.

## On the Hotel at Palma and a proposed Guide-book



THE hotel at Palma is like the Savoy, but the cooking is a great deal better. It is large and new; its decorations are in the modern style with twiddly lines. Its luxury is greater than that of its London competitor. It has an eager, willing porter and a delightful landlord. You do what you like in it and there are books to read. One of these books was an English guide-book. I read it. It was full of lies, so gross and palpable that I told my host how abominably it traduced his country, and advised him first to beat the book well and then to burn it over a slow fire. It said that the people were superstitious—it is false. They have no taboo about days; they play about on Sundays. They have no taboo about drinks; they drink what they feel inclined (which is wine) when they feel inclined (which is when they are thirsty). They have no taboo book, Bible or Koran, no damned psychical rubbish, no damned “folk-lore,” no triply damned mumbo-jumbo of social ranks; kind, really good, simple-minded dukes would have a devil of a time in Palma. Avoid it, my dears, keep away.

## On Something

If anything, the people of Palma have not quite enough superstition. They play there for love, money, and amusement. No taboo (talking of love) about love.

The book said they were poor. Their populace is three or four times as rich as ours. They own their own excellent houses and their own land; no one but has all the meat and fruit and vegetables and wine he wants, and usually draught animals and musical instruments as well.

In fact, the book told the most frightful lies and was a worthy companion to other guide-books. It moved me to plan a guide-book of my own in which the truth should be told about all the places I know. It should be called "Guide to Northumberland, Sussex, Chelsea, the French frontier, South Holland, the Solent, Lombardy, the North Sea, and Rome, with a chapter on part of Cheshire and some remarks on the United States of America."

In this book the fault would lie in its too great scrappiness, but the merit in its exactitude. Thus I would inform the reader that the best time to sleep in Siena is from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon, and that the best place to sleep is the north side of St. Domenic's ugly brick church there.

Again, I would tell him that the man who keeps the "Turk's Head" at Valogne, in Nor-



## On the Hotel at Palma

mandy, was only outwardly and professedly an Atheist, but really and inwardly a Papist.

I would tell him that it sometimes snowed in Lombardy in June, for I have seen it—and that any fool can cross the Alps blindfold, and that the sea is usually calm, not rough, and that the people of Dax are the most horrible in all France, and that Lourdes, contrary to the general opinion, does work miracles, for I have seen them.

I would also tell him of the place at Toulouse where the harper plays to you during dinner, and of the grubby little inn at Terneuzen on the Scheldt where they charge you just anything they please for anything; five shillings for a bit of bread, or half a crown for a napkin.

All these things, and hundreds of others of the same kind, would I put in my book, and at the end should be a list of all the hotels in Europe where, at the date of publication, the landlord was nice, for it is the character of the landlords which makes all the difference—and that changes as do all human things.

There you could see first, like a sort of Primate of Hotels, the Railway Hotel at York. Then the inn at La Bruyère in the Landes, then the "Swan" at Petworth with its mild ale, then the "White Hart" of Storrington, then the rest of them, all the six or seven hundred of them, from the "Elephant" of Château Thierry to the "Feathers"

## On Something

of Ludlow—a truly noble remainder of what once was England; the “Feathers” of Ludlow, where the beds are of honest wood with curtains to them, and where a man may drink half the night with the citizens to the success of their engines and the putting out of all fires. For there are in West England three little inns in three little towns, all in a line, and all beginning with an L—Ledbury, Ludlow, and Leominster, all with “Feathers,” all with orchards round, and I cannot tell which is the best.

Then my guide-book will go on to talk about harbours; it will prove how almost every harbour was impossible to make in a little boat; but it would describe the difficulties of each so that a man in a little boat might possibly make them. It would describe the rush of the tide outside Margate and the still more dangerous rush outside Shoreham, and the absurd bar at Littlehampton that strikes out of the sea, and the place to lie at in Newhaven, and how not to stick upon the Platters outside Harwich; and the very tortuous entry to Poole, and the long channel into Christchurch past Hengistbury Head; and the enormous tides of South Wales; and why you often have to beach at Britonferry, and the terrible difficulty of mooring in Great Yarmouth; and the sad changes of Little Yarmouth, and the single black buoy at Calais which is much too far

## On the Hotel at Palma

out to be of any use; and how to wait for the tide in the Swin. And also what no book has ever yet given, an exact direction of the way in which one may roll into Orford Haven, on the top of a spring tide if one has luck, and how if one has no luck one sticks on the gravel and is pounded to pieces.

Then my guide-book would go on to tell of the way in which to make men pleasant to you according to their climate and country; of how you must not hurry the people of Aragon, and how it is your duty to bargain with the people of Catalonia; and how it is impossible to eat at Daroca; and how careful one must be with gloomy men who keep inns at the very top of glens, especially if they are silent, under Cheviot. And how one must not talk religion when one has got over the Scotch border, with some remarks about Jedburgh, and the terrible things that happened to a man there who would talk religion though he had been plainly warned.

Then my guide-book would go on to tell how one should climb ordinary mountains, and why one should avoid feats; and how to lose a guide which is a very valuable art, for when you have lost your guide you need not pay him. My book will also have a note (for it is hardly worth a chapter) on the proper method of frightening

## On Something

sheep dogs when they attempt to kill you with their teeth upon the everlasting hills.

This my good and new guide-book (oh, how it blossoms in my head as I write!) would further describe what trains go to what places, and in what way the boredom of them can best be overcome, and which expresses really go fast; and I should have a footnote describing those lines of steamers on which one can travel for nothing if one puts a sufficiently bold face upon the matter.

My guide-book would have directions for the pacifying of Arabs, a trick which I learnt from a past master, a little way east of Batna in the year 1905. I will also explain how one can tell time by the stars and by the shadow of the sun; upon what sort of food one can last longest and how best to carry it, and what rites propitiate, if they are solemnized in a due order, the half-malicious fairies which haunt men when they are lost in lonely valleys, right up under the high peaks of the world. And my book should have a whole chapter devoted to Ulysses.

For you must know that one day I came into Narbonne where I had never been before, and I saw written up in large letters upon a big, ugly house:

ULYSSES,  
Lodging for Man and Beast.

## On the Hotel at Palma

So I went in and saw the master, who had a round bullet head and cropped hair, and I said to him: "What! Are you landed, then, after all your journeys? And do I find you at last, you of whom I have read so much and seen so little?" But with an oath he refused me lodging.

This tale is true, as would be every other tale in my book.

What a fine book it will be!

## The Death of Wandering Peter ∞ ∞

“ I WILL confess and I will not deny,” said Wandering Peter (of whom you have heard little but of whom in God’s good time you shall hear more). “ I will confess and I will not deny that the chief pleasure I know is the contemplation of my fellow beings.”

He spoke thus in his bed in the inn of a village upon the River Yonne beyond Auxerre, in which bed he lay a-dying ; but though he was dying he was full of words.

“ What energy ! What cunning ! What desire ! I have often been upon the edge of a steep place, such as a chalk pit or a cliff above a plain, and watched them down below, hurrying around, turning about, laying down, putting up, leading, making, organizing, driving, considering, directing, exceeding, and restraining : upon my soul I was proud to be one of them ! I have said to myself,” said Wandering Peter, “ lift up your heart ; you also are one of these ! For though I am,” he continued, “ a wandering man and lonely, given to the hills and to empty places, yet I glory in the workers on the plain, as might a

## The Death of Wandering Peter

poor man in his noble lineage. From these I came; to these in my old age I would have returned."

At these words the people about his bed fell to sobbing when they thought how he would never wander more, but Peter Wanderwide continued with a high heart:

"How pleasant it is to see them plough! First they cunningly contrive an arrangement that throws the earth aside and tosses it to the air, and then, since they are too weak to pull the same, they use great beasts, oxen or horses or even elephants, and impose them with their will, so that they patiently haul this contrivance through the thick clods; they tear up and they put into furrows, and they transform the earth. Nothing can withstand them. Birds you will think could escape them by flying up into the air. It is an error. Upon birds also my people impose their view. They spread nets, food, bait, trap, and lime. They hail stones and shot and arrows at them. They cause some by a perpetual discipline to live near them, to lay eggs and to be killed at will; of this sort are hens, geese, turkeys, ducks, and guinea-fowls. Nothing eludes the careful planning of man.

"Moreover, they can build. They do not build this way or that, as a dull necessity forces them, not they! They build as they feel inclined,

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They hew down, they saw through (and how marvellous is a saw!), they trim timber, they mix lime and sand, they excavate the recesses of the hills. Oh! the fine fellows! They can at whim make your chambers or the Tower prison, or my aunt's new villa at Wimbledon (which is a joke of theirs), or St. Pancras Station, or the Crystal Palace, or Westminster Abbey, or St. Paul's, or Bon Secours. They are agreeable to every change in the wind that blows about the world. It blows Gothic, and they say 'By all means'—and there is your Gothic—a thing dreamt of and done! It suddenly veers south again and blows from the Mediterranean. The jolly little fellows are equal to the strain, and up goes Amboise, and Anet, and the Louvre, and all the Renaissance. It blows everyhow and at random as though in anger at seeing them so ready. They care not at all! They build the Eiffel Tower, the Queen Anne house, the Mary Jane house, the Modern-Style house, the Carlton, the Ritz, the Grand Palais, the Trocadero, Olympia, Euston, the Midhurst Sanatorium, and old Beit's Palace in Park Lane. They are not to be defeated, they have immortal certitudes.

“Have you considered their lines and their drawings and their cunning plans?” said Wandering Peter. “They are astonishing there! Put a bit of charcoal into my dog's mouth or



## The Death of Wandering Peter

my pet monkey's paw—would he copy the world? Not he! But men—my brothers—*they* take it in hand and make war against the unspeaking forces; the trees and the hills are of their own showing, and the places in which they dwell, by their own power, become full of their own spirit. Nature is made more by being their model, for in all they draw, paint, or chisel they are in touch with heaven and with hell. . . . They write (Lord! the intelligence of their men, and Lord! the beauty of their women). They write unimaginable things!

“They write epics, they write lyrics, they write riddles and marching songs and drinking songs and rhetoric, and chronicles, and elegies, and pathetic memories; and in everything that they write they reveal things greater than they know. They are capable,” said Peter Wanderwide, in his dying enthusiasm, “of so writing that the thought enlarges upon the writing and becomes far more than what they have written. They write that sort of verse called ‘Stop-Short,’ which when it is written makes one think more violently than ever, as though it were an introduction to the realms of the soul. And then again they write things which gently mock themselves and are a consolation for themselves against the doom of death.”

But when Peter Wanderwide said that word

## On Something

“death,” the howling and the boo-hooing of the company assembled about his bed grew so loud that he could hardly hear himself think. For there was present the Mayor of the village, and the Priest of the village, and the Mayor’s wife, and the Adjutant Mayor or Deputy Mayor, and the village Councillor, and the Road-mender, and the Schoolmaster, and the Cobbler, and all the notabilities, as many as could crush into the room, and none but the Doctor was missing.

And outside the house was a great crowd of the village folk, weeping bitterly and begging for news of him, and mourning that so great and so good a man should find his death in so small a place.

Peter Wanderwide was sinking very fast, and his life was going out with his breath, but his heart was still so high that he continued although his voice was failing:

“Look you, good people all, in your little passage through the daylight, get to see as many hills and buildings and rivers, fields, books, men, horses, ships, and precious stones as you can possibly manage to do. Or else stay in one village and marry in it and die there. For one of these two fates is the best fate for every man. Either to be what I have been, a wanderer with all the bitterness of it, or to stay at home and hear in one’s garden the voice of God.

## The Death of Wandering Peter

“For my part I have followed out my fate. And I propose in spite of my numerous iniquities, by the recollection of my many joys in the glories of this earth, as by corks, to float myself in the sea of nothingness until I reach the regions of the Blessed and the pure in heart.

“For I think when I am dead Almighty God will single me out on account of my accoutrement, my stirrup leathers, and the things that I shall be talking of concerning Ireland and the Perigord, and my boat upon the narrow seas; and I think He will ask St. Michael, who is the Clerk and Registrar of battling men, who it is that stands thus ready to speak (unless his eyes betray him) of so many things? Then St. Michael will forget my name although he will know my face; he will forget my name because I never stayed long enough in one place for him to remember it.

“But St. Peter, because he is my Patron Saint and because I have always had a special devotion to him, will answer for me and will have no argument, for he holds the keys. And he will open the door and I will come in. And when I am inside the door of Heaven I shall freely grow those wings, the pushing and nascence of which have bothered my shoulder blades with birth pains all my life long, and more especially since my thirtieth year. I say, friends and companions all, that I shall grow a very satisfying

## On Something

and supporting pair of wings, and once I am so furnished I shall be received among the Blessed, and I shall at once begin to tell them, as I told you on earth, all sorts of things, both false and true, with regard to the countries through which I carried forward my homeless feet, and in which I have been given such fulfilment for my eyes."

When Peter Wanderwide had delivered himself of these remarks, which he did with great dignity and fire for one in such extremity, he gasped a little, coughed, and died.

I need not tell you what solemnities attended his burial, nor with what fervour the people flocked to pray at his tomb; but it is worth knowing that the poet of that place, who was rival to the chief poet in Auxerre itself, gathered up the story of his death into a rhyme, written in the dialect of that valley, of which rhyme this is an English translation :

When Peter Wanderwide was young  
He wandered everywhere he would;  
And all that he approved was sung,  
And most of what he saw was good.

When Peter Wanderwide was thrown  
By Death himself beyond Auxerre,  
He chanted in heroic tone  
To Priest and people gathered there :

## The Death of Wandering Peter

“ If all that I have loved and seen  
    Be with me on the Judgment Day,  
I shall be saved the crowd between  
    From Satan and his foul array.

“ Almighty God will surely cry  
    ‘ St. Michael ! Who is this that stands  
With Ireland in his dubious eye,  
    And Perigord between his hands,

“ ‘ And on his arm the stirrup thongs,  
    And in his gait the narrow seas,  
And in his mouth Burgundian songs,  
    But in his heart the Pyrenees ? ’

“ St. Michael then will answer right  
    (But not without angelic shame) :  
‘ I seem to know his face by sight ;  
    I cannot recollect his name. . . . ’

“ St. Peter will befriend me then,  
    Because my name is Peter too ;  
‘ I know him for the best of men  
    That ever wallopped barley brew.

“ ‘ And though I did not know him well,  
    And though his soul were clogged with sin,  
I hold the keys of Heaven and Hell.  
    Be welcome, noble Peterkin.’

## On Something

“Then shall I spread my native wings  
And tread secure the heavenly floor,  
And tell the Blessed doubtful things  
Of Val d’Aran and Perigord.”

\* \* \* \*

This was the last and solemn jest  
Of weary Peter Wanderwide,  
He spoke it with a failing zest,  
And having spoken it, he died.

## The Tree of Knowledge    ∞    ∞    ∞

THE nation known to history as the Nephalo Ceclumenazenoï, or, more shortly, the Nepioi, inhabited a fruitful and prosperous district consisting in a portion of the mainland and certain islands situated in the Picrocholian Sea ; and had there for countless centuries enjoyed a particular form of government which it is not difficult to describe, for it was religious and arranged upon the principle that no ancient custom might be changed.

Lest such changes should come about through the lapse of time or the evil passions of men, the citizens of the aforesaid nation had them very clearly engraved in a dead language and upon bronze tablets, which they fixed upon the doors of their principal temple, where it stood upon a hill outside the city, and it was their laudable custom to entrust the interpretation of them not to aged judges, but to little children, for they argued that we increase in wickedness with years, and that no one is safe from the aged, but that children are, alone of the articulately speaking race, truth-tellers. Therefore, upon the first day

## On Something

of the year (which falls in that country at the time of sowing) they would take one hundred boys of ten years of age chosen by lot, they would make these hundred, who had previously for one year received instruction in their sacred language, write each a translation of the simple code engraved upon the bronze tablets. It was invariably discovered that these artless compositions varied only according to the ability of the lads to construe, and that some considerable proportion of them did accurately show forth in the vernacular of the time the meaning of those ancestral laws. They had further a magistrate known as the Archon, whose business it was to administrate these customs and to punish those who broke them. And this Archon, when or if he proposed something contrary to custom in the opinion of not less than a hundred petitioners, was judged by a court of children.

In this fashion for thousands of years did the Nepioi proceed with their calm and ordinary lives, enjoying themselves like so many grigs, and utterly untroubled by those broils and imaginations of State which disturbed their neighbours.

There was a legend among them (upon which the whole of this Constitution was based) that a certain Hero, one Melek, being in stature twelve foot high and no less than 93 inches round the



## The Tree of Knowledge

chest, had landed in their country 150,000 years previously, and finding them very barbarous, slaying one another and unacquainted with the use of letters, the precious metals, or the art of usury, had instructed them in civilization, endowed them with letters, a coinage, police, lawyers, instruments of torture, and all the other requisites of a great State, and had finally drawn up for them this code of law or custom, which they carefully preserved engraved upon the tablets of bronze, which were set upon the walls of their chief temple on the hill outside the city.

Within the temple itself its great shrine and, so to speak, its very cause of being was the Hero's tomb. He lay therein covered with plates of gold, and it was confidently asserted and strictly and unquestionably believed that at some unknown time in the future he would come out to rule them for ever in a millennial fashion—though heaven knows they were happy enough as it was.

Among their customs was this: that certain appointed officers would at every change in the moon proclaim the former existence and virtue of Melek, his residence in the tomb, and his claims to authority. To enter the tomb, indeed, was death, but there was proof of the whole story in documents which were carefully preserved in the

## On Something

temple, and which were from time to time consulted and verified. The whole structure of Nepioian society reposed upon the sanctity of this story, upon the presence of the Hero in his tomb, and of his continued authority, for with this was intertwined, or rather upon this was based, the further sanctity of their customs.

Things so proceeded without hurt or cloud until upon one most unfortunate day a certain man, bearing the vulgar name of Megalocrates, which signifies a person whose health requires the use of a wide head-gear, discovered that a certain herb which grew in great abundance in their territory and had hitherto been thought useless would serve almost every purpose of the table, sufficing, according to its preparation, for meat, bread, vegetables, and salt, and, if properly distilled, for a liquor that would make the Nepioi even more drunk than did their native spirits.

From this discovery ensued a great plenty throughout the land, the population very rapidly increased, the fortunes of the wealthy grew to double, treble, and four times those which had formerly been known, the middle classes adopted a novel accent in speech and a gait hitherto unusual, while great numbers of the poor acquired the power of living upon so small a proportion of foul air, dull light, stagnant water, and mangy crusts as would have astonished their nicer fore-

## The Tree of Knowledge

fathers. Meanwhile this great period of progress could not but lead to further discoveries, and the Nepioi had soon produced whole colleges in which were studied the arts useful to mankind and constantly discovered a larger and a larger number of surprising and useful things. At last the Nepioi (though this, perhaps, will hardly be credited) were capable of travelling underground, flying through the air, conversing with men a thousand miles away in a moment of time, and committing suicide painlessly whenever there arose occasion for that exercise.

It may be imagined with what reverence the authors of all these boons, the members of the learned colleges, were regarded; and how their opinions had in the eyes and ears of the Nepioi an unanswerable character.

Now it so happened that in one of these colleges a professor of more than ordinary position emitted one day the opinion that Melek had lived only half as long ago as was commonly supposed. In proof of this he put forward the undoubted truth that if Melek had lived at the time he was supposed to have lived, then he would have lived twice as long ago as he, the professor, said that he had lived. The more old-fashioned and stupid of the Nepioi murmured against such opinions, and though they humbly confessed themselves unable to discover any flaw

## On Something

in the professor's logic, they were sure he was wrong somewhere and they were greatly disturbed. But the opinion gained ground, and, what is more, this fruitful and intelligent surmise upon the part of the professor bred a whole series of further theories upon Melek, each of which contradicted the last but one, and the latest of which was always of so limpid and so self-evident a truth as to be accepted by whatever was intelligent and energetic in the population, and especially by the young unmarried women of the wealthier classes. In this manner the epoch of Melek was reduced to five, to three, to two, to one thousand years. Then to five hundred, and at last to one hundred and fifty. But here was a trouble. The records of the State, which had been carefully kept for many centuries, showed no trace of Melek's coming during any part of the time, but always referred to him as a long-distant forerunner. There was not even any mention of a man twelve foot high, nor even of one a little over 93 inches round the chest. At last it was proposed by an individual of great courage that he might be allowed to open the tomb of Melek and afterwards, if they so pleased, suffer death. This privilege was readily granted to him by the Archon. The worthy reformer, therefore, prised open the sacred shrine and found within it absolutely nothing whatsoever.

## The Tree of Knowledge<sup>1</sup>

Upon this there arose among the Nepioi all manner of schools and discussions, some saying this and some that, but none with the certitude of old. Their customs fell into disrepute, and even the very professors themselves were occasionally doubted when they laid down the law upon matters in which they alone were competent—as, for instance, when they asserted that the moon was made of a peculiarly delicious edible substance which increased in savour when it was preserved in the store-rooms of the housewives; or when they affirmed with every appearance of truth that no man did evil, and that wilful murder, arson, cruelty to the innocent and the weak, and deliberate fraud were of no more disadvantage to the general state, or to men single, than the drinking of a cup of cold water.

So things proceeded until one day, when all custom and authority had fallen into this really lamentable deliquescence, fleets were observed upon the sea, manned by men-at-arms, the admiral of which sent a short message to the Archon proposing that the people of the country should send to him and his one-half of their yearly wealth for ever, “or,” so the message proceeded, “take the consequences.” Upon the Archon communicating this to the people there arose at once an infinity of babble, some saying one thing and some another, some proposing to

## On Something

pay neighbouring savages to come in and fight the invaders, others saying it would be cheaper to compromise with a large sum, but the most part agreeing that the wisest thing would be for the Archon and his great-aunt to go out to the fleet in a little boat and persuade the enemy's admiral (as they could surely easily do) that while most human acts were of doubtful responsibility and not really wicked, yet the invasion, and, above all, the impoverishment of the Nepioi was so foul a wrong as would certainly call down upon its fiendish perpetrator the fires of heaven.

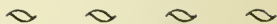
While the Archon and his great-aunt were rowing out in the little boat a few doddering old men and superstitious females slunk off to consult the bronze tablets, and there found under Schedule XII these words: "If an enemy threaten the State, you shall arm and repel him." In their superstition the poor old chaps, with their half-daft female devotees accompanying them, tottered back to the crowds to persuade them to some ridiculous fanaticism or other, based on no better authority than the non-existent Melek and his absurd and exploded authority.

Judge of their horror when, as they neared the city, they saw from the height whereon the temple stood that the invaders had landed, and, having put to the sword all the inhabitants with-

## The Tree of Knowledge

out exception, were proceeding to make an inventory of the goods and to settle the place as conquerors. The admiral summoned this remnant of the nation, and hearing what they had to say treated them with the greatest courtesy and kindness and pensioned them off for their remaining years, during which period they so instructed him and his fighting men in the mysteries of their religion as quite to convert them, and in a sense to found the Nepioian State over again ; but it should be mentioned that the admiral, by way of precaution, changed that part of the religion which related to the tomb of Melek and situated the shrine in the very centre of the crater of an active volcano in the neighbourhood, which by night and day, at every season of the year, belched forth molten rock so that none could approach it within fifteen miles.

## A Norfolk Man



**A**MONG the delights of historical study which makes it so curiously similar to travel, and therefore so fatally attractive to men who cannot afford it, is the element of discovery and surprise: notably in little details.

When in travel one goes along a way one has never been before one often comes upon something odd, which one could not dream was there: for instance, once I was in a room in a little house in the south and thought there must be machinery somewhere from the noise I heard, until a man in the house quietly lifted up a trapdoor in the floor, and there, running under and through the house a long way below, was a river: the River Garonne.

It is the same way in historical study. You come upon the most extraordinary things: little things, but things whose unexpectedness is enormous. I had an example of this the other day, as I was looking up some last details to make certain of the affair of Vahny.

Most people have heard of the French Revolution, and many people have heard of the battle of Valmy, which decided the first fate of that



## A Norfolk Man

movement, when it was first threatened by war. But very few people have read about Valmy, so it is necessary to give some idea of the action to understand the astonishing little thing attaching to it which I am about to describe.

The cannonade of Valmy was exchanged between a French Army with its back to a range of hills and a Prussian Army about a mile away over against them. It was as though the French Army had stretched from Leatherhead to Epsom and had engaged in a cannonade with a Prussian Army lying over against them in a position astraddle of the road to Kingston.

Through this range of hills at the back of the French Army lay a gap, just as there is a gap through the hills behind Leatherhead. Not only was that gap easily passable by an army—easily, at least, compared with the hill country on either side—but it had running through it the great road from Metz to Paris, so that advance along it was rapid and practicable.

It so happened that another force of the enemy besides that which was cannonading the French in front was advancing through this gap from behind, and it is evident that if this second force of the enemy had been able to get through the gap it would have been all up with the French. Dumouriez, who commanded the French, saw this well enough; he had ordered the gap to

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be strongly fortified and well gunned and a camp to be formed there, largely made up of Volunteers and Irregulars. On the proper conduct of that post depended everything: and here comes the fun. The commander of the post was not what you might expect, a Frenchman of any one of the French types with which the Revolution has made us familiar: contrariwise, he was an elderly private gentleman from the county of Norfolk.

His name was Money. The little that is known about him is entertaining to a degree. His own words prove him to be like the person in the song, "a very honest man," and luckily for us he has left in a book a record of the day (and subsequent actions) stamped vividly with his own character. John Money: called by his neighbours General John Money, not, as you might expect, General Money: a man devoted to the noble profession of arms and also eaten up with a passion for ballooning.

I find it difficult to believe that he was first in action at the age of nine years or that he held King George's commission as a Cornet at the age of ten. He does not tell us so himself nor do any of his friends. The surmise is that of our Universities, and it is worthy of them. Clap on ten years and you are nearer the mark. At any rate he was under fire in 1761, and he was a Cornet in 1762; a Cornet in the Inniskilling

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Dragoons with a commission dated on the 11th of March of that year. Then he transformed himself into a Linesman, got his company in the 9th Foot eight years later, and eight years later again, at the outbreak of the American War, he was a major. He was quarter-master-general under Burgoyne, he was taken prisoner—I think at Saratoga, but anyhow during that disastrous advance upon the Hudson Valley. He got his lieutenant-colonelcy towards the end of the war. He retired from the Army and never saw active service again. When the Low Countries revolted against Austria he offered his services to the insurgents and was accepted, but the truly entertaining chapter of his adventures begins when he suggested himself to the French Government as a very proper and likely man to command a brigade on the outbreak of the great war with the Empire and with Prussia.

Very beautifully does he tell us in his preface what moved him to that act. "Colonel Money," he says, in the quiet third person of a self-respecting Norfolk gentleman, "does not mean to assign any other reason for serving the armies of France than that he loves his profession and went there merely to improve himself in it." Spoken like Othello!

He dedicates the book, by the way, to the Marquis Townshend, and carefully adds that he

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has not got permission to dedicate it to that exalted nobleman, nay, that he fears that he would not get permission if he asked for it. But Lord Townshend is such a rattling good soldier that Colonel Money is quite sure he will want to hear all about the war. On which account he has this book so dedicated and printed by E. Harlow, bookseller to Her Majesty, in Pall Mall.

Before beginning his narrative the excellent fellow pathetically says, that as there was no war a little time before, nor apparently any likelihood of one, "Colonel Money once intended to serve the Turks"; from this horrid fate a Christian Providence delivered him, and sent him to the defence of Gaul.

His commission was dated on the 19th of July, 1792; Marshal of the Camps, that is, virtually, brigadier-general. He is very proud of it, and he gives it in full. It ends up "Given in the year of Grace 1792 of our Reign the 19th and Liberty the 4th. Louis." The phrase, in accompaniment with the signature and the date, is not without irony.

Colonel Money could never stomach certain traits in the French people.

Before he left Paris for his command on the frontier he was witness to the fighting when the Palace was stormed by the populace, and he is our authority for the fact that the 5th Battalion

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of Paris Volunteers stationed in the Champs Elysées helped to massacre the Swiss Guard.

“The lieutenant-colonel of this battalion,” writes honest John Money, “who was under my command during part of the campaign, related to me the circumstances of this murder, and apparently with pleasure. He said: ‘That the unhappy men implored mercy, but,’ added he, ‘we did not regard this. We put them all to death, and our men cut off most of their heads and fixed them on their bayonets.’”

Colonel or, as he then was, General Money disapproves of this.

He also disapproves of the officer in command of the Marseillaise, and says he was a “Tyger.” It seems that the “Tyger” was dining with Théroigne de Méricourt and three English gentlemen in the very hotel where Money was stopping, and it occurs to him that they might have broken in from their drunken revels next door and treated him unfriendly.

Then he goes to the frontier, and after a good deal of complaint that he has not been given his proper command he finds himself at the head of that very important post which was the saving of the Army of Valmy.

Dumouriez, who always talked to him in English (for English was more widely known abroad then than it is now, at least among gentlemen), had a very great opinion of Money; but he

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deplores the fact that Money's address to his soldiery was couched "in a jargon which they could not even begin to understand." Money does not tell us that in his account of the fighting, but he does tell us some very interesting things, which reveal him as a man at once energetic and exceedingly simple. He left the guns to Galbaud, remarking that no one but a gunner could attend to that sort of thing, which was sound sense; but the Volunteers, the Line, and the Cavalry he looked after himself, and when the first attack was made he gave the order to fire from the batteries. Just as they were blazing away Dillon, who was far off but his superior, sent word to the batteries to cease firing. Why, nobody knows. At any rate the orderly galloped up and told Money that those were Dillon's orders. On which Money very charmingly writes:

"I told him to go back and tell General Dillon that I commanded there, and that whilst the enemy fired shot and shell on me I should continue to fire back on them." A sentence that warms the heart. Having thus delivered himself to the orderly, he began pacing up and down the parapet "to let my men see that there was not much to be apprehended from a cannonade."

You may if you will make a little picture of this to yourselves. A great herd of volunteers, some of whom had never been under fire, the

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rest of whom had bolted miserably at Verdun a few days before, men not yet soldiers and almost without discipline: the batteries banging away in the wood behind them, in front of them a long earthwork at which the enemy were lobbing great round lumps of iron and exploding shells, and along the edge of this earthwork an elderly gentleman from Norfolk, in England, walking up and down undisturbed, occasionally giving orders to his army, and teaching his command a proper contempt for fire.

He adds as another reason why he did not cease fire when he was ordered that "without doubt the troops would have thought there was treason in it, and I had probably been cut in pieces."

He did not understand what had happened at Valmy, though he was so useful in securing the success of that day. All he noted was that after the cannonade Kellermann had fallen back. He rode into St. Ménehould, where Dumouriez's head-quarters were, ran up to the top of the steeple and surveyed the country around the enemy's camp with an enormous telescope, laid a bet at dinner of five to one that the enemy would attack again (they did not do so, and so he lost his bet, but he says nothing about paying it), and then heard that France had been decreed a Republic. His comment on this piece of news is strong but cryptical. "It was surprising," he says, "to see what an effect this news had on the Army."

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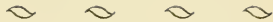
Every sentence betrays the personality: the keen, eccentric character which took to balloons just after the Montgolfiers, and fell with his balloon into the North Sea, wrote his Treatise on the use of such instruments in War, and was never happy unless he was seeing or doing something—preferably under arms. And in every sentence also there is that curious directness of statement which is of such advantage to vivacity in any memoir. Thus of Gobert, who served under him, he has a little footnote: “This unfortunate young man lost his head at the same time General Dillon suffered, and a very amiable young man he was, and an excellent officer.”

He ends his book in a phrase from which I think not a word could be taken nor to which a word could be added without spoiling it. I will quote it in full.

“The reader, I trust, will excuse my having so often departed from the line of my profession in giving my opinion on subjects that are not military” (for instance, his objections to the head-cutting business), “but having had occasion to know the people of France I freely venture to submit my judgments to the public and have the satisfaction to find that they coincide with the opinion of those who know that extraordinary nation *still better than myself.*”



## The Odd People



THE people of Monomotapa, of whom I have written more than once, I have recently revisited; and I confess to an astonishment at the success with which they deal with the various difficulties and problems arising in their social life.

Thus, in most countries the laws of property are complex in the extreme; punishable acts in connexion with them are numerous and often difficult to define.

In Monomotapa the whole thing is settled in a very simple manner: in the first place, instead of strict laws binding men down by written words, they appoint a number of citizens who shall have it in their discretion to decide whether a man's actions are worthy of punishment or no; and these appointed citizens have also the power to assign the punishment, which may vary from a single day's imprisonment to a lifetime. So crimeless is the country, however, that in a population of over thirty millions less than twenty such nominations are necessary; I must, however, admit that these score are aided by several thou-

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sand minor judges who are appointed in a different manner.

Their method of appointment is this: it is discovered as accurately as may be by a man's manner of dress and the hours of his labour and the size of the house he inhabits, whether he have more than a certain yearly revenue; any man discovered to have more than this revenue is immediately appointed to the office of which I speak.

The power of these assessors is limited, however, for though it is left to their discretion whether their fellow-citizens are worthy of punishment or not, yet the total punishment they can inflict is limited to a certain number of years of imprisonment. In old times this sort of minor judge was not appointed in Monomotapa unless he could prove that he kept dogs in great numbers for the purposes of hunting, and at least three horses. But this foolish prejudice has broken down in the progress of modern enlightenment, and, as I have said, the test is now extended to a general consideration of clothes, the size of the house inhabited, and the amount of leisure enjoyed, the type of tobacco smoked, and other equally reasonable indications of judicial capacity.

The men thus chosen to consider the actions of their fellow-citizens in courts of law are

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rewarded in two ways: the first small body who are the more powerful magistrates are given a hundred times the income of an ordinary citizen, for it is claimed that in this way not only are the best men for the purpose obtained, but, further, so large a salary makes all temptation to bribery impossible and secures a strict impartiality between rich and poor.

The lesser judges, on the other hand, are paid nothing, for it is wisely pointed out that a man who is paid nothing and who volunteers his services to the State will not be the kind of a man who would take a bribe or who would consider social differences in his judgments.

It is further pointed out by the Monomotapans (I think very reasonably) that the kind of man who will give his services for nothing, even in the arduous work of imprisoning his fellow-citizens, will probably be the best man for the job, and does not need to be allured to it by the promise of a great salary. In this way they obtain both kinds of judges, and, oddly enough, each kind speaks, acts, and lives much as does the other.

I must next describe the methods by which this interesting and sensible people secure the ends of their criminal system.

When one of their magistrates has come to the conclusion that on the whole he will have a fellow-citizen imprisoned, that person is handed

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over to the guardianship of certain officials, whose business it is to see that the man does not die during the period for which he is entrusted to them. When some one of the numerous forms of torture which they are permitted to use has the effect of causing death, the official responsible is reprimanded and may even be dismissed. The object indeed of the whole system is to reform and amend the criminal. He is therefore forbidden to speak or to communicate in any way with human beings, and is segregated in a very small room devoid of all ornament, with the exception of one hour a day, during which he is compelled to walk round and round a deep, walled courtyard designed for the purpose of such an exercise. If (as is often the case) after some years of this treatment the criminal shows no signs of mental or moral improvement, he is released; and if he is a man of property, lives unmolested on what he has, and that usually in a quiet and retired way. But if he is devoid of property, the problem is indeed a difficult one, for it is the business of the police to forbid him to work, and they are rewarded if he is found committing any act which the judges or the magistrates are likely to disapprove. In this way even those who have failed to effect reform in their characters during their first term of imprisonment are commonly—if they are poor—re-incar-

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cerated within a short time, so that the system works precisely as it was intended to, giving the maximum amount of reformation to the worst and the hardest characters. I should add that the Monomotapan character is such that in proportion to wealth a man's virtues increase, and it is remarkable that nearly all those who suffer the species of imprisonment I have described are of the poorer classes of society.

Though they are so reasonable, and indeed afford so excellent a model to ourselves in most of their social relations, the people of Monomotapa have, I confess, certain customs which I have never clearly understood, and which my increasing study of them fails to explain to me.

Thus, in matters which, with us, are thought susceptible of positive proof (such as the taste and quality of cooking, or the mental abilities of a fellow-citizen) the Monomotapans establish their judgment in a transcendental or super-rational manner. The cooking in a restaurant or hotel is with them excellent in proportion, not to the taste of the viands subjected to it, but to the rental of the premises. And when a man desires the most delicious food he does not consider where he has tasted such food in the past, but rather the situation and probable rateable value of the eating-house which will provide him with it. Nay, he is willing—if he under-

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stands that that rateable value is high—to pay far more for the same article than he would in a humbler hostelry.

The same super-rational method, as I have called it, applies to the Monomotapan judgment of political ability; for here it is not what a man has said or written, nor whether he has proved himself capable of foreseeing certain events of moment to the State, it is not these characters that determine his political career, but a mixture of other indices, one of which is that his brothers shall be younger than himself, another that when he speaks he shall strike the palm of his open left hand with his clenched right hand in a particular manner by no means commonly or easily acquired; another that he shall not wear at one and the same time a coat which is bifurcated and a hat of hemispherical outline; another that he shall keep silence upon certain types of foreigners who frequent the markets of Monomotapa, and shall even pretend that they are not foreigners but Monomotapans; and this index of statesmanship he must preserve under all circumstances, even when the foreigners in question cannot speak the Monomotapan language.

Some years ago it was required of every statesman that he should, for at least so many times in any one year, extravagantly praise the virtues of these foreign merchants, and par-

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ticularly allude to their intensely unforeign character; but this custom has recently fallen into abeyance, and silence upon the subject is the most that is demanded.

A further social habit of this people which we should find very strange and which I for my part think unaccountable is their habit of judging the excellence of a literary production, not by the sense or even the sound of it, but by the ink in which it is printed and the paper upon which it is impressed. And this applies not only to their letters but also to their foreign information, and on this account they should (one would imagine) obtain but a very distorted view of the world. For if a good printer prints with excellent ink at five shillings a pound, and with beautiful clear type upon the best linen paper, the statement that the British Islands are uninhabited, while another in bad ink and upon flimsy paper and with worn type affirms that they contain over forty million souls, the first impression and not the second would be conveyed to the Monomotapan mind. As a fact, however, they are not misinformed, for this singular frailty of theirs (as I conceive it to be) is moderated by one very wise countervailing mental habit of theirs, which is to believe whatever they hear asserted more than twenty-six times, so that even if the assertion be conveyed to them in bad print and upon

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poor paper, they will believe it if they read it over and over again to the required limits of reiterations.

No people in the world are fonder of animals than this genial race, but here again curious limits to their affection are to be discovered, for while they will tear to pieces some abandoned wretch who beats a llama with a hazel twig for its correction, they will see nothing remarkable in the tearing to pieces of an alpaca goat by dogs specially trained in that exercise.

Generally speaking, the larger an animal is, the warmer is the affection borne it by these people. Fleas and lice are crushed without pity, blackbeetles with more hesitation, small birds are spared entirely, and so on upwards until for calves they have a special legislation to protect and cherish them. At the other end of the scale, microbes are pitilessly exterminated.

Divorce is not common in Monomotapa. But such divorces as take place are very rightly treated differently, according to the wealth of the persons involved. Above a certain scale of wealth divorce is only granted after a lengthy trial in a court of justice; but with the poor it is established by the decree of a magistrate who usually, shortly after pronouncing his sentence, finds an occasion to imprison the innocent party. Moreover, the poor can be divorced in this



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manner, if any magistrate feels inclined to exercise his power, while for the divorce of the rich set conditions are laid down.

I should add that the Monomotapans have no religion; but the tolerance of their Constitution is nowhere better shown than in this particular, for though they themselves regard religion as ridiculous, they will permit its exercise within the State, and even occasionally give high office and emoluments to those who practise it.

We have, indeed, much to learn in this matter of religion from the race whose habits I have discovered and here describe. Nothing, perhaps, has done more to warp our own story than the hide-bound prejudice that a doctrine could not be both false and true at the same time, and the unreasoning certitude, inherited from the bad old days of clerical tyranny, that a thing either was or was not.

No such narrowness troubles the Monomotapan. He will prefer—and very wisely prefer—an opinion that renders him comfortable to one that in any way interferes with his appetites; and if two such opinions contradict each other, he will not fall into a silly casuistry which would attempt to reconcile them: he will quietly accept both, and serve the Higher Purpose with a contented mind.

It is on this account that I have said that the

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Monomotapans regard religion as ridiculous. For *true* religion, indeed (as they phrase it), they have the highest reverence; and true religion consists in following the inclinations of an honest man, that is, oneself; but "religion in the sense of fixed doctrine," as one of their priests explained to me, "is abhorrent to our free commonwealth." Thus such hair-splitting questions as whether God really exists or no, whether it be wrong to kill or to steal, whether we owe any duties to the State, and, if so, what duties, are treated by the honest Monomotapans with the contempt they deserve: they abandon such speculation for the worthy task of enjoying, each man, what his fortune permits him to enjoy.

But, as I have said above, they do not persecute the small minority living in their midst who cling with the tenacity of all starved minds to their fixed ideas; and if a man who professes certitude upon doctrinal matters is useful in other ways, they are very far from refusing his services to the State. I have known more than one, for instance, of this old-fashioned and bigoted lot who, when he offered a sum of money in order to be admitted to the Senate of Monomotapa, found it accepted as readily and cheerfully as though it had been offered by one of the broadest principles and most liberal mind.

Let no one be surprised that I have spoken of

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their priests, for though the Monomotapans regard religion with due contempt, it does not follow that they will take away the livelihood of a very honest class of people who in an older and barbaric state of affairs were employed to maintain the structure of what was then a public worship. The priesthood, therefore, is very justly and properly retained by the Monomotapans, subject only to a few simple duties and to a sacred intonation of voice very distressing to those not accustomed to it. If I am asked in what occupation they are employed, I answer, the wealthier of them in such sports and futilities as attract the wealthy, and the less wealthy in such futilities and sports as the less wealthy customarily enjoy. Nor is it a rigid law among them that the sons of priests should be priests, but only the custom—so far, at least, as I have been able to discover.

Letter of Advice and Apology to a  
Young Burglar      ~      ~      ~      ~

MY DEAR ORMOND,  
Nothing was further from my thoughts. I had imagined you knew me well enough—and, for the matter of that, all your mother's family—to judge me better. Believe me, no conception of blaming your profession entered my mind for a moment. Whether there be such a thing as "property" in the abstract I should leave it to metaphysicians to decide: in practical affairs everything must be judged in its own surroundings.

It was not upon any musty theological whimsy that I wrote; the definition of stealing or "theft"—I care not by what name you call it—is not for practical men to discuss. Nor was I concerned with the ethical discussion of burglary (to give the matter its old legal and technical title); it was lack of judgment, sudden actions due to nothing but impulse, and what I think I may call "the speculative side" of a burglar's life.

You have not, as yet, any great responsibilities. No one is dependent upon you—you have but

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yourself to provide for ; but you must remember that such responsibilities will arrive in their natural course, and that if you form habits of rashness or obstinacy now they will cling to you through life. We are all looking forward to a certain event when Anne is free again ; in plain English, my boy, we know your loyal heart, and we shall bless the union ; but I should feel easier in my mind if I saw you settled into one definite branch of the profession before you undertook the nurture of a family.

Adventure tempts you because you are brave, and something of a poet in you leads you to unusual scenes of action. Well, Youth has a right to its dreams, but beware of letting a dangerous Quixotism spoil your splendid chances.

Take, for example, your breaking into Mr. Cowl's house. You may say Mr. Cowl was not a journalist, but only a reviewer ; the distinction is very thin, but let it pass. You know and I know that the houses of *none* in any way connected with the daily Press should ever be approached. It is plain common sense. The journalist comes home at all hours of the night. His servant (if he keeps one) is often up before he is abed. Do you think to enter such houses unobserved ?

Again, in one capacity or another, the journalist is dealing with our profession all day long. Some he serves and knows as masters ; others he

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is employed in denouncing at about forty-two shillings the 1600 words; others again it is his business to interview and to pacify or cajole in the lobbies of the House—do you think he would not know what you were if he found you in the kitchen with a dark lantern?

There is another peril—I mean that of alienating friends. Mr. Cowl is an Imperialist—of a very unemphatic type: he wears (as you will say) gold spectacles, and has a nervous cough, but he *is* an Imperialist. I never said that it was *wrong* or even *foolish* to alienate such a man. I said that a great and powerful section of opinion thought it a breach of honour in one of Ours to do it. Do not run away with the first impression my words convey. Believe me, I weigh them all.

There has been so much misunderstanding that I hardly know what to choose. Take those watches. I did not say that watches were “a mere distraction.” You have put the words into my mouth. What I said was that watches, especially watches at a Tariff Reform meeting, were not worth the risk. Of course a hatful of watches, such as your Uncle Robert would bring home from fires, or better still, such a load as your poor cousin Charles obtained upon Empire Day last year, has value. But how many gold watches are there, off the platform, at a Tariff Reform meeting? And what possible chance

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have you of getting *on* the platform? Now church and purses, that is another thing, but your mid-Devon adventure was simple folly.

Who is Lord Darrell? I never heard of him! For Heaven's sake don't get caught by a title. Do you know any of the servants? His butler or his secretary? The fellow who catalogues the library is useful. Do recollect that lots of the ornaments in those Mayfair houses are fastened to the wall. That is where your dear father failed over the large Chinese jar in Park Street. . . . Your mother would never forgive me if you were to get into another of your boyish scrapes.

There is another little matter, my dear Ormond, which I wish you to lay to heart very seriously. Now do take an old man's advice and do not get up upon your Quixotic hobby-horse the moment you sniff what it is—for I suppose you have guessed it already. Yes, it is what you feared: I want to urge you to follow your mother's ardent wish and add commission business to your other work. I know very well that young men must dream their dreams, but the world is what it is, and after all there is nothing so very dreadful in the commission side of our profession. You do not come into direct relation with the collectors of curios and church ornaments: there is always an agent to break the crudeness of the connexion. And it is a certain and profitable source

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of income with none of the risks attached to it that the older branches of the profession unfortunately show. Moreover, it affords excellent opportunities for foreign travel, and gives one a special position very difficult to define, but easily appreciable among one's colleagues.

George Burton made to my knowledge three thousand pounds last year in a short season; he got this very large commission without the necessity of breaking into a single public-house; he earned it entirely upon objects taken out of churches upon the Continent, and in only three cases had he to pick a pocket. It would have hurt him very much with his knowledge and tastes to have had to break a stained-glass window.

Do consider this, my dear Ormond, for your mother's sake. Don't think for a moment that I am advising you to take up any of those forms of work which we both agree in despising, and which are quite unworthy of your traditions, as for instance stealing pictures on commission out of the houses of dealers and then turning detective to recover them again. It is much too easy work for a man of your talents, much too ill-paid, and much too dangerous. It is all very well for the picture dealer to leave the door open, but what if the policeman is not in the know? No, you will always find me on your side in your



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steady refusal to have anything to do with this kind of business.

Ormond, my dear lad, bear me no ill-will. It is true of every profession, of the Bar and of the City, of homicide, medicine, the Services, even Politics—everything, that success only comes slowly, and that the experience of older men is the key to it.

To-morrow is Ascension Day, and I am at leisure. Come and dine with me at the Colonial Club at eight for eight-fifteen. I will show you a magnificent little tanagra I picked up yesterday, and we will talk about the new prospectus.

God bless you! (Dress.)

Your affectionate Uncle

## The Monkey Question: An Appeal to Common Sense

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A PRIVILEGED body slips so easily into regarding its privileges as common rights that I fear the plea which the SIMIAN LEAGUE repeats in this pamphlet will still sound strange in the ears of many, though the work of the League has been increasingly successful and has reached yearly a wider circle of the educated public since its foundation by Lady Wayne in 1902. We desire to place before our fellow-citizens the claims of Monkeys, and we hope once more that nothing we say may seem extreme or violent, for we know full well what poor weapons violence and passion are in the debate of a practical political matter.

Perhaps it is best to begin by pointing out how rarely even the best of us pause in our fevered race for wealth to consider the disabilities of any of our fellow-creatures: when that truth is grasped it will be easier to plead the special cause of the Simian.

Were English men and women to realize the wrongs of the Race, or at any rate the illogical

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and therefore unjust position in which we have placed them; were the just and thoughtful men, the refined and golden-hearted ladies who are ready in this country to support every good cause when it is properly presented; were *they* to realize the disabilities of the Monkey, I do not say as vividly they realize the tragedies and misfortunes of London life, they could not, I think, avoid an ill-ease, a pricking of conscience, which would lead at last to some hearty and English effort for the relief of the cousin and forerunner of man.

The attitude adopted towards Monkeys by the mass of those who, after all, live in the same world, and have much the same appetites and necessities and sufferings as they, is an attitude I am persuaded, not of heartlessness, but of ignorance. To disturb that ignorance, and in some to awake a consciousness which, perhaps, they fear, is not a grateful task, but it is our duty, and we will pursue it.

Let the reader consider for one moment the aspect not only of formal law but of the whole community, and of what is called "public opinion" towards this section of sentient beings.

As things now are—aye! and have been for centuries in this green England of ours—a Monkey may not marry; he may not own land; he may not fill any salaried post under the Crown. The Papists themselves are debarred from no

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honour (outside Ireland) save the Lord Chancellorship. Monkeys, who are responsible for no persecutions in the past, whose religion presents no insult or outrage to our common reason, and who differ little from ourselves in their general practice of life and thought, *are debarred from all!*

A Monkey may not be a Member of Parliament, a Civil Servant, an officer in either Service, no, not even in the Territorial Army. It is doubtful whether he may hold a commission for the peace. True, there is no statute upon the subject, and the rural magistracy is perhaps the freest and most open of all our offices, and the least restricted by artificial barriers of examination or test; nevertheless, it is the considered opinion of the best legal authorities that no Monkey could sit upon the Bench, and in any case the discussion is purely academic, for it is difficult to believe that any Lord-Lieutenant, under the ridiculous anachronism of our present Constitution, would nominate a Monkey to such a position—unless (which is by law impossible) he should be heir to an owner of an estate in land.

Nor is this all. The mention of unpaid posts recalls the damning truth that all honorary positions in the Diplomatic Service, including even the purely formal stage in the Foreign Office, are closed to the Monkey; the very Court sinecures, which admittedly require no talents, are denied

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to our Simian fellow-creatures, if not by law at least by custom and in practice.

There have been employed by the League in the British Museum the services of two ladies who feel most keenly upon this subject. They are (to the honour of their sex) as amply qualified as any person in this kingdom for the task which they have undertaken, and they report to the Executive Commission after two months of minute research that (with one doubtful exception occurring during the reign of Her late Majesty) no Monkey has held any position whatever at Court.

All judicial positions are equally inaccessible to them; for though, perhaps, in theory a Monkey could be promoted to the Bench if he had served his party sufficiently long and faithfully in the House of Commons (to which body he is admissible—at least I can find no rule or custom, let alone a statute, against it), yet he is cut off from such an ambition at the very outset by his inadmissibility to a legal career. The Inns of Court are monopolist, and, like all monopolists, hopelessly conservative. They have admitted first one class and then another—though reluctantly—to their privileges, but it will be twenty or thirty years at least before they will give way in the matter of Monkeys. To be a physician, a solicitor, an engineer, or a Com-

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missioner for Oaths is denied them as effectually as though they did not exist. Indeed, no occupation is left them save that of manual labour, and on this I would say a word. It is fashionable to jeer at the Monkey's disinclination to sustained physical effort and to concentrated toil; but it is remarkable that those who affect such a contempt for the Monkey's powers are the first to deny him access to the liberal professions in which they know (though they dare not confess it) he would be a serious rival to the European. As it is, in the few places open to Monkeys—the somewhat parasitical domestic occupation of “companions” and the more manly, but still humiliating, task of acting as assistants to organ-grinders, the Monkey has won universal if grudging praise.

Latterly, since progress cannot be indefinitely delayed, the Monkey has indeed advanced by one poor step towards the civic equality which is his right, and has appeared as an actor upon the boards of our music-halls. It should surely be a sufficient rebuke for those who continue to sneer at the Simian League and such devoted pioneers as Miss Greeley and Lady Wayne that the Monkey has been honourably admitted and has done first-rate work in a profession which His late Gracious Majesty and His late Majesty's late revered mother, Queen Victoria, have seen fit to honour

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by the bestowal of knighthoods, and in one case (where the recipient was childless) of a baronetcy.

The disabilities I have enumerated are by no means exhaustive. A Monkey may not sign or deliver a deed ; he may not serve on a jury ; he may be ill-treated, forsooth, and even killed by some cruel master, and the law will refuse to protect him or to punish his oppressor. He may be subjected to all the by-laws of a tyrannical or fanatical administration, but in preventing such abuses he has no voice. He may not enter our older Universities, at least as the member of a college ; that is, he can only take a degree at Oxford or Cambridge under the implied and wholly unmerited stigma applying to the non-collegiate student. And these iniquities apply not only to the great anthropoids whose strength and grossness we might legitimately fear, but to the most delicately organized types—to the Barbary Ape, the Lemur, and the Ring-tailed Baboon. Finally—and this is the worst feature in the whole matter—a Monkey, by a legal fiction at least as old as the fourteenth century, is not a person in the eye of the law.

We call England a free country, yet at the present day and as you read these lines, *any Monkey found at large may be summarily arrested*. He has no remedy ; no action for assault will lie.

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He is not even allowed to call witnesses in his own defence, or to establish an alibi.

It may be pleaded that these disabilities attach also to the Irish, but we must remember that the Irish are allowed a certain though modified freedom of the Press, and have extended to them the incalculable advantage of sending representatives to Westminster. The Monkey has no such remedies. He may be incarcerated, nay *chained*, yet he cannot sue out a writ for habeas corpus any more than can a British subject in time of war, and worst of all, through the connivance or impotence of the police, cases have been brought forward *and approved* in which Monkeys have been openly bought and sold!

We boast our sense of delicacy, and perhaps rightly, in view of our superiority over other nations in this particular; yet we permit the Monkey to exhibit revolting nakedness, and we hardly heed the omission! It is true that some Monkeys are covered from time to time with little blue coats. A cap is occasionally disdainfully permitted them, and not infrequently they are permitted a pair of leather breeches, through a hole in which the tail is permitted to protrude; but no reasonable man will deny that these garments are regarded in the light of mere ornaments, and rarely fulfil those functions which every decent Englishman requires of clothing.



## The Monkey Question

And now we come to the most important section of our appeal. *What can be done?*

We are a kindly people and we are a just people, but we are also a very conservative people. The fate of all pioneers besets those who attempt to move in this matter. They are jeered at, or, what is worse, neglected. One of the most prominent of the League's workers has been certified a lunatic by an authority whose bitter prejudice is well known, and against whom we have as yet had no grant of a *mandamus*, and we have all noticed the quiet contempt, the sort of organized boycott or conspiracy of silence with which a company at dinner will receive the subject when it is brought forward.

There are also to be met the violent prejudices with which the mass of the population is still filled in this regard. These prejudices are, of course, more common among the uneducated poor than in the upper classes, who in various relations come more often in contact with Monkeys, and who also have a wider and more tolerant, because a better cultivated, spirit. But the prejudice is discernible in every class of society, even in the very highest. We have also arrayed against us in our crusade for right and justice the dying but still formidable power of clericalism. Society is but half emancipated from its medieval trammels, and the priest, that

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Eternal Enemy of Liberty, can still put in his evil word against the rights of the Simian.

Let us not despair! We can hope for nothing, it is true, until we have effected a profound change in public opinion, and that change cannot be effected by laws. It can only be brought about by a slow and almost imperceptible effort, unsleeping, tireless, and convinced: something of the same sort as has destroyed the power of militarism upon the Continent of Europe; something of the same sort as has scotched landlordism at home; something of the same sort as has freed the unhappy natives of the Congo from the misrule of depraved foreigners; something of the same sort as has produced the great wave in favour of temperance through the length and breadth of this land.

We must not attempt extremes or demand full justice to the exclusion of excellent half-measures. No one condemns more strongly than do we the militant pro-Simians who have twice assaulted and once blinded for life a keeper in the Zoological Gardens. We do not even approve of those ardent but in our opinion misguided spirits of the Simian Freedom Society who publish side by side the photographs of Pongo the learned Ape from the Gaboons and that of a certain Cabinet Minister, accompanied by the legend "Which is Which?" It is not by actions of this kind that

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we shall win the good fight; but rather by a perseverance in reason combined with courtesy shall we attain our end, until at long last our Brother shall be free! As for the excellent but somewhat provincial reactionaries who still object to us that the Monkey differs fundamentally from the human race; that he is not possessed of human speech, and so forth, we can afford to smile at their waning authority. Modern science has sufficiently dealt with them; and if any one bring out against the Monkey the obscurantist insult that His Hide is Covered with Hair, we can at once point to innumerable human beings, fully recognized and endowed with civic rights, who, were they carefully examined, would prove in no better case. As to speech, the Monkey communicates in his own way as well or better than do we, and for that matter, if speech is to be the criterion, are we to deny civic rights to the Dumb?

We have it upon the authority of all our greatest scientific men, that there is no substantial difference between the Ape and Man. One of the greatest has said that between himself and his poorer fellow-citizens there was a wider difference than that which separated *them* from the Monkey. H $\ddot{a}$ ckel has testified that while there is a *boundary*, there is no *gulf* between the corps of professors to which he

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belongs and the Chimpanzee. The Gorilla is universally accepted, and if we have won the battle for the Gorilla, the rest will follow.

Tolstoy is with us, Webb is with us, Gorky is with us, Zola and Ferrer were with us and fight for us from their graves. The whole current of modern thought is with us. WE CANNOT FAIL!

### *Questions submitted at the last Election by the Simian League*

1. Are you in favour of removing the present disabilities of Monkeys?

2. Are you in favour of a short Statute which should put adult Monkeys upon the same footing as other subjects of His Majesty as from the 1st of January, 1912? And *would you, if necessary, vote against your party in favour of such a measure?*

3. Are you in favour of the inclusion of Monkeys under the Wild Birds Act?

(A plain reply "Yes" or "No" was to be written by the candidate under each of these questions and forwarded to the Secretary, Mr. Consul, 73 Purbeck Street, W., before the 14th January, 1910. No replies received after that date were admitted. The Simian League, which has agents in every constituency, acted according to the replies received, and treated the lack of reply as a negative. Of 1375 circulars sent, 309 remained unanswered,

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264 were answered in the negative, 201 gave a qualified affirmative, *all the rest (no less than 799) a clear and, in some cases, an enthusiastic adherence to our principles.* It is a sufficient proof of the power of the League and the growth of the cause of justice that in these 799 no less than 515 are members of the present House of Commons.

## The Empire Builder      ~      ~      ~

WE possess in this country a breed of men in whom we feel a pride so loyal, so strong, and so frank that were I to give further expression to it here I should justly be accused of insisting upon a hackneyed theme. These are the Empire Builders, the Men Efficient, the agents whom we cannot but feel—however reluctantly we admit it—to be less strictly bound by the common laws of life than are we lesser ones.

But there is something about these men not hackneyed as a theme, which is their youth. By what process is the great mind developed? Of what sort is the Empire Builder when he is young?

The fellow commonly rises from below: What was his experience there below? In what school was he trained? What accident of fortune, how met, or how surmounted, or how used, produced at last the Man who Can? In *that* inquiry there is food for very deep reflection. It is here that our Masters, whose general motives are so open and so plain, touch upon mystery. That secret power of determining nourishment which is at the base of all organic life has in its own silent way built

## The Empire Builder

up the boyhood and the adolescence which we only know in their maturity.

I will not pretend to a full knowledge of that strange education of the mind which has produced so many similar men for the advancement of the race, but I can point to one example which lately came straight across my vision—an accident, an illumination, a revealing flash of how our time breeds the Great Type. I was acquainted for some hours with the actions of a youth of whose very name I am ignorant, but whose face I am very certain will reappear twenty years hence in a setting of glory, recognized as yet one other of those superb spirits who will do all for England.

The occasion was a pageant—no matter what pageant—a great public pageant which passed through the Strand, and was to be witnessed by hundreds of thousands. Let us call it “The Function.”

Well, I was walking down the Strand three days before this Function was to take place, when when I saw in an empty shop window about twenty-five wooden chairs, arranged in tiers one above the other upon a sloping platform, and lettered from A to Y. In the window was a large notice, very clearly printed, and it was to this effect:

**Why pay fancy prices which must inevitably fall before the Function?  
Seats in this window, commanding a full view of the procession, 5s.**

## On Something

At a little desk in the gangway by which the chairs were approached sat a dark, pale child—I can call him by no other name, so frail and young did he seem—and the delicacy of his complexion led me to wonder perhaps whether he was not one of those whom the climate of England strikes with consumption, and who, in the mysterious providence of our race, wander abroad in search of health and find a Realm. His alertness, however, and the brilliance of his eye; his winning, almost obsequious address, and the hooked clutch of his gestures betrayed an energy that no physical weakness could conquer. He invited me to enter, and begged me to purchase a seat.

I had no need of one, for I had made arrangements to spend the Great Day itself and the next at a small hotel in the extreme north of Sutherlandshire, but I was arrested by the evident mental power of my new acquaintance, and I wasted five shillings in buying the chair marked D.

It was with some difficulty that I could purchase it, so eager was he that I should have the best place; “seeing,” said he, “that they are all one price, and that you may as well benefit by being an early bird.” I noted the strict rectitude which, for all that men ignorant of modern commerce may say, is at the basis of commercial success.



## The Empire Builder

Something so attracted me in the whole business that I was weak enough to take a chair in a tea-shop opposite and watch all day the actions of the Child of Fate.

In less than an hour twenty different people, mainly gentlefolk, had come in and bought places at the sensible price at which he offered them. To each of them he gave a ticket corresponding to the number of the chair. He was courteous to all, and even expansive. He explained the advantage of each particular seat.

So far so good; but, what was more astonishing, in the second hour another twenty came and appeared to purchase; in the third (which was the busiest time of the day) some forty, first and last, must have done business with the Favourite of Fortune. I pondered upon these things very deeply, and went home.

Next morning the attraction which the place had for me drew me as with a magnet, and I went, somewhat stealthily I fear, to the same tea-shop and noticed with the greatest astonishment that the chairs were now not lettered, but numbered, and that the boy was sitting at his little desk with a series of white cards bearing the figures from one to twenty-five. It was very early—not ten o'clock—but the Child was as spruce and neat as he had been in the afternoon of the day before. He bore already that mark

## On Something

of energy combined with neatness which is the stamp of success.

I crossed the road and entered. He recognized me at once (their memory for faces is wonderful), and said cheerfully :

“Your D corresponds to the number 4.”

I thanked him very much, and asked him why he had changed his system of notation. He told me it was because several people had explained to him that they remembered figures more easily than letters. We then talked to each other, agreeing upon the maxims of simplicity and directness which are at the root of all mercantile stability. He told me he required cash from all who bought his chairs; that there was no agreement, no insurance—no “frills,” as he wittily called them.

“It is as simple,” he said, “as buying a pound of tea. I am satisfied, and they are satisfied. As for the risk, it is covered by the low price, and if you ask me how I can let them at so low a price, I will tell you. It is because I have found exactly what was needed and have added nothing more. Moreover, I did not buy the chairs, but hired them.”

I went back to my tea-shop with head bent, murmuring to myself those memorable lines :

We founded many a mighty State,  
Pray God that we may never fail  
From craven fears of being great

(or words to that effect).

## The Empire Builder

That day no less than 153 people did business with the Youth.

Next day I found among my morning letters a note from a politician of my acquaintance, telling me that the Function was postponed—indefinitely. I wasted not a moment. I went at once to my post of observation, my tea-shop, and I proceeded to watch the Leader.

There was as yet no knowledge of the calamity in London.

My friend seemed to have noticed me; at any rate a new and somewhat anxious look was apparent on his face. With a firm and decided step I crossed the road to greet him, and when he saw me he was all at his ease. He told me that my seat had been especially asked for, and that a higher price had been offered; but a bargain, he said, was a bargain, and so we fell to chatting. When I mentioned, among other subjects, the very great success of his enterprise, he gave a slight start, which did honour to his heart; but he was of too stern a mould to give way. He was of the temper of the Pioneers.

I assured him at once that it was very far from my intention to reproach him for the talents which he had used with so much ability and energy. I pointed out to him that even if I desired to injure him, which I did not, it would be impossible for me, or for any one, to trace

## On Something

more than half a dozen, at the most, of his numerous clients.

It is frequently the case that men of small business capacity will perceive some important element in a commercial problem which escapes the eyes of Genius; and I could see that this simple observation of mine had relieved him almost to tears.

Before he could thank me, a newsboy appeared with a very large placard, upon which was written

“POSTPONED.”

In a moment his mind grasped the whole meaning of that word; but he went out with a steady step, and paid the sixpence which the newsboy demanded. Even in that uncomplaining action, the uncomplaining forfeiture of the comparatively large sum which necessity demanded, one could detect the financial grip which is the true arbiter of the fates of nations. He needed the paper: he did not haggle about the price. He first mastered the exact words of the announcement, and then, looking up at me with a face of paper, he said:

“It is not only postponed, but all this preparation is thrown away.”

I have said that I have no commercial aptitude; I admit that I was puzzled.

## The Empire Builder

“Surely,” said I, “this is exactly what you needed?”

He shook his head, still restraining, by a powerful effort, the natural expression of his grief, and showed me, for all his answer, a railway ticket to Boulogne which he had purchased, and which was available for the night boat on the eve of the Function. I then understood what he meant when he said that all his preparations had been thrown away.

I do not know whether I did right or wrong—I felt myself to be nothing more than a blind instrument in the hands of the superior power which governs the destinies of a people.

“How much did the ticket cost?” said I.

“Thirty shillings,” said he.

I pulled out a sovereign and a half-sovereign from my pocket, and said :

“Here is the money. I have leisure, and I would as soon go to Boulogne as to Sutherlandshire.”

He did not thank me effusively, as might one of the more excitable and less efficient races ; but he grasped my hand and blessed me silently. I then left him.

. . . . .

In the steamer to Boulogne, as I was musing over this strange adventure, a sturdy Anglo-Saxon man, a true son of Drake or Raleigh, came up

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and asked me for my ticket. As I gave it him my eye fell idly upon the price of the ticket. It was twenty-five shillings—but I had saved a directing and creative mind.

If he should come across these lines he will remember me. He is probably in the House of Commons by now. Perhaps he has bought his peerage. Wherever he is I hope he will remember me.

## Caedwalla



**C**AEDWALLA, a prince out of Wales (though some deny it), wandered in the Andredsweald. He was nineteen years of age and his heart was full of anger for wrong that had been done him by men of his own blood. For he was rightfully heir to the throne of the kingdom of Sussex, but he was kept from it by the injustice of men.

A retinue went with him of that sort which will always follow adventure and exile. These, the rich of the seacoast and of the Gwent called broken men; but they loved their Lord. So he went hunting, feeding upon what he slew, and proceeding from steading to steading in the sparse woods of Andred where is sometimes an open heath, and sometimes a mile of oak, and often a clay swamp, and, seen from little lifted knolls of sand where the broom grows and the gorse, the Downs to the south like a wall.

As he so wandered upon one day, he came upon another man of a very different fashion, for Caedwalla would have nothing to do with the Cross of Christ, nor with the customs of the towns, nor with the talk of foreign men. But

## On Something

this man was a bishop wandering, and his name was Wilfrid. He also had his little retinue, and, by an accident of his office or of his exile, he had proceeded to a steading in the heaths and woods of the Weald where also was Caedwalla: so they met. The pride and the bearing of Wilfrid, seeing that he was of a Roman town and an officer of the State, and a bishop to boot, nay, a bishop above bishops, was not the pride Caedwalla loved, and the young man bore himself with another sort of pride, which was that of the mountains and of pagan men. Nevertheless Wilfrid put before him, with Roman rhetoric and with uplifted hands, the story of our Lord, and Caedwalla, keeping his face set during all that recital, could not forbid this story to sink into the depths of his heart, where for many years it remained, and did no more than remain.

The kingdom of Sussex, cultivated by men of various kinds, received Wilfrid the Bishop wherever he went. He did many things that do not here concern me, and his chief work was to make the rich towns of the sea plain and of Chichester and of Lewes and of Arundel, and of the steadings of the Weald, and of the wealden markets also, Christian men; for he showed them that it was a mean thing to go about in a hairy way like pagans, unacquainted with letters, and of imperfect ability in the making of raiment or



## Caedwalla

the getting of victuals. Indeed, as I have written in another place, it was St. Wilfrid who taught the King of Sussex and his men how to catch fish in nets. They revered him everywhere, and when they had given up their shameful barbarism and decently accepted the rules of life and the religion of it, they pressed upon St. Wilfrid that he should found a bishopric, and that it should have a cathedral and a see (all of which things he had explained to them), and he did this on Selsey Bill: but to-day the sea has swallowed all.

Time passed, and the young man Caedwalla, still a very young man in the twenties, came to his own, and he sat on the throne that was rightfully his in Chichester and he ruled all Sussex to its utmost boundaries. And he was king of much more, as history shows, but all the while he proudly refused in his young man's heart the raiment and the manner of the thing which he had hated in his exile, nor would he accept the Latin prayers, nor bow to the name of the Christian God.

Caedwalla, still so young but now a king, thought it shameful that he should rule no more than the empire God had given him, and he was filled with a longing to cross the sea and to conquer new land. Wherefore, whether well or ill advised, he set out to cross the sea and to

## On Something

conquer the Isle of Wight, of which story said that Wight the hero had established his kingdom there in the old time before writing was, and when there were only songs. So Caedwalla and his fighting men, they landed in that island and they fought against the many inhabitants of it, and they subdued it, but in these battles Caedwalla was wounded.

It happened that the King of that island, whose name was Atwald, had two heirs, youths, whom it was pitifully hoped this conqueror would spare, for they fled up the Water to Stoneham; but a monk who served God by the ford of reeds which is near Hampton at the head of the Water, hearing that King Caedwalla (who was recovering of wounds he had had in the war with the men of Wight) had heard of the youths' hiding-place and had determined to kill them, sought the King and begged that at least they might be instructed in the Faith before they died, saying to him: "King, though you are not of the Faith, that is no reason that you should deprive others of such a gift. Let me therefore see that these young men are instructed and baptized, after which you may exercise your cruel will." And Caedwalla assented. These lads, therefore, were taken to a holy place up on Itchen, where they were instructed in the truths and the mysteries of religion. And while this so went forward

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Caedwalla would ask from time to time whether they were yet Christians.

At last they had received all the knowledge the holy men could give them and they were baptized. When they were so received into the fold Caedwalla would wait no longer but had them slain. And it is said that they went to death joyfully, thinking it to be no more than the gate of immortality.

After such deeds Caedwalla still reigned over the kingdom of Sussex and his other kingdoms, nor did he by speech or manner give the rich or poor about him to understand whether anything was passing in his heart. But while they sang Mass in the cathedral of Selsey and while still the new-comers came (now more rarely, for nearly all were enrolled): while the new-comers came, I say, in their last numbers from the remotest parts of the forest ridge, and from the loneliest combes of the Downs to hear of Christ and his cross and his resurrection and the salvation of men, Caedwalla sat in Chichester and consulted his own heart only and was a pagan King. No one else you may say in all the land so kept himself apart.

His youth had been thus spent and he thus ruled, when as his thirtieth year approached he gave forth a decision to his nobles and to his earls and to the Welsh-speaking men and to the

## On Something

seafaring men and to the priests and to all his people. He said: "I will take ship and I will go over the sea to Rome, where I may worship at the tombs of the blessed Apostles, and there I will be baptized. But since I am a king no one but the Pope shall baptize me. I will do penance for my sins. I will lift my eyes to things worthy of a man. I will put behind me what was dear to me, and I will accept that which is to come." And as they could not alter Caedwalla in any of his previous decisions, so they could not alter him in this. But his people gave gladly for the furnishing of his journey, and all the sheep of the Downs and their fleece, and all the wheat in the clay steadings of the Weald, and the little vineyards in the priests' gardens that looked towards the sea, and the fishermen, and every sort in Sussex that sail or plough or clip or tend sheep or reap or forge iron at the hammer ponds, gave of what they had to King Caedwalla, so that he went forth with a good retinne and many provisions upon his journey to the tombs of the Apostles.

When King Caedwalla came to Rome the Pope received him and said: "I hear that you would be instructed in the Faith." To which King Caedwalla answered that such was his desire, and that he would crave baptism at the hands of the said Pope. And meanwhile Caedwalla took up

## Caedwalla

good lodgings in Rome, gave money to the poor, and showed himself abroad as one who had come from the ends of the earth, that is, from the kingdom of Sussex, which in those days was not yet famous. Caedwalla, now being thirty years old and having learnt what one should learn in order to receive baptism, was baptized, and they put a white robe on him which he was to wear for certain days.

King Caedwalla, when he was thus made one with the unity of Christian men, was very glad. But he also said that before he had lost that white robe so given him, death would come and take him (though he was a young man and a warrior), and that not in battle. He was certain it was so.

And so indeed it came about. For within the limit of days during which ritual demanded that the King should wear his white garment, nay, within that same week, he died.

So those boys who had found death at his hands had died after baptism, up on Itchen in the Gwent, when Caedwalla the King had journeyed out of Sussex to conquer and to hold the Wight with his spear and his sword and his shield, and his captains and his armoured men.

Now that you have done reading this story you may think that I have made it up or that it

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is a legend or that it comes out of some storyteller's book. Learn, therefore, that it is plain history, like the battle of Waterloo or the Licensing Bill (differing from the chronicle only in this, that I have put living words into the mouths of men), and be assured that the history of England is a very wonderful thing.

## A Unit of England

ENGLAND has been lucky in its type of subdivision. All over Western Europe the type of subdivision following in the fall of the Empire has been of capital importance in the development of the great nations, but while these have elsewhere been exaggerated to petty kingdoms or diminished to mere townships in Britain, for centuries the counties have formed true and lasting local units, and they have survived with more vigour than the corresponding divisions of the other provinces of Roman Europe.

That accident of the county moulded and sustained local feeling during the generations when local government and local initiative were dying elsewhere; it has preserved a sort of aristocratic independence, the survival of custom, and the differentiation of the State.

It is not necessarily (as many historians unacquainted with Europe as a whole have taken for granted) a supreme advantage for any people to escape from institution of a strong central executive. Such a power is the normal fruit of all high civilizations. It protects the weak

## On Something

against the strong. It is necessary for rapid action in war, it makes for clarity and method during peace, it secures a minimum for all, and it forbids the illusions and vices of the rich to taint the whole commonwealth.

But though such an escape from strong central government and the substitution for it of a ruling class is not a supreme advantage, it has advantages of its own which every foreign historian of England has recognized, and it is the divisions into counties which, after the change of religion in the sixteenth century, was mainly responsible for the slow substitution of local and oligarchic for general, central, and bureaucratic government in England.

Not all the counties by any means are true to type. All the Welsh divisions, for instance, are more or less artificial and late, with the exception of Anglesey. And as for the non-Roman parts, Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, it goes without saying that the county never was, and is not to this day, a true unit. The central and much of the west of England is the same. That is, the shires are cut as their name implies, somewhat arbitrarily, from the general mass of territory.

When one says "arbitrarily" one does not mean that no local sentiment bound them, or that they had not some natural basis, for they had. They were the territory of central towns:



## A Unit of England

Shrewsbury, Warwick, Derby, Chester, Oxford, Buckingham, Bedford, Nottingham. But their life was not and has not since been strongly individual. They have not continuous boundaries nor an early national root. But all round these, in a sort of ring, run the counties which have had true local life from the beginning. Cornwall is utterly different from Devon, and with a clear historic reason for the difference. Devon, again, is a perfectly separate unit, resulting from a definite political act of the early ninth century. Of Dorset and Hampshire one can say less, but with Sussex you get a unit which has been one kingdom and one diocese, set in true natural limits and lying within these same boundaries for much more than a thousand years. Kent, probably an original Roman division, has been one unit for longer still. Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex are equally old, though not upon their land boundaries equally defined; but perhaps the most sharply defined of all—after Sussex, at least—was Southern and Central Lancashire.

Its topography was like one of those ideal examples which military instructors take for their models when they wish to simplify a lesson upon terrain. Upon one side ran the long, high, and difficult range which is the backbone of England; upon the other the sea, and the sea and the mountains leant one towards the other,

## On Something

making two sides of a triangle that met above Morecambe Bay.

How formidable the natural barriers of this triangle were it is not easy for the student of our time to recognize. It needs a general survey of the past, and a knowledge of many unfamiliar conditions in the present, to appreciate it.

The difficulty of those Eastern moors and hills, for instance, the resistance they offer to human passage, meets you continually throughout English history. The engineers of the modern railways could give one a whole romance of it; the story of every army that has had to cross them, and of which we have record, bears the same witness. The illusion which the modern traveller may be under that the barrier is negligible is very soon dispelled when for his recreation he crosses it by any other methods than the railway; and perhaps in such an experience of travel nothing more impresses one in the character of that barrier than the *loneliness*.

There is no other corresponding contrast of men and emptiness that I know of in Europe.

The great towns lie, enormous, pullulating, millioned in the plains on either side; they push their limbs up far into the valleys. Between them, utterly deserted, you have these miles and miles of bare upland, like the roof of a house between two crowded streets.

## A Unit of England ·

Merely to cross the Pennines, driving or on foot, is sufficient to teach one this. To go the length of the hills along the watershed from the Peak to Crossfell (few people have done it!) is to get an impression of desertion and separation which you will match nowhere else in travel—nowhere else, at least, within touch and almost hearing of great towns.

The sea also was here more of a barrier than a bond. Ireland—not Roman, and later an enemy—lay over against that shore. Its ports (save one) silted. Its slope from the shore was shallow: the approach and the beaching of a fleet not easy. Its river mouths were few and dangerous.

This triangle of Lancashire, so cut off from the west and from the east, had for its base a barrier that completed its isolation. That barrier was the marshy valley of the Mersey. It could be outflanked only at its extreme eastern point, where the valley rises to the hundred-foot contour line. From that point the valley rises so rapidly within half a dozen miles into the eastern hills that it was dry even under primitive conditions, and the opportunity here afforded for a passage is marked by the topographical point of Stockport.

By that gate the main avenues of approach still enter the county. Through this gap passed the London Road, and passes to-day the London

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and North-Western Railway. It was this gate which gave its early strategic importance to Manchester, lying just north of it and holding the whole of this corner.

Historians have noted that to hold Manchester was ultimately to hold Lancashire itself. It was not the industrial importance of the town, for that was hardly existent until quite modern times: it was its strategic position which gave it such a character. The Roman fort at the junction of the two rivers near Knott Mill represented the first good defensible position commanding this gate upon the south-east.

To enter the county anywhere west of the hundred-foot contour and the Mersey Valley was, for an army deprived of modern methods, impossible: a little organized destruction would make it impossible again.

Two artificial causeways negotiated the valley. Each bears to this day (at Stretford and at Stretton) the proof of its old character, for both words indicate the passage of a "street," that is, of a hard-made way, over the soft and drowned land. Stretford was but the approach to Manchester from Chester—and Manchester thus commanded (by the way) the two south-eastern approaches to the county, the one natural, the other artificial. The approach by Stretton gave Warrington its strategic importance in the early

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history of the county; Warrington, the central point upon the Mersey, standing at a clear day's march from Liverpool, the port on the one hand, and a clear day's march from Manchester on the other. It was from Warrington that Lord Strange marched upon Manchester at the very beginning of the Civil War, and if by some accident this stretch of territory should again be a scene of warfare, Warrington, in spite of the close network of modern communications, would be the strategic centre of the county boundary.

So one might take the units out of which modern England has been built up one by one, showing that their boundaries were fixed by nature, and that their local separation was not the product of the pirate raids, but is something infinitely older, older than the Empire, and very probably (did we know what the Roman divisions of Britain were) accepted under the Empire. So one might prove or at least suggest that the strategical character of the English county and of its chief stronghold and barriers lay in an origin far beyond the limits of recorded history. To produce such a study would be to add to the truth and reality of our history, for England was not made nor even moulded by the Danish and the Saxon raids. The framework is far, far older and so strong that it still survives.

## The Relic



IT was upon an evening in Spain, but with nothing which that word evokes for us in the North—for it was merely a lessening of the light without dews, without mists, and without skies—that I came up a stony valley and saw against the random line of the plateau at its head the dome of a church. The road I travelled was but faintly marked, and was often lost and mingled with the rough boulders and the sand, and in the shallow depression of the valley there were but a few stagnant pools.

The shape of the dome was Italian, and it should have stood in an Italian landscape, drier indeed than that to which Northerners are accustomed, but still surrounded by trees, and with a distance that could render things lightly blue. Instead of that this large building stood in the complete waste which I have already described at such length, which is so appalling and so new to an European from any other province of Europe. As I approached the building I saw that there gathered round it a village, or rather a group of dependent houses; for the church was

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so much larger than anything in the place, and the material of which the church itself and the habitations were built was so similar, the flat old tiled roofs all mixed under the advance of darkness into so united a body, that one would have said, as was perhaps historically the truth, that the church was not built for the needs of the place, but that the borough had grown round the shrine, and had served for little save to house its servants.

When the long ascent was ended and the crest reached, where the head of the valley merged into the upper plain, I passed into the narrow first lanes. It was now quite dark. The darkness had come suddenly, and, to make all things consonant, there was no moon and there were not any stars; clouds had risen of an even and menacing sort, and one could see no heaven. Here and there lights began to show in the houses, but most people were in the street, talking loudly from their doorsteps to each other. They watched me as I came along because I was a foreigner, and I went down till I reached the central market-place, wondering how I should tell the best place for sleep. But long before my choice could be made my thoughts were turned in another direction by finding myself at a turn of the irregular paving, right in front of a vast façade, and behind it, somewhat belittled by the great length of the church itself, the dome just

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showed. I had come to the very steps of the church which had accompanied my thoughts and had been a goal before me during all the last hours of the day.

In the presence of so wonderful a thing I forgot the object of my journey and the immediate care of the moment, and I went through the great doors that opened on the Place. These were carved, and by the little that lingered of the light and the glimmer of the electric light on the neighbouring wall (for there is electric light everywhere in Spain, but it is often of a red heat) I could perceive that these doors were wonderfully carved. Already at Saragossa, and several times during my walking south from thence, I had noted that what the Spaniards did had a strange affinity to the work of Flanders. The two districts differ altogether save in the human character of those who inhabit them: the one is pastoral, full of deep meadows and perpetual woods, of minerals and of coal for modern energy, of harbours and good tidal rivers for the industry of the Middle Ages; the other is a desert land, far up in the sky, with an air like a knife, and a complete absence of the creative sense in nature about one. Yet in both the creation of man runs riot; in both there is a sort of endlessness of imagination; in both every detail that man achieves in art is carefully com-



## The Relic

pleted and different from its neighbour; and in both there is an exuberance of the human soul: but with this difference, that something in the Spanish temper has killed the grotesque. Both districts have been mingled in history, yet it is not the Spaniard who has invigorated the Delta of the Rhine and the high country to the south of it, nor the Walloons and the Flemings who have taught the Spaniards; but each of these highly separated peoples resembles the other when it comes to the outward expression of the soul: why, I cannot tell.

Within, there is not a complete darkness, but a series of lights showing against the silence of the blackness of the nave; and in the middle of the nave, like a great funeral thing, was the choir which these Spanish churches have preserved, an intact tradition, from the origins of the Christian Faith. Go to the earliest of the basilicas in Rome, and you will see that sacred enclosure standing in the middle of the edifice and taking up a certain proportion of the whole. We in the North, where the Faith lived uninterruptedly and, after the ninth century, with no great struggle, dwindled this feature and extended the open and popular space, keeping only the rood-screen as a hint of what had once been the Secret Mysteries and the Initiations of our origins. But here in Spain the earliest forms of

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Christian externals crystallized, as it were; they were thrust, like an insult or a challenge, against the Asiatic as the reconquest of the desolated province proceeded; and therefore in every Spanish church you have, side by side with the Christian riot of art, this original hierarchic and secret thing, almost shocking to a Northerner, the choir, the Coro, with high solemn walls shutting out the people from the priests and from the Mysteries as they had been shut out when the whole system was organized for defence against an inimical society around.

The silence of the place was not complete nor, as I have said, was the darkness. At the far end of the choir, behind the high altar, was the light of many candles, and there were people murmuring or whispering, though not at prayers. There was a young priest passing me at that moment, and I said to him in Latin of the common sort that I could speak no Spanish. I asked him if he could speak to me slowly in Latin, as I was speaking to him. He answered me with this word, "*Paucissime*," which I easily understood. I then asked him very carefully, and speaking slowly, whether Benediction were about to be held—an evening rite; but as I did not know the Latin for Benediction, I called it alternately "*Benedictio*," which is English, and "*Salus*," which is French. He said twice, "*Si, si*," which,

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whether it were Italian or French or local, I understood by the nodding of his head ; but at any rate he had not caught my meaning, for when I came behind the high altar where the candles were, and knelt there, I clearly saw that no preparations for Benediction were toward. There was not even an altar. All there was was a pair of cupboard doors, as it were, of very thickly carved wood, very heavily gilded and very old ; indeed, the pattern of the carving was barbaric, and I think it must have dated from that turn of the Dark into the Middle Ages when so much of our Christian work resembled the work of savages : spirals and hideous heads, and serpents and other things.

By this I was already enormously impressed, and by a little group of people around of whom perhaps half were children, when the young priest to whom I had spoken approached and, calling a well-dressed man of the middle class who stood by and who had, I suppose, some local prominence, went up the steps with him towards these wooden doors ; he fitted a key into the lock and opened them wide. The candles shone at once through thick clear glass upon a frame of jewels which flashed wonderfully, and in their midst was the head of a dead man, cut off from the body, leaning somewhat sideways, and changed in a terrible manner from the ex-

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pression of living men. It was so changed, not only by incalculable age, but also, as I presume, by the violence of his death.

To those inexperienced in the practice of such worship there might be more excuse for the novel impression which this sight suddenly produced upon me. Our race from its very beginning, nay, all the races of men, have preserved the fleshly memorials of those to whom sanctity attached, and I have seen such relics in many parts of Europe almost as commonplaces; but for some reason my emotions upon that evening were of a different kind. The length of the way (for I was miles and miles southwards over this desert waste), the ignorance of the language which surrounded me, the inhuman outline hour after hour under the glare of the sun, or in the inhospitable darkness of this hard Iberian land, the sternness of the faces, the violent richness and the magnitude of the architecture about me, and my knowledge of the trials through which the province had passed, put me in this Presence into a mood very different, I think, from that which pilgrimage is calculated to arouse; there was in it much more of awe, and even of terror; there seemed to re-arise in the presence of that distorted face the memories of active pain and of the unconquerable struggle by which this ruined land was recovered. I wondered as I looked at

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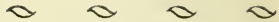
that face whether he had fallen in protest against the Mohammedans, or, as have so many, in a Spanish endurance of torture, martyred by Pagans in the Pacific Seas. But no history of him was given to me, nor do I now know as I write what occasion it was that made this head so great.

They said but a few prayers, all familiar to me, in the Latin tongue; then the "Our Father" and some few others which have always been recited in the vernacular. They next intoned the *Salve Regina*. But what an intonation!

Had I not heard that chant often enough in my life to catch its meaning? I had never heard it set to such a tune! It was harsh, it was full of battle, and the supplication in it throbbed with present and physical agony. Had I cared less for the human beings about me, so much suffering, so much national tradition of suffering would have revolted, as it did indeed appal, me. The chant came to an end, and the three gracious epithets in which it closes were full of wailing, and the children's voices were very high.

Then the priest shut the doors and locked them, and a boy came and blew the candles out one by one, and I went out into the market-place, fuller than ever of Spain.

## The Ironmonger



WHEN I was in the French army we came one day with the guns in July along a straight and dusty road and clattered into the village called Bar-le-Duc. Of the details of such marches I have often written. I wish now to speak of another thing, which, in long accounts of mere rumbling of guns, one might never have time to tell, but which is really the most important of all experiences under arms in France—I mean the older civilians, the fathers.

Who made the French army? Who determined to recover from the defeats and to play once more that determined game which makes up half French history, the “Thesaurization,” the gradual reaccumulation of power? The general answer to such questions is to say: “The nation being beaten had to set to and recover its old position.” That answer is insufficient. It deals in abstractions and it tells you nothing. Plenty of political societies throughout history have sat down under disaster and consented to sink slowly. Many have done worse—they have maintained after sharp warnings the pride of their blind years;

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they have maintained that pride on into the great disasters, and when these came they have sullenly died. France neither consented to sink nor died by being overweening. Some men must have been at work to force their sons into the conscription, to consent to heavy taxation, to be vigilant, accumulative, tenacious, and, as it were, constantly eager. There must have been classes in which, unknown to themselves, the stirp of the nation survived; individuals who, aiming at twenty different things, managed, as a resultant, to carry up the army to the pitch in which I had known it and to lay a slow foundation for recovered vigour. Who were these men?

I had read of them in Birmingham when I was at school; I had read of them in books when I read of the Hundred Years' War and of the Revolution. I was to read of them again in books at Oxford. But on that Saturday at Bar-le-Duc I *saw* one of them, and by as much as the physical impression is worth more than the secondary effect of history, my sight of them is worth writing down.

A man in my battery, one Matthieu, told me he had leave to go out for the evening, and told me also to go and get leave. He said his uncle had asked him to dine and bring a friend. It seemed his uncle lived in a villa on the heights above the town; he was an ironmonger who had

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retired. I went to my Sergeant and asked him for leave.

My Sergeant was a noble who was working his way up through the ranks, and when I found him he was checking off forage at a barn where some of our men were working. He looked me hard in the eyes, and said in a drawling lackadaisical voice :

“ You are the Englishman ? ”

“ Yes, Sergeant,” said I a little anxiously (for I was very keen to get a good dinner in town after all that marching).

“ Well,” said he, “ as you are the Englishman you can go.” Such is the logic of the service.

The army is no place to argue, and I went. I suppose what he meant was, “ As we are both more or less in exile, take my blessing and be off,” but he may merely have meant to be inconsequent, for inconsequence is the wit of schoolboys and soldiers. I went up the hill with my friend.

The long twilight was still broad over the hill and the old houses of Bar-le-Duc, as we climbed. It was night by the clock, but one could have seen to read. We were tired, and talked of nothing in particular, but such things as we said were full of the old refrain of conscripts: “ Dog of a trade,” “ When shall we be out of it ? ” Even as we spoke there was pride in our breasts at the noise of trumpets in the mist below along the



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river and the Eighth making its presence known, and our uniforms and our swords.

We stopped at last before a little square house with "The Lilacs" painted on its gate; there was a parched little lawn, a little fountain, a tripod supporting a globular mirror, and we went in.

Matthieu's uncle met us; he was in a cotton suit walking about among his flowers and enjoying the evening. He was a man of about fifty, short, strong, brown, and abrupt. Though it was already evening and one could see little, we knew well enough that his eyes were steady and dark. For he had the attitude and carriage of those men who invigorate France. His self-confidence was evident in his sturdy legs and his arms akimbo, his vulgarity in his gesture, his narrowness in his forward and peering look, his indomitable energy in every movement of his body. It did not surprise me to learn in his later conversation that he was a Republican. He spoke at once to us both, saying in a kind of grumbling shout:

"Well, gunners!"

Then he spoke roughly to his nephew, telling him we were late: to me a little too politely saying he put no blame on me, but only on his scapegrace of a nephew. I said that our lateness was due to having to find the Sergeant. He answered:

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“One must always put the blame on some one else,” which was rank bad manners.

He led the way into the house. The dining-room gave on to a veranda, and beyond this was another little lawn with trees. In the dark a few insects chirped, and, as the evening was warmish, one smelt the flowers. The windows had been left open. Everything was clean, neat, and bare. On the walls were two excellent old prints, a badly drawn certificate of membership in some society or other, a still worse portrait of a local worthy, and a water-colour painted, I suppose, by his daughter.

He introduced me to his wife, a hard-featured woman, with thin hair, full of duty, busy and precise—fresh from the kitchen. We unhooked our swords with the conventional clatter, and sat down to the meal.

I will confess that as we ate those excellent dishes (they were all excellent) and drank that ordinary wine, I seemed to be living in a book rather than among living men. Here was I, a young English boy, thrust by accident into the French army. Fairly acquainted with its language, though I spoke it with an accent; taken (of course) by my host for a pure Englishman, though half my blood was French. Here was I sitting at his side and watching things, and learning—as for him, men like him, of whom England

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has some few left in forgotten villages, and who are, when they can be found, the strength of a State, *they* never bother about learning anything far removed from their realities.

I noticed the one servant going in and out rapidly, bullied a good deal by her master, deft but nervous. I noticed how everything was solid and good: the chairs, table, clock, clothes—and especially the cooking. I saw his local newspaper neatly folded on the mantelpiece. I saw the pet dog of his retirement crouching at his side, and I heard the chance sayings he threw to his nephew, the maxims granted to youth long ago. I wondered how much that nephew would inherit. I guessed about ten thousand pounds at the least, and twenty at the most. I was almost inclined to cross myself at the thought of such a lot of money.

My host grew more genial: he asked me questions on England. His wife also was interested in that country. They both knew more about it than their class in England knows about France: and this astonished me, for, in the gentry, English gentlemen know more about France than French gentlemen know about England.

He asked me if agriculture were still in a bad way; why we had not more of the people at the Universities; why we allowed only lords into our Parliament, and whether there were more French

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commercial travellers in England than English commercial travellers in France. In all these points I admitted, supplemented, and corrected, and probably distorted his impressions.

He asked me if English gunners were good. I said I did not know, but I thought so. He replied that the English drivers had a high reputation in his country—his brother (the brother of an ironmonger) was a Captain of the Horse Artillery, and had told him so. And this he said to me, who wore a French uniform, but whose heart was away up in Arun Valley, in my own woods, and at rest and alone.

In the last hour when we had to be getting back a certain tenderness came into his somewhat mercenary look. He devoted himself more to his nephew; he took him aside, and, with some ceremony, gave him money. He offered us cigars. We took one each. His round French face became all wrinkles, like a cracked plate. He said:

“Bah! Take them by the pocketful! We know what life is in the regiment,” and he crammed half a dozen each into the pocket of our tunics. But when he said “We know what the life is,” he lied. For he had only been a “mobile” in '70. He had voted, but never suffered, the conscription.

So we said good night to this man, our host,

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who had so regaled us. I may be wrong, but I fancy he was an anti-clerical. He was a hard man, just, eager, and attentive, narrow, as I have said, and unconsciously (as I have also said) building up the nation.

There was the Ironmonger of Bar-le-Duc; and there are hundreds of thousands of the same kind.

## A Force in Gaul    ~    ~    ~    ~

THERE is a force in Gaul which is of prime consequence to all Europe. It has canalized European religion, fixed European law, and latterly launched a renewed political ideal. It is very vigorous to day.

It was this force which made the massacres of September, which overthrew Robespierre, which elected Napoleon. In a more concentrated form, it was this force which combined into so puissant a whole the separate men—not men of genius—who formed the Committee of Public Safety. It is this force which made the Commune, so that to this day no individual can quite tell you what the Commune was driving at. And it is this force which at the present moment so grievously misunderstands and overestimates the strength of the armies which are the rivals of the French; indeed, in that connexion it might truly be said that the peace of Europe is preserved much more by the German knowledge of what the French army is, even than by French ignorance of what the German army is.

I say the disadvantages of this force or quality

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in a commonwealth are apparent, for the weakness and disadvantages of something extraneous to ourselves are never difficult to grasp. What is of more moment for us is to understand, with whatever difficulty, the strength which such a quality conveys. Not to have understood that strength, nay, not to have appreciated the existence of the force of which I speak, has made nearly all the English histories of France worthless. French turbulence is represented in them as anarchy, and the whole of the great story which has been the central pivot of Western Europe appears as an incongruous series of misfortunes. Even Carlyle, with his astonishing grasp of men and his power of rapid integration from a few details (for he read hardly anything of his subject), never comprehended this force. He could understand a master ordering about a lot of servants; indeed, he would have liked to have been a servant himself, and *was* one to the best of his ability; but he could not understand self-organization from below. Yet upon the existence of that power depends the whole business of the Revolution. Its strength, then, (and principal advantage), lies in the fact that it makes democracy possible at critical moments, even in a large community.

There is no one, or hardly any one, so wicked or so stupid as to deny the democratic ideal.

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There is no one, or hardly any one, so perverted that, were he the member of a small and simple community, he would be content to forgo his natural right to be a full member thereof. There is no one, or hardly any one, who would not feel his exclusion from such rights, among men of his own blood, to be intolerable. But while every one admits the democratic ideal, most men who think and nearly all the wiser of those who think, perceive its one great obstacle to lie in the contrast between the idea and the action where the obstacle of complexity—whether due to varied interests, to separate origins, or even to mere numbers—is present.

The psychology of the multitude is not the psychology of the individual. Ask every man in West Sussex separately whether he would have bread made artificially dearer by Act of Parliament, and you will get an overwhelming majority against such economic action on the part of the State. Treat them collectively, and they will elect—I bargain they will elect for years to come—men pledged to such an action. Or again, look at a crowd when it roars down a street in anger—the sight is unfortunately only too rare to-day—you have the impression of a beast majestic in its courage, terrible in its ferocity, but with something evil about its cruelty and determination. Yet if you stop and consider the



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face of one of its members straggling on one of its outer edges, you will probably see the bewildered face of a poor, uncertain, weak-mouthed man whose eyes are roving from one object to another, and who appears all the weaker because he is under the influence of this collective domination. Or again, consider the jokes which make a great public assembly honestly shake with laughter, and imagine those jokes attempted in a private room! Our tricky politicians know well this difference between the psychologies of the individual and of the multitude. The cleverest of them often suffer in reputation precisely because they know what hopeless arguments and what still more hopeless jests will move collectivities, the individual units of which would never have listened to such humour or to such reasoning.

The larger the community with which one is dealing, the truer this is; so that, when it comes to many millions spread upon a large territory, one may well despair of any machinery which shall give expression to that very real thing which Rousseau called the General Will.

In the presence of such a difficulty most men who are concerned both for the good of their country and for the general order of society incline, especially as they grow older, to one or other of the old traditional organic methods

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by which a State may be expressed and controlled. They incline to an oligarchy such as is here in England where a small group of families, intermarried one with the other, dining together perpetually and perpetually guests in each other's houses, are by a tacit agreement with the populace permitted to direct a nation. Or they incline to the old-fashioned and very stable device of a despotic bureaucracy such as manages to keep Prussia upright, and did until recently support the expansion of Russia.

The evils of such a compromise with a political idea are evident enough. The oligarchy will be luxurious and corporately corrupt, and individually somewhat despicable, with a sort of softness about it in morals and in military affairs. The despot or the bureaucracy will be individually corrupt, especially in the lower branches of the system, and hatefully unfeeling.

"But," (says your thinker, especially as he advances in age) "man is so made that he *cannot* otherwise be collectively governed. He cannot collectively be the master, or at any rate permanently the master of his collective destiny, whatever power his reason and free will give him over his individual fate. The nation" (says he), "especially the large nation, certainly has a Will, but it cannot directly express that Will. And if it attempts to do so, whatever

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machinery it chooses—even the referendum—will but create a gross mechanical parody of that subtle organic thing, the National soul. The oligarchy or the bureaucracy” (he will maintain, and usually maintain justly) “inherit, convey, and maintain the national spirit more truly than would an attempted democratic system.”

General history, even the general history of Western Europe, is upon the whole on the side of such a criticism. Andorra is a perfect democracy, and has been a perfect democracy for at least a thousand years, perhaps since first men inhabited that isolated valley. But there is no great State which has maintained even for three generations a democratic system undisturbed.

Now it is peculiar to the French among the great and independent nations, that they *are* capable, by some freak in their development, of rapid *communal* self-expression. It is, I repeat, only in crises that this power appears. But such as it is, it plays a part much more real and much more expressive of the collective will than does the more ordinary organization of other peoples.

Those who attacked the Tuileries upon the 10th of August acted in a manner entirely spontaneous, and succeeded. The arrest of the Royal Family at Varennes was not the action of one individual or of two ; it was not Drouet nor

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was it the Saulce family. It was a great number of individuals (the King had been recognized all along the journey), each thinking the same thing under the tension of a particular episode, each vaguely tending to one kind of action and tending with increasing energy towards that action, and all combining, as it were, upon that culminating point in the long journey which was reached at the archway of the little town in Argonne.

To have expressed and portrayed this common national power has been the saving of the principal French historians, notably of Michelet. It has furnished them with the key by which alone the history of their country could be made plain. Nothing is easier than to ridicule or deny so mystical a thing. Taine, by temperament intensely anti-national, ridiculed it as he ridiculed the mysteries of the Faith; but with this consequence, that his denial made it impossible for him to write the history of his country, and compelled him throughout his work, but especially in his history of the Revolution, to perpetual, and at last to somewhat crude, forms of falsehood.

Not to recognize this National force has, again, led men into another error: they will have it that the great common actions of Frenchmen are due to some occult force or to a master. They will explain the Crusades by the cunning organiza-

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tion of the Papacy; the French Revolution by the cunning organization of the Masonic lodges; the Napoleonic episode by the individual cunning and plan of Bonaparte. Such explanations are peurile.

The blow of 1870 was perhaps the most severe which any modern nation has endured. By some accident it did not terminate the activity of the French nation. The Southern States of America remain under the effect of the Civil War. All that is not Prussian in Germany remains prostrate—especially in ideas—under the effect of the Prussian victory over it. The French but barely escaped a similarly permanent dissolution of national character: but they did escape it; and the national mark, the power of spontaneous and collective action, after a few years' check, began to emerge.

Upon two occasions an attempt was made towards such action. The first was in the time of Boulanger, the second during the Dreyfus business. In both cases the nation instinctively saw, or rather felt, its enemy. In both there was a moment when the cosmopolitan financier stood in physical peril of his life. Neither, however, matured; in neither did the people finally move.

Latterly several partial risings have marked French life. Why none of them should have

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culminated I will consider in a moment. Meanwhile, the foreign observer will do well to note the character of these movements, abortive though they were. It is like standing upon the edge of a crater and watching the heave and swell of the vast energies below. There may have been no actual eruption for some time, but the activities of the volcano and its nature are certain to you as you gaze. The few days that passed two years ago in Herault are an example.

No one who is concerned for the immediate future of Europe should neglect the omen: half a million men, with leaders chosen rapidly by themselves, converging without disaster, with ample commissariat, with precision and rapidity upon one spot: a common action decided upon, and that action most calculated to defeat the enemy; decided upon by men of no exceptional power, mere mouthpieces of this vast concourse: similar and exactly parallel decisions over the whole countryside from the great towns to the tiny mountain villages. It is the spirit of a swarm of bees. One incident in the affair was the most characteristic of it all: fearing they would be ordered to fire on men of their own district the private soldiers and corporals of the 17th of the Line mutinied. So far so good: mutinies are common in all actively military

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states—the exceptional thing was what followed. The men organized themselves without a single officer or non-commissioned officer, equipped themselves for a full day's march to the capital of the province, achieved it in good order, and took quarters in the town. All that exact movement was spontaneous. It explains the Marshals of the Empire. These were sent off as a punishment to the edge of the African desert; the mutiny seemed to the moneydealers a proof of military defeat. They erred: these young men, some of them of but six months' training, none of them of much more than two years, not one of them over twenty-five years of age, were a precise symbol of the power which made the Revolution and its victims. The reappearance of that power in our tranquil modern affairs seems to me of capital importance.

One should end by asking one's self, "Will these unfinished movements breed a finished movement at last? Will Gaul move to some final purpose in our time, and if so, against what, with what an object and in what a manner?"

Prophecy is vain, but it is entertaining, and I will prophesy that Gaul will move in our time, and that the movement will be directed against the pestilent humbug of the parliamentary system.

For forty years this force in the nation of which I speak, though so frequently stirred, has not

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achieved its purpose. But in nearly every case, directly or indirectly, the thing against which it moved was the Parliament. It would be too lengthy a matter to discuss here why the representative system has sunk to be what it is in modern Europe. It was the glory of the Middle Ages, it was a great vital institution of Christendom, sprung from the monastic institution that preceded it, a true and living power first in Spain, where Christendom was at its most acute activity in the struggle against Asia, then in the north-west, in England and in France. And indeed, in one form or another, throughout all the old limits of the Empire. It died, its fossil was preserved in one or two small and obscure communities, its ancient rules and form were captured by the English squires and merchants, and it was maintained, a curious but vigorous survival, in this country. When the Revolution in 1789 began the revival of democracy in the great nations the old representative scheme of the French, a very perfect one, was artificially resurrected, based upon the old doctrine of universal suffrage and upon a direct mandate. It was logical, it ought to have worked, but in barely a hundred years it has failed.

There is an instructive little anecdote upon the occupation of Rome in 1870.

When the French garrison was withdrawn and



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the Northern Italians had occupied the city, representative machinery was set to work, nominally to discover whether the change in Government were popular or no. A tiny handful of votes was recorded in the negative, let us say forty-three.

Later, in the early winter of that same year, a great festival of the Church was celebrated in the Basilica of St. Peter and at the tombs of the Apostles. The huge church was crowded, many were even pressed outside the doors. When the ceremony was over the dense mass that streamed out into the darkness took up the cry, the irony of which filled the night air of the Trastevere and its slums of sovereign citizens. The cry was this :

“We are the Forty-three !”

It is an anecdote that applies continually to the modern representative system in every country which has the misfortune to support it. No one needs to be reminded of such a truth. We know in England how the one strong feeling in the elections of 1906 was the desire to get at the South African Jews and sweep away their Chinese labour from under them.

The politicians and the party hacks put into power by that popular determination went straight to the South African Jews, hat in hand, asked them what was their good pleasure in the

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matter, and framed a scheme in connivance with them, by which no vengeance should be taken and not a penny of theirs should be imperilled.

In modern France the chances of escape from the parliamentary game, tawdry at its best, at its worst a social peril, are much greater than in this country. The names and forms of the thing are not of ancient institution. There is therefore no opportunity for bamboozling people with a sham continuity, or of mixing up the interests of the party hacks with the instinct of patriotism. Moreover, in modern France the parliamentary system happened to come up vitally against the domestic habits of the people earlier and more violently than it has yet done in this country. The little gang which had captured the machine was violently anti-Christian ; it proceeded step by step to the destruction of the Church, until at the end of 1905 the crisis had taken this form. The Church was disestablished, its endowments were cancelled, the housing of its hierarchy, its churches and its cathedrals and their furniture were, further, to be taken from it unless it adopted a Presbyterian form of government which could not but have cankered it and which was the very negative of its spirit. So far nothing that the Parliament had done really touched the lives of the people. Even the proposal to put the remaining goods of the Church under Presbyterian

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management was a matter for the theologians and not for them. Not one man in a hundred knew or cared about the business. The critical date approached (the 11th of December, if I remember rightly). Rome was to accept the anti-Catholic scheme of government or all the churches were to be shut. Rome refused the scheme, and Parliament, faced for once with a reality and brought under the necessity of really interfering with the popular life or of capitulating, capitulated.

What has that example to do, you may ask, with that movement in the south of France, which is the text of these pages? The answer is as follows:

In the south of France the one main thing actually touching the lives of the people, after their religion (which the complete breakdown of the anti-clerical threat had secured), was the sale of their principal manufacture. This sale was rendered difficult from a number of reasons, one of which, perhaps not the chief, but the most apparent and the most easily remediable, was the adulteration and fraud existing in the trade. Such adulteration and fraud are common to all the trade of our own time. It was winked at by the gang in power in France, just as similar dirty work is winked at by the gang in power in every other parliamentary country. When the peasants

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who had suffered so severely by this commercial corruption of our time asked that it should be put a stop to, the old reply, which has done duty half a million times in every case of corruption in France, England, or America for a generation, was given to them: "If you desire a policy to be effected, elect men who will effect it." As a fact, these four departments had elected a group of men, of whom Laferre, the Grand Master of the Freemasons, is a good type, with his absorbing interest in the destruction of Christianity, and his ignorance and ineptitude in any other field than that of theology.

The peasants replied to this sophistry, which had done duty so often and had been successful so often in their case as in others, by calling upon their Deputies to resign. Laferre neglected to do so. He was too greatly occupied with his opportunity. He went down to "address his constituents." They chased him for miles. And in that exhilarating episode it was apparent that the peasants of the Aude had discovered in their simple fashion both where the representative system was at fault and by what methods it may be remedied.

## On Bridges ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**S**TAND on the side of a stream and consider two things: the imbecility of your private nature and the genius of your common kind.

For you cannot cross the stream, you—Individual you; but Man (from whence you come) has found out an art for crossing it. This art is the building of bridges. And hence man in the general may properly be called Pontifex, or “The Bridge Builder”; and his symbolic summits of office will carry some such title.

Here I will confess (Individual) that I am tempted to leave you by the side of the stream, to swim it if you can, to drown if you can't, or to go back home and be eaten out with your desire for the ulterior shore, while I digress upon that word Pontifex, which, note you, is not only a name over a shop as “Henry Pontifex, Italian Warehouseman,” or “Pontifex Brothers, Barbers,” but a true key-word breeding ideas and making one consider the greatness of man, or rather the greatness of what made him.

For man builds bridges over streams, and he has built bridges more or less stable between

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mind and mind (a difficult art!), having designed letters for that purpose, which are his instrument; and man builds by prayer a bridge between himself and God; man also builds bridges which unite him with Beauty all about.

Thus he paints and draws and makes statues, and builds for beauty as well as for shelter from the weather. And man builds bridges between knowledge and knowledge, co-ordinating one thing that he knows with another thing that he knows, and putting a bridge from each to each. And man is for ever building—but he has never yet completed, nor ever will—that bridge they call philosophy, which is to explain himself in relation to that whence he came. I say, when his skeleton is put in the Museum properly labelled, it shall be labelled not *Homo Sapiens*, but *Homo Pontifex*; hence also the anthem, or rather the choral response, "*Pontificem habemus*," which is sung so nobly by pontifical great choirs, when pontifications are pontificated, as behooves the court of a Pontiff.

Nevertheless (Individual) I will not leave you there, for I have pity on you, and I will explain to you the nature of bridges. By a bridge was man's first worry overcome. For note you, there is no worry so considerable as to wail by impassable streams (as Swinburne has it). It is the proper occupation of the less fortunate dead.

## On Bridges

Believe me, without bridges the world would be very different to you. You take them for granted, you lollop along the road, you cross a bridge. You may be so ungrateful as to forget all about it, but it is an awful thing!

A bridge is a violation of the will of nature and a challenge. "You desired me not to cross," says man to the River God, "but I will." And he does so: not easily. The god had never objected to him that he should swim and wet himself. Nay, when he was swimming the god could drown him at will, but to bridge the stream, nay, to insult it, to leap over it, that was man all over; in a way he knows that the earthly gods are less than himself and that all that he dreads is his inferior, for only that which he reveres and loves can properly claim his allegiance. Nor does he in the long run pay that allegiance save to holiness, or in a lesser way to valour and to worth.

Man cannot build bridges everywhere. They are not multitudinous as are his roads, nor universal as are his pastures and his tillage. He builds from time to time in one rare place and another, and the bridge always remains a sacred thing. Moreover, the bridge is always in peril. The little bridge at Paris which carried the Roman road to the island was swept away continually; and the bridge of Staines that carried

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the Roman road from the great port to London was utterly destroyed.

Bridges have always lived with fear in their hearts; and if you think this is only true of old bridges (Individual), have you forgotten the Tay Bridge with the train upon it? Or the bridge that they were building over the St. Lawrence some little time ago, or the bridge across the Loire where those peasants went to their death on a Sunday only a few months since? Carefully consider these things and remember that the building and the sustaining of a bridge is always a wonderful and therefore a perilous thing.

No bridges more testify to the soul of man than the bridges that leap in one arch from height to height over the gorge of a torrent. Many of these are called the Devil's Bridges with good reason, for they suggest art beyond man's power, and there are two to be crossed and wondered at, one in Wales in the mountains, and another in Switzerland, also in the mountains. There is a third in the mountains at the gate of the Sahara, of the same sort, jumping from rock to rock. But it is not called the Devil's Bridge. It is called with Semitic simplicity "El Kantara," and that is the name the Arabs gave to the old bridges, to the lordly bridges of the Romans, wherever they came across them, for the Arabs were as incapable of



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making bridges as they were of doing anything else except singing love songs and riding about on horses. "Alcantara" is a name all over Spain, and it is in the heart of the capital of Portugal, and it is fixed in the wilds of Estremadura. You get it outside Constantine also where the bridge spans the gulf. Never did an Arab see bridges but he wondered.

Our people also, though they were not of the sort to stand with their mouths open in front of bridges or anything else, felt the mystery of these things. And they put chapels in the middle of them, as you may see at Bale, and at Bradford-upon-Avon, and especially was there one upon old London Bridge, which was dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket, and was very large. And speaking of old London Bridge, every one in London should revere bridges, for a great number of reasons.

In the first place London never would have been London but for London Bridge.

In the second place, bridges enable the people of London to visit the south of the river, which is full of pleasing and extraordinary sights, and in which may be seen, visibly present to the eye, Democracy. If any one doubts this let him take the voyage.

Then again, but for bridges Londoners could not see the river except from the Embankment,

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which is an empty sort of place, or from the windows of hotels. Bridges also permit railways from the south to enter London. If this seems to you a commonplace, visit New York or for ever after hold your peace.

All things have been degraded in our time and have also been multiplied, which is perhaps a condition of degradation; and your simple thing, your bridge, has suffered with the rest. Men have invented all manner of bridges: tubular bridges, suspension bridges, cantilever bridges, swing bridges, pontoon bridges, and the bridge called the Russian Bridge, which is intolerable; but they have not been able to do with the bridge what they have done with some other things: they have not been able to destroy it; it is still a bridge, still perilous, and still a triumph. The bridge still remains the thing which may go at any moment and yet the thing which, when it remains, remains our oldest monument. There is a bridge over the Euphrates—I forget whether it goes all the way across—which the Romans built. And the oldest thing in the way of bridges in the town of Paris, a thing three hundred years old, was the bridge that stood the late floods best. The bridge will remain a symbol in spite of the engineers.

Look how differently men have treated bridges according to the passing mood of civilization.

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Once they thought it reasonable to tax people who crossed bridges. Now they think it unreasonable. Yet the one course was as reasonable as the other. Once they built houses on bridges, clearly perceiving that there was lack of room for houses, and that there was a housing problem, and that the bridges gave a splendid chance. Now no one dares to build a house upon a bridge, and the one proceeding is as reasonable as the other.

The time has come to talk at random about bridges.

The ugliest bridge in the world runs from Lambeth to the Horseferry Road, and takes the place of the old British trackway which here crossed the Thames. About the middle of it, if you will grope in the mud, you may or may not find the great Seal of England which James II there cast into the flood. If it was fished up again, why then it is not there. The most beautiful bridge in London is Waterloo Bridge; the most historic is London Bridge; and far the most useful Westminster Bridge. The most famous bridge in Italy to tourists is the old bridge at Florence, and the best known from pictures the Bridge of Sighs in Venice. That with the best chance of an eternal fame is the bridge which carries the road from Tizzano to Serchia over the gully of the muddy Apennines, for

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upon the 18th of June, 1901, it was broken down in the middle of the night, and very nearly cost the life of a man who could ill afford it. The place where a bridge is most needed, and is not present, is the Ford of Fornovo. The place where there is most bridge and where it is least needed is the railway bridge at Venice. The bridge that trembles most is the Bridge of Piacenza. The bridge that frightens you most is the Brooklyn Bridge, and the bridge that frightens you least is the bridge in St. James's Park; for even if you are terrified by water in every form, as are too many boastful men, you must know, or can be told, that there is but a dampness of some inches in the sheet below. The longest bridge for boring one is the railway bridge across the Somme to St. Valery, whence Duke William started with a horseshoe mouth and very glum upon his doubtful adventure to invade these shores—but there was no bridge in his time. The shortest bridge is made of a plank, in the village of Loudwater in the county of Bucks, not far from those Chiltern Hundreds which men take in Parliament for the good of their health as a man might take the waters. The most entertaining bridge is the Tower Bridge, which lifts up and splits into two just as you are beginning to cross it, as can be testified by a cloud of witnesses. The broadest bridge is the

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Alexandre III Bridge in Paris, at least it looks the broadest, while the narrowest bridge, without a shadow of doubt, is the bridge that was built by ants in the moon; if the phrase startles you remember it is only in a novel by Wells.

The first elliptical bridge was designed by a monk of Cortona, and the first round one by Adam. . . .

But one might go on indefinitely about bridges and I am heartily tired of them. Let them cross and recross the streams of the world. I for my part will stay upon my own side.

## A Blue Book

I HAVE thought it of some value to contemporary history to preserve the following document, which concerns the discovery and survey of an island in the North Atlantic, which upon its discovery was annexed by the United States in the first moments of their imperial expansion, and was given the name of "Atlantis."

The island, which appears to have been formed by some convulsion of nature, disappeared the year after its discovery, and the report drawn up by the Commissioners is therefore very little known, and has of course no importance in the field of practical finance and administration. But it is a document of the highest and most curious interest as an example of the ideas that guided the policy of the Great Republic at the moment when the survey was undertaken; and English readers in particular will be pleased to note the development and expansion of English methods and of characteristic English points of view and institutions throughout the whole document.

Any one who desires to consult the maps, etc., which I have been unable to reproduce in this

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little volume, must refer to the Record Office at Washington. My only purpose in reprinting these really fascinating pages in such a volume as this is the hope that they may give pleasure to many who would not have had the opportunity to consult them in the public archives where they have hitherto been buried.

A. 2. E. 331 ff.

### REPORT

OF THE THREE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO REPORT UPON THE POTENTIAL RESOURCES, SITUATION, ETC., OF THE NEW ISLAND KNOWN AS "ATLANTIS," RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC AND ANNEXED TO THE REPUBLIC, TOGETHER WITH A RECOMMENDATION ON FUTURE TREATMENT OF SAME.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC.

YOUR HONOUR,

Your Honour's three Commissioners, Joshua Hogg, Abraham Bush and Jack Bimber, being of sound mind, solvent, and in good corporeal health, all citizens of more than five years' standing, and domiciled within the boundaries, frontiers or terms of the Republic, do make oath and say, So Help Them God :—

I. That on the 20th of the month of July,

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being at that time in or about Latitude 45 N. and betwixt and between Longitude 51 W. and 51.10° W., so near as could be made out, the captain of the steamboat "Glory of the Morning Star" (chartered *for this occasion only* by the Government of the Republic, without any damage, precedent or future lien whatsoever), by name James Murphy, of Cork, Ireland, and domiciled within the aforesaid terms, boundaries, etc.,

did in a loud voice at about 4.33 a.m., *Arrival off* when it was already light, cry out *Atlantis*. "That's Hur," or words to that effect.

Your three Commissioners being at that moment in the cabin, state-room or cuddy in the forward part of the ship (see annexed plan), came up on deck and were ordered or enjoined to go below by those having authority on the "Glory of the Morning Star." Your three Commissioners desire individually and collectively to call attention to the fact that this order was obeyed, being given under the Maritime Acts of 1853, and desire also to protest against the indignity offered in their persons to the majesty of the Republic. (See Attorney-General's Plea, Folio 56, M.) At or about 6.30 a.m. of the same day, July 20th, your Commissioners were called upon deck, and there was put at their disposal a boat manned by four sailors, who did thereupon and with all due dispatch row them towards the



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island, at that moment some two miles off the weather bow, that is S.S.W. by S. of the "Glory of the Morning Star." They did then each individually and all collectively land, disembark and set foot upon the Island of Atlantis and take possession thereof in the name of Your Honour and the Republic, displaying at the same time a small flag 19" x 6" in token of the same, which flag was distinctly noted, seen, recorded and witnessed by the undersigned, to which they put their hand and seal, trusting in the guidance of Divine Providence.

JOSHUA HOGG

ABRAHAM BUSH

JACK BIMBER.

II. Your Commissioners proceeded at once to a measurement of the aforesaid island of Atlantis, which they discovered to be of a triangular or three-cornered shape, in *Shape and dimensions* as follows: On the northern face from Cape Providence (q.v.) to Cape Mercy (q.v.), one mile *Island*. one furlong and a bit. On the southwestern face from Cape Mercy (q.v.) to Point Liberty (q.v.), seven furlongs, two roods and a foot. On the south-eastern face, which is the shortest face, from Point Liberty (q.v.) round again to Cape Providence (q.v.), from which we started, something like half a mile, and not

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worth measuring. These dimensions, lines, figures, measurements and plans they do submit to the public office of Record as accurate and done to the best of their ability by the undersigned: So Help Them God. (SEAL.)

III. It will be seen from the above that the island is in shape an Isosceles triangle, as it were, pointing in a north-westerly *Appearance* direction and having a short base and *Struc-* turned to the south-east, contains some *ture of the* 170 acres or half a square mile, and *Island.* is situate in a temperate latitude

suited to the Anglo-Saxon Race. As to material or structure, it is composed of sand (*see its specimens in glass phial*), the said sand being of a yellow colour when dry and inclining to a brown colour where it may be wet by the sea or by rain.

*Springs* IV. There are no springs or rivers and *Rivers.* in the Island.

V. There are no mountains on the Island, but there is in the North a slight hummock some fifteen feet in height. To this hummock we have given (saving your *Hills and* Honour's Reverence) the name of *Mountains.* "Mount Providence" in commemoration of the manifold and evident graces of Providence in permitting us to occupy and develop this new land in the furtherance of true civilization and good government. The hill is at present too

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small to make a feature in the landscape, but we have great hopes that it will grow. (See *Younger* on "The Sand Dunes of Picardy," Vol. II, pp. 199-200.)

VI. The Island is difficult of approach as it slopes up gradually from the sea bottom and the tides are slight. At high water there is no sounding of more than *Harbours*, three fathoms for about a mile and a half from shore; but at a distance of two miles soundings of five and six fathoms are common, and it would be feasible in fine weather for a vessel of moderate draught to land her cargo, passengers, etc. in small boats. Moreover a harbour might be built as in our Recommendations (q.v.). There is on the northern side a bay (caused by indentation of the land) which we think suitable to the purpose and which, in Your Honour's honour, we have called Buggins' Bay.

VII. These are three, as above enumerated (q.v.); one, the most precipitous and bold, we have called Cape *Providence* (q.v.) for reasons which appear above; the *Capes and* second, Cape *Mercy*, in recognition *Headlands* of the great mercy shown us in finding this place without running on it as has been the fate of many a noble vessel. The third we called Point *Liberty* from the nature of those glorious institutions which are the pride of the

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Republic and which we intend to impose upon any future inhabitants. These titles, which are but provisional, we pray may remain and be Enregistered under the seal, notwithstanding the "Act to Restrain Nuisances and Voids" of 1819, Cap. 2.

VIII. The climate is that of the North Atlantic known as the "Oceanic." Rain falls not infrequently, and between November  
*Climate.* and April snow is not unknown. In summer a more genial temperature prevails, but it is never so hot as to endanger life or to facilitate the progress of epidemic disease. Wheat, beans, hops, turnips, and barley could be grown did the soil permit of it. But we cannot regard an agricultural future as promising for the new territory.

HERE ENDETH your Commissioners' Report.

JOSHUA HOGG.

(*Seal*) ABRAHAM BUSH.

JACOBUS BIMBER.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Your Commissioners being also entrusted with the privilege of making Recommendations, submit the following without prejudice and all pursuants to the contrary notwithstanding.

As to the *land*: your Commissioners recommend that it should be held by the State in conformity

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with those principles which are gaining a complete ascendancy among the Leading Nations of the Earth. This might then be let out at its full value to private individuals who would make what they could of it, leaving the Economic Rent to the community. For the individual did not make the land, but the State did.

This power of letting the land should, they recommend, be left in the hands of a *Chartered Company*. Your Commissioners will provide the names of certain reputable and wealthy citizens who will be glad to undertake the duty of forming and directing this company, and who will act on the principle of unsalaried public service by the upper classes, which is the chief characteristic of our civilization. I. Jacobs, Esq., and Z. Lewis, Esq. (to be directors of the proposed Chartered Company) have already volunteered in this matter.

Your Commissioners recommend that the Chartered Company should be granted the right to strike coins of copper, nickel, silver and gold, the first three to be issued at three times eight times and twice the value of the metals respectively, the said currency to be on a gold basis and mono-metallic and not to exceed the amount of \$100 *per capita*.

Your Commissioners further recommend that the same authority be empowered to issue paper

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money in proportions of 165% to the gold reserve, the right to give high values to pieces of paper having proved in the past of the greatest value to those who have obtained it.

Your Commissioners recommend the building of a stone harbour out to sea without encroaching on the already exiguous dimensions of the land. They propose two piers, each some mile and a half long, and built of Portland rock, an excellent quarry of which is to be discovered on the property of James Barber, Esq., of Maryville, Kent County, Conn. The stone could be brought to Atlantis at the lowest rates by the Wall Schreiner line of floats. In this harbour, if it be sufficiently deepened and its piers set wide enough apart, the navies of the world could be contained, and it would be a standing testimony to the energy of our race, "which maketh the desert to blossom like a rose" (Lev. xxii. 3, 2).

Your Commissioners also recommend an artesian well to be sunk until fresh water be discovered. This method has been found successful in Australia, which is also an island and largely composed of sand. It is said that this method of irrigation produces astonishing results.

Finally, in the matter of industry your Commissioners propose (not, of course, as a unique industry but as a staple) the packing of sardines. A sound system of fair trade based upon a tariff

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scientifically adjusted to the conditions of the Island should develop the industry rapidly. Everything lends itself to this: the skilled labour could be imparted from home, the sardines from France, and the tin and oil from Spain. It would need for some years an export Bounty somewhat in the nature of Protection, the scale of which would have to be regulated by the needs of the community, but they are convinced that when once the industry was established, the superior skill of our workmen and the enterprise of our capitalists would control the markets of the world.

As to political rights, we recommend that Atlantis should be treated as a territory, and that a sharp distinction should be drawn between Rural and Urban conditions; that the inhabitants should not be granted the franchise till they have shown themselves worthy of self-government, saving, of course, those immigrants (such as the negroes of Carolina, etc.) who have been trained in the exercise of representative institutions. All Religions should be tolerated except those to which the bulk of the community show an implacable aversion. Education should be free to all, compulsory upon the poor, non-sectarian, absolutely elementary, and subject, of course, to the paramount position of that gospel which has done so much for our dear country. The sale of

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Intoxicants should be regulated by the Company, and these should be limited to a little spirits: wine and beer and all alcoholic liquors habitually used as beverages should be rigorously forbidden to the labouring classes, and should only be supplied in *bona fide* clubs with a certain minimum yearly subscription.

IN CONCLUSION your Commissioners will ever pray, etc.

MS. note added at the end in the hand of Mr. Charles P. Hands, the curator of this section:

*(The Island was lost—luckily with no one aboard—during the storms of the following winter. This report still possesses, however, a strong historical interest).*



## Perigeux of the Perigord ~ ~ ~

I KNEW a man once. I met him in a wooden inn upon a bitterly cold day. He was an American, and we talked of many things. At last he said to me: "Have you ever seen the Matterhorn?"

"No," said I; for I hated the very name of it. Then he continued:

"It is the most surprising thing I ever saw."

"By the Lord," said I, "you have found the very word!" I took out a sketch-book and noted his word "surprising." What admirable humour had this American; how subtle and how excellent a spirit! I have never seen the Matterhorn; but it seems that one comes round a corner, and there it is. It is surprising! Excellent word of the American. I never shall forget it!

An elephant escapes from a circus and puts his head in at your window while you are writing and thinking of a word. You look up. You may be alarmed, you may be astonished, you may be moved to sudden processes of thought; but one thing you will find about it, and you will find

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out quite quickly, and it will dominate all your other emotions of the time : the elephant's head will be surprising. You are caught. Your soul says loudly to its Creator : " Oh, this is something new ! "

So did I first see in the moonlight up the quite unknown and quite deserted valley which the peak of the Dead Man dominates in a lonely and savage manner the main crest of the Pyrenees. So did I first see a land-fall when I first went overseas. So did I first see the Snowdon range when I was a little boy, having, until I woke up that morning and looked out of the windows of the hotel, never seen anything in my life more uplifted than the rounded green hills of South England.

Now the cathedral of St. Front in Perigeux of the Perigord is the most surprising thing in Europe. It is much more surprising than the hills—for a man made it. Man made it hundreds and hundreds of years ago ; man has added to it, and, by the grace of his enthusiasm and his disciplined zeal, man has (thank God !) scraped, remodelled, and restored it. Upon my soul, to see such a thing I was proud to be an Anthropoid, and to claim cousinship with those dark citizens of the Dordogne and of Garonne and of the Tarn and of the Lot, and of whatever rivers fall into the Gironde. I know very well that they have

## Perigeux of the Perigord

sweated to indoctrinate, to persecute, to trim, to improve, to exterminate, to lift up, to cast down, to annoy, to amuse, to exasperate, to please, to en-music, to offend, to glorify their kind. In some of these energies of theirs I blame them, in others I praise; but it is plainly evident that they know how to bingé. I wished (for a moment) to be altogether of their race, like that strong cavalry man of their race to whom they have put up a statue pointing to his wooden leg. What an incredible people to build such an incredible church!

The Clericals claim it, the anti-Clericals adorn it. The Christians bemoan within it the wickedness of the times. The Atheists are baptized in it, married in it, denounced in it, and when they die are, in great coffins surrounded by great candles, to the dirge of the *Dies Iræ*, to the booming of the vast new organ, very formally and determinedly absolved in it; and holy water is sprinkled over the black cloth and cross of silver. The pious and the indifferent, nay, the sad little army of earnest, intelligent, strenuous men who still anxiously await the death of religion—they all draw it, photograph it, paint it; they name their streets, their hotels, their villages, and their very children after it. It is like everything else in the world: it must be seen to be believed. It rises up in a big cluster of white domes upon

## On Something

the steep bank of the river. And sometimes you think it a fortress, and sometimes you think it a town, and sometimes you think it a vision. It is simple in plan and multiple in the mind; and after all these years I remember it as one remembers a sudden and unexpected chorus. It is well worthy of Perigeux of the Perigord.

Perigeux of the Perigord is Gaulish, and it has never died. When it was Roman it was Vesona; the temple of that patron Goddess still stands at its eastern gate, and it is one of those teaching towns which have never died, but in which you can find quite easily and before your eyes every chapter of our worthy story. In such towns I am filled as though by a book, with a contemplation of what we have done, and I have little doubt for our sons.

The city reclines and is supported upon the steep bank of the Isle just where the stream bends and makes an amphitheatre, so that men coming in from the north (which is the way the city was meant to be entered—and therefore, as you may properly bet, the railway comes in at the other side by the back door) see it all at once: a great sight. One goes up through its narrow streets, especially noting that street which is very nobly called after the man who tossed his sword in the air riding before the Conqueror at Hastings, Taillefer. One turns a

## Perigeux of the Perigord

narrow corner between houses very old and very tall, and then quite close, no longer a vision, but a thing to be touched, you see—to use the word again—the “surprising” thing. You see something bigger than you thought possible.

Great heavens, what a church!

Where have I heard a church called “the House of God”? I think it was in Westmorland near an inn called “The Nag’s Head”—or perhaps “The Nag’s Head” is in Cumberland—no matter, I did once hear a church so called. But this church has a right to the name. It is a gathering-up of all that men could do. It has fifty roofs, it has a gigantic signal tower, it has blank walls like precipices, and round arch after round arch, and architrave after architrave. It is like a good and settled epic; or, better still, it is like the life of a healthy and adventurous man who, having accomplished all his journeys and taken the Fleece of Gold, comes home to tell his stories at evening, and to pass among his own people the years that are left to him of his age. It has experience and growth and intensity of knowledge, all caught up into one unity; it conquers the hill upon which it stands. I drew one window and then another, and then before I had finished that a cornice, and then before I had finished that a porch, for it was evening when I saw it, and I had not many hours.

## On Something

Music, they say, does something to the soul, filling it full of unsatisfied but transcendent desires, and making it guess, in glimpses that mix and fail, the soul's ultimate reward or destiny. Here, in Perigeux of the Perigord, where men hunt truffles with hounds, stone set in a certain order does what music is said to do. For in the sight of this standing miracle I could believe and confess, and doubt and fear, and control, all in one.

Here is, living and continuous, the Empire in its majority and its determination to be eternal. The people of the Perigord, the truffle-hunting people, need never seek civilization nor fear its death, for they have its symbol, and a sacrament, as it were, to promise them that the arteries of the life of Europe can never be severed. The arches and the entablatures of this solemn thing are alive.

It was built some say nine, some say eight hundred years ago; its apse was built yesterday, but the whole of it is outside time.

In human life, which goes with a short rush and then a lull, like the wind among trees before rains, great moments are remembered; they comfort us and they help us to laugh at decay. I am very glad that I once saw this church in Perigeux of the Perigord.

When I die I should like to be buried in my

## Perigeux of the Perigord

own land, but I should take it as a favour from the Bishop, who is master of this place, if he would come and give my coffin an absolution, and bring with him the cloth and the silver cross, and if he would carry in his hand (as some of the statues have) a little model of St. Front, the church which I have seen and which renewed my faith.

## The Position

THERE is a place where the valley of the Allier escapes from the central mountains of France and broadens out into a fertile plain.

Here is a march or boundary between two things, the one familiar to most English travelers, the other unfamiliar. The familiar thing is the rich alluvium and gravel of the Northern French countrysides, the poplar trees, the full and quiet rivers, the many towns and villages of stone, the broad white roads interminable and intersecting the very fat of prosperity, and over it all a mild air. The unfamiliar is the mass of the Avernian Mountains, which mass is the core and centre of Gaul and of Gaulish history, and of the unseen power that lies behind the whole of that business.

The plains are before one, the mountains behind one, and one stands in that borderland. I know it well.

I have said that in the Avernian Mountains was the centre of Gaul and the power upon which the history of Gaul depends. Upon the Margeride, which is one of their uttermost



## The Position

ridges, du Guesclin was wounded to death. One may see the huge stones piled up on the place where he fell. In the heart of those mountains, at Puy, religion has effects that are eerie; it uses odd high peaks for shrines—needles of rock; and a long way off all round is a circle of hills of a black-blue in the distance, and they and the rivers have magical names—the river Red Cap and Chaise Dieu, “God’s Chair.” In these mountains Julius Cæsar lost (the story says) his sword; and in these mountains the Roman armies were staved off by the Avernians. They are as full of wonder as anything in Europe can be, and they are complicated and tumbled all about, so that those who travel in them with difficulty remember where they have been, unless indeed they have that general eye for a countryside which is rare nowadays among men.

Just at the place where the mountain land and the plain land meet, where the shallow valleys get rounder and less abrupt, I went last September, following the directions of a soldier who had told me how I might find where the centre of the manœuvres lay. The manœuvres, attempting to reproduce the conditions of war, made a drifting scheme of men upon either side of the River Sioule. One could never be certain where one would find the guns.

I had come up off the main road from Vichy,

## On Something

walking vaguely towards the sound of the firing. It was unfamiliar. The old and terrible rumble has been lost for a generation; even the plain noise of the field-piece which used to be called "90" is forgotten by the young men now. The new little guns pop and ring. And when you are walking towards them from a long way off you do not seem to be marching towards anything great, but rather towards something clever. Nevertheless it is as easy to-day as ever it was to walk towards the sound of cannon.

Two valleys absolutely lonely had I trudged-through since the sun rose, and it was perhaps eight o'clock when I came upon one of those lonely walled parks set in bare fields which the French gentry seem to find homelike enough. I asked a man at the lodge about how far the position was. He said he did not know, and looked upon me with suspicion.

I went down into the depth of the valley, and there I met a priest who was reading his Breviary and erroneously believed me (if I might judge his looks) to be of a different religion, for he tested philosophy by clothes; and this, by the way, is unalterably necessary for all mankind. When, however, he found by my method of address that I knew his language and was of his own faith, he became very courteous, and when I told him that I wanted to find the position he

## The Position

became as lively as a linesman, making little maps with his stick in the earth, and waving his arms, and making great sweeps with his hand to show the way in which the army had been drifting all morning, northward and eastward, above the Sioule, with the other division on the opposite bank, and how, whenever there was a bridge to be fought for, the game had been to pretend that one or the other had got hold of it. Of this priest it might truly be said, as was said of the priest of Thiers in the Forez, that chance had made him a choir-boy, but destiny had designed him for the profession of arms; and upon this one could build an interesting comedy of how chance and destiny are perpetually at issue, and how chance, having more initiative and not being so bound to routine, gets the better of destiny upon all occasions whatsoever.

Well, the priest showed me in this manner whither I should walk, and so I came out of the valley on to a great upland, and there a small boy (who was bullying a few geese near a pond) showed much the same excitement as the priest when he told me at what village I should find the guns.

That village was a few miles further on. As I went along the straight, bare road, with stubble upon either side, I thought the sound of firing got louder; but then, again, it would diminish, as

## On Something

the batteries took a further and a further position in their advance. It was great fun, this sham action, with its crescent of advancing fire and one's self in the centre of the curve. At the next village I had come across the arteries of the movement. By one road provisionment was going off to the right; by another two men with messages, one a Hussar on horseback, the other a Reservist upon a bicycle, went by me very quickly. Then from behind some high trees in a churchyard there popped out a lot of little Engineers, who were rolling a great roll of wire along. So I went onwards; and at last I came to a cleft just before the left bank of the Sioule. This cleft appeared deserted: there was brushwood on its sides and a tiny stream running through it. On the ridge beyond were the roofs of a village. The firing of the pieces was now quite close and near. They were a little further than the houses of the hamlet, doubtless in some flat field where the position was favourable to them. Down that cleft I went, and in its hollow I saw the first post, but as yet nothing more. Then when I got to the top of the opposing ridge I found the whole of the 38th lolling under the cover of the road bank. From below you would have said there were no men at all. The guns were right up beyond the line, firing away. I went up past the linesmen till I found the guns.

## The Position

And what a pretty sight! They were so small and light and delicate! There was no clanking, and no shouting, and to fire them a man pulled a mere trigger. I thought to myself: "How simple and easy our civilization becomes. Think of the motor-cars, and how they purr. Think of the simple telephone, and all the other little things." And with this thought in my mind I continued to watch the guns. Without yells or worry a man spoke gently to other men, and they all limbered up, quite easily. The weight seemed to have gone since my time. They trotted off with the pieces, and when they crossed the little ditch at the edge of the field I waited for the heavy clank-clank and the jog that ought to go with that well-known episode; but I did not hear it, and I saw no shock. They got off the field with its little ditch on to the high road as a light cart with good springs might have done. And when they massed themselves under the cover of a roll of land it was all done again without noise. I thought a little sadly that the world had changed. But it was all so pretty and sensible that I hardly regretted the change. There was a stretch of road in front where nothing on earth could have given cover. The line was on its stomach, firing away, and it was getting fired at apparently, in the sham of the manœuvre from the other side of the Sioule. As it covered this

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open space the line edged forward and upward. When a certain number of the 38th had worked up like this, the whole bunch of them, from half a mile down the road, right through the village, were moved along, and the head of the column was scattered to follow up the firing. It was like spraying water out of a tap. The guns still stood massed, and then at a sudden order which was passed along as though in the tones of a conversation (and again I thought to myself, "Surely the world is turning upside down since I was a boy") they started off at a sharp gallop and leapt, as it were, the two or three hundred yards of open road between cover and cover. They were very well driven. The middle horses and the wheelers were doing their work : it was not only the leaders that kept the traces taut. It was wonderfully pretty to see them go by : not like a storm but like a smoke. No one could have hit those gunners or those teams. Whether they were on the sky-line or not I could not tell, but at any rate they could have been seen just for that moment from beyond the Sioule. And when they massed up again, beyond—some seconds afterwards—one heard the pop-pop from over the valley, which showed they had been seen just too late.

Hours and hours after that I went on with the young fellows. The guns I could not keep with :

## The Position

I walked with the line. And all the while as I walked I kept on wondering at the change that comes over European things. This army of young men doing two years, with its odd silence and its sharp twittering movements, and the sense of eyes all round one, of men glancing and appreciating: individual men catching an opportunity for cover; and commanding men catching the whole countryside. . . . Then, in the early afternoon, the bugles and the trumpets sounded that long-drawn call which has attended victories and capitulations, and which is also sounded every night to tell people to put out the lights in the barrack-rooms. It is the French "Cease fire." And whether from the national irony or the national economy, I know not, but the stopping of either kind of fire has the same call attached to it, and you must turn out a light in a French barrack-room to the same notes as you must by command stop shooting at the other people.

The game was over. I faced the fourteen miles back to Gannat very stiff. All during those hours I had been wondering at the novelty of Europe, and at all these young men now so different, at the silence and the cover, and the hefty, disposable little guns. But when I had my face turned southward again to get back to a meal, that other aspect of Europe, its eternity, was pictured all abroad. For there right before

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me stood the immutable mountains, which stand enormous and sullen, but also vague at the base, and, therefore, in their summits, unearthly, above the Limagne. There was that upper valley of the Allier down which Cæsar had retreated, gathering his legions into the North, and there was that silent and menacing sky which everywhere broods over Auvergne, and even in its clearest days seems to lend the granite and the lava land a sort of doomed hardness, as though Heaven in this country commanded and did not allure. Never had I seen a landscape more mysterious than those hills, nor at the same time anything more enduring.



Home    ∞    ∞    ∞    ∞    ∞    ∞

THERE is a river called the Eure which runs between low hills often wooded, with a flat meadow floor in between. It so runs for many miles. The towns that are set upon it are for the most part small and rare, and though the river is well known by name, and though one of the chief cathedrals of Europe stands near its source, for the most part it is not visited by strangers.

In this valley one day as I was drawing a picture of the woods I found a wandering Englishman who was in the oddest way. He seemed by the slight bend at his knees and the leaning forward of his head to have no very great care how much further he might go. He was in the clothes of an English tourist, which looked odd in such a place, as, for that matter, they do anywhere. He had upon his head a pork-pie hat which was of the same colour and texture as his clothes, a speckly brown. He carried a thick stick. He was a man over fifty years of age; his face was rather hollow and worn; his eyes were very simple and pale; he was bearded with a weak beard, and in his expression there appeared

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a constrained but kindly weariness. This was the man who came up to me as I was drawing my picture. I had heard him scrambling in the undergrowth of the woods just behind me.

He came out and walked to me across the few yards of meadow. The haying was over, so he did the grass no harm. He came and stood near me, irresolutely, looking vaguely up and across the valley towards the further woods, and then gently towards what I was drawing. When he had so stood still and so looked for a moment he asked me in French the name of the great house whose roof showed above the more ordered trees beyond the river, where a park emerged from and mixed with the forest. I told him the name of the house, whereupon he shook his head and said that he had once more come to the wrong place.

I asked him what he meant, and he told me, sitting down slowly and carefully upon the grass, this adventure :

“First,” said he, “are you always quite sure whether a thing is really there or not?”

“I am always quite sure,” said I; “I am always positive.”

He sighed, and added: “Could you understand how a man might feel that things were really there when they were not?”

“Only,” said I, “in some very vivid dream,

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and even then I think a man knows pretty well inside his own mind that he is dreaming." I said that it seemed to me rather like the question of the cunning of lunatics; most of them know at the bottom of their silly minds that they are cracked, as you may see by the way they plot and pretend.

"You are not sympathetic with me," he said slowly, "but I will nevertheless tell you what I want to tell you, for it will relieve me, and it will explain to you why I have again come into this valley."

"Why do you say 'again'?" said I.

"Because," he answered gently, "whenever my work gives me the opportunity I do the same thing. I go up the valley of the Seine by train from Dieppe; I get out at the station at which I got out on that day, and I walk across these low hills, hoping that I may strike just the path and just the mood—but I never do."

"What path and what mood?" said I.

"I was telling you," he answered patiently, "only you were so brutal about reality." And then he sighed. He put his stick across his knees as he sat there on the grass, held it with a hand on either side of his knees, and so sitting bunched up began his tale once more.

"It was ten years ago, and I was extremely tired, for you must know that I am a Government

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servant, and I find my work most wearisome. It was just this time of year that I took a week's holiday. I intended to take it in Paris, but I thought on my way, as the weather was so fine, that I would do something new and that I would walk a little way off the track. I had often wondered what country lay behind the low and steep hills on the right of the railway line.

"I had crossed the Channel by night," he continued, a little sorry for himself, "to save the expense. It was dawn when I reached Rouen, and there I very well remember drinking some coffee which I did not like, and eating some good bread which I did. I changed carriages at Rouen because the express did not stop at any of the little stations beyond. I took a slower train, which came immediately behind it, and stopped at most of the stations. I took my ticket rather at random for a little station between Pont de l'Arche and Mantes. I got out at that little station, and it was still early—only midway through the morning.

"I was in an odd mixture of fatigue and exhilaration: I had not slept and I would willingly have done so, but the freshness of the new day was upon me, and I have always had a very keen curiosity to see new sights and to know what lies behind the hills.

"The day was fine and already rather hot for

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June. I did not stop in the village near the station for more than half an hour, just the time to take some soup and a little wine; then I set out into the woods to cross over into this parallel valley. I knew that I should come to it and to the railway line that goes down it in a very few miles. I proposed when I came to that other railway line on the far side of the hills to walk quietly down it as nearly parallel to it as I could get, and at the first station to take the next train for Chartres, and then the next day to go from Chartres to Paris. That was my plan.

“The road up into the woods was one of those great French roads which sometimes frighten me and always weary me by their length and insistence: men seem to have taken so much trouble to make them, and they make me feel as though I had to take trouble myself; I avoid them when I walk. Therefore, so soon as this great road had struck the crest of the hills and was well into the woods (cutting through them like the trench of a fortification, with the tall trees on either side) I struck out into a ride which had been cut through them many years ago and was already half overgrown, and I went along this ride for several miles.

“It did not matter to me how I went, since my design was so simple and since any direction more or less westward would enable me to fulfil

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it, that is, to come down upon the valley of the Eure and to find the single railway line which leads to Chartres. The woods were very pleasant on that June noon, and once or twice I was inclined to linger in their shade and sleep an hour. But—note this clearly—I did not sleep. I remember every moment of the way, though I confess my fatigue oppressed me somewhat as the miles continued.

“At last by the steepness of a new descent I recognized that I had crossed the watershed and was coming down into the valley of this river. The ride had dwindled to a path, and I was wondering where the path would lead me when I noticed that it was getting more orderly: there were patches of sand, and here and there a man had cut and trimmed the edges of the way. Then it became more orderly still. It was all sanded, and there were artificial bushes here and there—I mean bushes not native to the forest, until at last I was aware that my ramble had taken me into some one’s own land, and that I was in a private ground.

“I saw no great harm in this, for a traveller, if he explains himself, will usually be excused; moreover, I had to continue, for I knew no other way, and this path led me westward also. Only, whether because my trespassing worried me or because I felt my own dishevelment more acutely,

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the lack of sleep and the strain upon me increased as I pursued those last hundred yards, until I came out suddenly from behind a screen of rosebushes upon a large lawn, and at the end of it there was a French country house with a moat round it, such as they often have, and a stone bridge over the moat.

“The château was simple and very grand. The mouldings upon it pleased me, and it was full of peace. Upon the further side of the lawn, so that I could hear it but not see it, a fountain was playing into a basin. By the sound it was one of those high French fountains which the people who built such houses as these two hundred years ago delighted in. The plash of it was very soothing, but I was so tired and drooping that at one moment it sounded much further than at the next.

“There was an iron bench at the edge of the screen of roses, and hardly knowing what I did, —for it was not the right thing to do in another person’s place—I sat down on this bench, taking pleasure in the sight of the moat and the house with its noble roof, and the noise of the fountain. I think I should have gone to sleep there and at that moment—for I felt upon me worse than ever the strain of that long hot morning and that long night journey—had not a very curious thing happened.”

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Here the man looked up at me oddly, as though to see whether I disbelieved him or not; but I did not disbelieve him.

I was not even very much interested, for I was trying to make the trees to look different one from the other, which is an extremely difficult thing: I had not succeeded and I was niggling away. He continued with more assurance:

“The thing that happened was this: a young girl came out of the house dressed in white, with a blue scarf over her head and crossed round her neck. I knew her face as well as possible: it was a face I had known all my youth and early manhood—but for the life of me I could not remember her name!”

“When one is very tired,” I said, “that does happen to one: a name one knows as well as one’s own escapes one. It is especially the effect of lack of sleep.”

“It is,” said he, sighing profoundly; “but the oddness of my feeling it is impossible to describe, for there I was meeting the oldest and perhaps the dearest and certainly the most familiar of my friends, whom,” he added, hesitating a moment, “I had not seen for many years. It was a very great pleasure . . . it was a sort of comfort and an ending. I forgot, the moment I saw her, why I had come over the hills, and all about how I meant to get to Chartres. . . .



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And now I must tell you," added the man a little awkwardly, "that my name is Peter."

"No doubt," said I gravely, for I could not see why he should not bear that name.

"My Christian name," he continued hurriedly.

"Of course," said I, as sympathetically as I could. He seemed relieved that I had not even smiled at it.

"Yes," he went on rather quickly, "Peter—my name is Peter. Well, this lady came up to me and said, 'Why, Peter, we never thought you would come!' She did not seem very much astonished, but rather as though I had come earlier than she had expected. 'I will get Philip,' she said. 'You remember Philip?' Here I had another little trouble with my memory: I did remember that there was a Philip, but I could not place him. That was odd, you know. As for her, oh, I knew *her* as well as the colour of the sky: it was her name that my brain missed, as it might have missed my own name or my mother's.

"Philip came out as she called him, and there was a familiarity between them that seemed natural to me at the time, but whether he was a brother or a lover or a husband, or what, I could not for the life of me remember.

"'You look tired,' he said to me in a kind voice that I liked very much and remembered

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clearly. 'I am,' said I, 'dog tired.' 'Come in with us,' he said, 'and we will give you some wine and water. When would you like to eat?' I said I would rather sleep than eat. He said that could easily be arranged.

"I strolled with them towards the house across that great lawn, hearing the noise of the fountain, now dimmer, now nearer; sometimes it seemed miles away and sometimes right in my ears. Whether it was their conversation or my familiarity with them or my fatigue, at any rate, as I crossed the moat I could no longer recall anything save their presence. I was not even troubled by the desire to recall anything; I was full of a complete contentment, and this surging up of familiar things, this surging up of it in a foreign place, without excuse or possible connexion or any explanation whatsoever, seemed to me as natural as breathing.

"As I crossed the bridge I wholly forgot whence I came or whither I was going, but I knew myself better than ever I had known myself, and every detail of the place was familiar to me.

"Here I had passed (I thought) many hours of my childhood and my boyhood and my early manhood also. I ceased considering the names and the relation of Philip and the girl.

"They gave me cold meat and bread and excel-

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lent wine, and water to mix with it, and as they continued to speak even the last adumbrations of care fell off me altogether, and my spirit seemed entirely released and free. My approaching sleep beckoned to me like an easy entrance into Paradise. I should wake from it quite simply into the perpetual enjoyment of this place and its companionship. Oh, it was an absolute repose!

“Philip took me to a little room on the ground floor fitted with the exquisite care and the simplicity of the French: there was a curtained bed, a thing I love. He lent me night clothes, though it was broad day, because he said that if I undressed and got into the bed I should be much more rested; they would keep everything quiet at that end of the house, and the gentle fall of the water into the moat outside would not disturb me. I said on the contrary it would soothe me, and I felt the benignity of the place possess me like a spell. Remember that I was very tired and had not slept for now thirty hours.

“I remember handling the white counterpane and noting the delicate French pattern upon it, and seeing at one corner the little red silk coronet embroidered, which made me smile. I remember putting my hand upon the cool linen of the pillow-case and smoothing it; then I got

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into that bed and fell asleep. It was broad noon, with the stillness that comes of a summer noon upon the woods; the air was cool and delicious above the water of the moat, and my windows were open to it.

"The last thing I heard as I dropped asleep was her voice calling to Philip in the corridor. I could have told the very place. I knew that corridor so well. We used to play there when we were children. We used to play at travelling, and we used to invent the names of railway stations for the various doors. Remembering this and smiling at the memory, I fell at once into a blessed sleep.

". . . . I do not want to annoy you," said the man apologetically, "but I really had to tell you this story, and I hardly know how to tell you the end of it."

"Go on," said I hurriedly, for I had gone and made two trees one exactly like the other (which in nature was never seen) and I was annoyed with myself.

"Well," said he, still hesitating and sighing with real sadness, "when I woke up I was in a third-class carriage; the light was that of late afternoon, and a man had woken me by tapping my shoulder and telling me that the next station was Chartres. . . . That's all."

He sighed again. He expected me to say

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something. So I did. I said without much originality: "You must have dreamed it."

"No," said he, very considerably put out, "that is the point! I didn't! I tell you I can remember exactly every stage from when I left the railway train in the Seine Valley until I got into that bed."

"It's all very odd," said I.

"Yes," said he, "and so was my mood; but it was real enough. It was the second or third most real thing that has ever happened to me. I am quite certain that it happened to me."

I remained silent, and rubbed out the top of one of my trees so as to invent a new top for it, since I could not draw it as it was. Then, as he wanted me to say something more, I said: "Well, you must have got into the train somehow."

"Of course," said he.

"Well, where did you get into the train?"

"I don't know."

"Your ticket would have told you that."

"I think I must have given it up to the man," he answered doubtfully, "the guard who told me that the next station was Chartres."

"Well, it's all very mysterious," I said.

"Yes," he said, getting up rather weakly to go on again, "it is." And he sighed again. "I come here every year. I hope," he added a little wistfully, "I hope, you see, that it may happen to me again . . . but it never does."

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“It will at last,” said I to comfort him.

And, will you believe it, that simple sentence made him in a moment radiantly happy; his face beamed, and he positively thanked me, thanked me warmly.

“You speak like one inspired,” he said. (I confess I did not feel like it at all.) “I shall go much lighter on my way after that sentence of yours.”

He bade me good-bye with some ceremony and slouched off, with his eyes set towards the west and the more distant hills.

## The Way to Fairyland      ~      ~      ~

A CHILD of four years old, having read of Fairyland and of the people in it, asked only two days ago, in a very popular attitude of doubt, whether there were any such place, and, if so, where it was; for she believed in her heart that the whole thing was a pack of lies.

I was happy to be able to tell her that her scepticism, though well founded, was extreme. The existence of Fairyland, I was able to point out to her both by documentary evidence from books and also by calling in the testimony of the aged, could not be doubted by any reasonable person. What was really difficult was the way to get there. Indeed, so obviously true was the existence of Fairyland, that every one in this world set out to go there as a matter of course, but so difficult was it to find the way that very few reached the place. Upon this the child very naturally asked me what sort of way the way was and why it was so difficult.

“You must first understand,” said I, “where Fairyland is: it lies a little way farther than the farthest hill you can see. It lies, in fact, just

## On Something

beyond that hill. The frontiers of it are sometimes a little doubtful in any landscape, because the landscape is confused, but if on the extreme limits of the horizon you see a long line of hills bounding your view exactly, then you may be perfectly certain that on the other side of those hills is Fairyland. There are times of the day and of the weather when the sky over Fairyland can be clearly perceived, for it has a different colour from any other kind of sky. That is where Fairyland is. It is not on an island, as some have pretended, still less is it under the earth—a ridiculous story, for there it is all dark.”

“But how do you get there?” asked the child. “Do you get there by walking to the hills and going over?”

“No,” said I, “that is just the bother of it. Several people have thought that that was the way of getting there; in fact, it looked plain common sense, but there is a trick about it; when you get to the hills everything changes, because the fairies have that power: the hills become ordinary, the people living on them turn into people just like you and me, and then when you get to the top of the hills, before you can say knife another common country just like ours has been stuck on the other side. On this account, through the power of the fairies, who hate particularly to be disturbed, no one can reach Fairy-



## The Way to Fairyland

land in so simple a way as by walking towards it."

"Then," said the child to me, "I don't see how any one can get there"—for this child had good brains and common sense.

"But," said I, "you must have read in stories of people who get to Fairyland, and I think you will notice that in the stories written by people who know anything about it (and you know how easily these are distinguished from the others) there are always two ways of getting to Fairyland, and only two: one is by mistake, and the other is by a spell. In the first way to Fairyland is to lose your way, and this is one of the best ways of getting there; but it is dangerous, because if you get there that way you offend the fairies. It is better to get there by a spell. But the inconvenience of that is that you are blindfolded so as not to be allowed to remember the way there or back again. When you get there by a spell, one of the people from Fairyland takes you in charge. They prefer to do it when you are asleep, but they are quite game to do it at other times if they think it worth their while.

"Why do they do it?" said the child.

"They do it," said I, "because it annoys the fairies very much to think that people are stopping believing in them. They are very proud people, and think a lot of themselves. They can,

## On Something

if they like, do us good, and they think us ungrateful when we forget about them. Sometimes in the past people have gone on forgetting about fairies more and more and more, until at last they have stopped believing in them altogether. The fairies meanwhile have been looking after their own affairs, and it is their fault more than ours when we forget about them. But when this has gone on for too long a time the fairies wake up and find out by a way they have that men have stopped believing in them, and get very much annoyed. Then some fairy proposes that a map of the way to Fairyland should be drawn up and given to the people; but this is always voted down; and at last they make up their minds to wake people up to Fairyland by going and visiting this world, and by spells bringing several people into their kingdom and so getting witnesses. For, as you can imagine, it is a most unpleasant thing to be really important and for other people not to know it."

"Yes," said the child, who had had this unpleasant experience, and greatly sympathized with the fairies when I explained how much they disliked it. Then the child asked me again :

"Why do the fairies let us forget about them?"

"It is," said I, "because they get so excited about their own affairs. Rather more than a

## The Way to Fairyland

hundred years ago, for instance, a war broke out in Fairyland because the King of the Fairies, whose name is Oberon, and the Queen of the Fairies, whose name is Titania, had asked the Trolls to dinner. The Gnomes were very much annoyed at this, and the Elves still more so, for the chief glory of the Elves was that being elfish got you to know people; and it was universally admitted that the Trolls ought never to be asked out, because they were trollish. King Oberon said that all that was a wicked prejudice, and that the Trolls ought to be asked out to dinner just as much as the Elves, in common justice. But his real reason was that he was bored by the perpetual elfishness of the Elves, and wanted to see the great ugly Trolls trying to behave like gentlemen for a change. So the Trolls came and tied their napkins round their necks, and ate such enormous quantities at dinner that King Oberon and his Queen almost died of laughing. The Elves were frightfully jealous, and so the war began. And while it was going on everybody in Earthland forgot more and more about Fairyland, until at last some people went so far as to say, like you, that Fairyland did not exist."

"I did not say so," said the child, "I only asked."

"But," I answered severely, "asking about such things is the beginning of doubting them.

## On Something

Anyhow, the fairies woke up one fine day about the time when your great-grandfather got married, to discover that they were not believed in, so they patched up their quarrel and they sent fairies to cast spells, and any amount of people began to be taken to Fairyland, until at last every one was forced to believe their evidence and to say that Fairyland existed."

"Were they glad?" said the child.

"Who?" said I; "the witnesses who were thus taken away and shown Fairyland?"

"Yes," said the child. "They ought to have been glad."

"Well, they *weren't!*" said I. "They were as sick as dogs. Not one of them but got into some dreadful trouble. From one his wife ran away, another starved to death, a third killed himself, a fourth was drowned and then burned upon the seashore, a fifth went mad (and so did several others), and as for poverty, and all the misfortunes that go with it, it simply rained upon the people who had been to Fairyland."

"Why?" said the child, greatly troubled.

"Ah!" said I, "that is what none of us know, but so it is, if they take you to Fairyland you are in for a very bad business indeed. There is only one way out of it."

"And what is that?" said the child, interested.

## The Way to Fairyland

“Washing,” said I, “washing in cold water. It has been proved over and over again.”

“Then,” said the child happily, “they can take me to Fairyland as often as they like, and I shall not be the worse for it, for I am washed in cold water every day. What about the other way to Fairyland?”

“Oh *that*,” said I, “that, I think, is much the best way; I’ve gone there myself.”

“Have you really?” said the child, now intensely interested. “That *is* good! How often have you been there?”

“Oh I can’t tell you,” I said carelessly, “but at least eight times, and perhaps more, and the dodge is, as I told you, to lose your way; only the great trouble is that no one can lose his way on purpose. At first I used to think that one had to follow signs. There was an omnibus going down the King’s Road which had ‘To the World’s End’ painted on it. I got into this one day, and after I had gone some miles I said to the man, ‘When do we get to the World’s End?’ ‘Oh,’ said he, ‘you have passed it long ago,’ and he rang a little bell to make me get out. So it was a fraud. Another time I saw another omnibus with the words, ‘To the Monster,’ and I got into that, but I heard that it was only a sort of joke, and that though the Monster was there all right, he was not in Fairyland. This omnibus went

## On Something

through a very uninteresting part of London, and Fairyland was nowhere in the neighbourhood. Another time in the country of France I came upon a printed placard which said: 'The excursion will pass by the Seven Winds, the Foolish Heath, and St. Martin under Heaven.' This time also I thought I had got it, but when I looked at the date on the placard I saw that the excursion had started several days before, so I missed it again. Another time up in Scotland I saw a signpost on which there was, 'To the King's House seven miles.' And some one had written underneath in pencil: 'And to the Dragon's Cave eleven.' But nothing came of it. It was a false lane. After that I gave up believing that one could get to Fairyland by signposts or omnibuses, until one day, quite by mistake, I chanced on the dodge of losing one's way."

"How is that done?" said the child.

"That is what no one can tell you," said I. "If people knew how it was done everybody would do it, but the whole point of losing your way is that you do it by mistake. You must be quite certain that you have *not* lost your way or it is no good. You walk along, and you walk along, and you wonder how long it will be before you get to the town, and then instead of getting to the town at all, there you are in Fairyland."

## The Way to Fairyland

"How do you know that you are in Fairyland?" said the little child.

"It depends how far you get in," said I. "If you get in far enough trees and rocks change into men, rivers talk, and voices of people whom you cannot see tell you all sorts of things in loud and clear tones close to your ear. But if you only get a little way inside then you know that you are there by a sort of wonderment. The things ought to be like the things you see every day, but they are a little different, notably the trees. It happened to me once in a town called Lanchester. A part of that town (though no one would think of it to look at it) happens to be in Fairyland. And there I was received by three fairies, who gave me supper in an inn. And it happened to me once in the mountains and once it happened to me at sea. I lost my way and came upon a beach which was in Fairyland. Another time it happened to me between Goodwood and Upwaltham in Sussex."

At this moment the child's nurse came in to take it away, so she came to the point :

"How did you know you were in Fairyland?" she said doubtfully. "Perhaps you are making all this up."

"Nonsense!" I said reprovingly, "the only people who make things up are little children, for they always tell lies. Grown-up people

## On Something

never tell lies. Let me tell you that one always knows when one has been in Fairyland by the feeling afterwards, and because it is impossible to find it again."

The child said, "Very well, I will believe you," but I could see from the expression of her eyes that she was not wholly convinced, and that in the bottom of her heart she does not believe there is any such place. She will, however, if she can hang on another forty years, and then I shall have my revenge.



## The Portrait of a Child    ∞    ∞    ∞

IN a garden which must, I think, lie somewhat apart and enclosed in one of the valleys of central England, you came across the English grass in summer beneath the shade of a tree; you were running, but your arms were stretched before you in a sort of dance and balance as though you rather belonged to the air and to the growing things about you and above you than to the earth over which you passed; and you were not three years old.

As, in jest, this charming vision was recorded by a camera which some guest had with him, a happy accident (designed, for all we know, by whatever powers arrange such things, an accident of the instrument or of the plate upon which your small, happy, advancing figure was recorded) so chanced that your figure, when the picture was printed, shone all around with light.

I cannot, as I look at it now before me and as I write these words, express, however much I may seek for expression, how great a meaning underlies that accident nor how full of fate and of reason and of suggested truth that aureole

## On Something

grows as I gaze. Your innocence is beatified by it, and takes on with majesty the glory which lies behind all innocence, but which our eyes can never see. Your happiness seems in that mist of light to be removed and permanent; the common world in which you are moving passes, through this trick of the lens, into a stronger world more apt for such a sight, and one in which I am half persuaded (as I still look upon the picture) blessedness is not a rare adventure, but something native and secure.

Little child, the trick which the camera has played means more and more as I still watch your picture, for there is present in that light not only blessedness, but holiness as well. The lightness of your movement and of your poise (as though you were blown like a blossom along the tops of the grass) is shone through, and your face, especially its ready and wondering laughter, is inspired, as though the Light had filled it from within; so that, looking thus, I look not on, but through. I say that in this portrait which I treasure there is not only blessedness, but holiness as well—holiness which is the cause of blessedness and which contains it, and by which secretly all this world is sustained.

Now there is a third thing in your portrait, little child. That accident of light, light all about you and shining through your face, is not

## The Portrait of a Child

only blessed nor only holy, but it is also sacred, and with that thought there returns to me as I look what always should return to man if he is to find any stuff or profit in his consideration of divine things. In blessedness there is joy for which here we are not made, so that we catch it only in glimpses or in adumbrations. And in holiness, when we perceive it we perceive something far off; it is that from which we came and to which we should return; yet holiness is not a human thing. But things sacred—things devoted to a purpose, things about which there lies an awful necessity of sacrifice, things devoted and necessarily suffering some doom—these are certainly of this world; that, indeed, all men know well at last, and find it part of the business through which they needs must pass. Human memories, since they are only memories; human attachments, since they are offered up and end; great human fears and hopeless human longings—these are sacred things attached to a victim and to a sacrifice; and in this picture of yours, with the light so glorifying you all round, no one can doubt who sees it but that the sacredness of human life will be yours also; that is, you must learn how it is offered up to some end and what a sacrifice is there.

I could wish, as I consider this, that the camera had played no such trick, and had not revealed in

## On Something

that haze of awful meaning all that lies beyond the nature of you, child. But it is a truth which is so revealed ; and we may not, upon a penalty more terrible than death, neglect any ultimate truth concerning our mortal way.

Your feet, which now do not seem to press upon the lawn across which they run, have to go more miles than you can dream of, through more places than you could bear to hear, and they must be directed to a goal which will not in your very young delight be mentioned before you, or of which, if it is mentioned, you will not understand by name ; and your little hands which you bear before you with the little gesture of flying things, will grasp most tightly that which can least remain and will attempt to fashion what can never be completed, and will caress that which will not respond to the caress. Your eyes, which are now so principally filled with innocence that that bright quality drowns all the rest, will look upon so much of deadly suffering and of misuse in men, that they will very early change themselves in kind ; and all your face, which now vaguely remembers nothing but the early vision from which childhood proceeds, will grow drawn and self-guarded, and will suffer some agonies, a few despairs, innumerable fatigues, until it has become the face of a woman grown. Nor will this sacred doom

## The Portrait of a Child

about you, which is that of all mankind, cease or grow less or be mitigated in any way ; it will increase as surely and as steadily as increase the number of the years, until at last you will lay down the daylight and the knowledge of daylight things as gladly as now you wake from sleep to see them.

For you are sacred, and all those elders about you, whose solemn demeanour now and then startles you into a pretty perplexity which soon calls back their smiles, have hearts only quite different from your quite careless heart, because they have known the things to which, in the manner of victims, they are consecrated.

All that by which we painfully may earn rectitude and a proper balance in the conduct of our short affairs I must believe that you will practise ; and I must believe, as I look here into your face, seeing your confident advance (as though you were flying out from your babyhood into young life without any fear), that the virtues which now surround you in a crowd and make a sort of court for you and are your angels every way, will go along with you and will stand by you to the end. Even so, and the more so, you will find (if you read this some years hence) how truly it is written. By contrast with your demeanour, with your immortal hopes, and with your pious efforts the world about you will seem

## On Something

darker and less secure with every passing harvest, and in proportion as you remember the childhood which has led me so to write of you, in proportion as you remember gladness and innocence with its completed joy, in that proportion will you find at least a breaking burden in the weight of this world.

Now you may say to me, little child (not now, but later on), to what purpose is all this complaint, and why should you tell me these things?

It is because in the portrait before me the holiness, the blessedness, and therefore the sacredness are apparent that I am writing as I do. For you must know that there is a false way out and a seeming relief for the rack of human affairs, and that this way is taken by many. Since you are sacred do not take it, but bear the burden. It is the character of whatever is sacred that it does not take that way; but, like a true victim, remains to the end, ready to complete the sacrifice.

The way out is to forget that one is sacred, and this men and women do in many ways. The most of them by way of treason. They betray. They break at first uneasily, later easily, and at last unconsciously, the word which each of us has passed before He was born in Paradise. All men and all women are conscious of that word, for though their lips cannot frame it here,

## The Portrait of a Child

and though the terms of the pledge are forgotten, the memory of its obligation fills the mind. But there comes a day, and that soon in the lives of many, when to break it once is to be much refreshed and to seem to drop the burden ; and in the second and the third time it is done, and the fourth it is done more easily—until at last there is no more need for a man or a woman to break that pledged word again and once again ; it is broken for good and for all. This is one most common way in which the sacred quality is lost : the way of treason. Round about such as choose this kind of relief grows a habit and an air of treason. They betray all things at last, and even common friendship is at last no longer theirs. The end of this false issue is despair.

Another way is to take refuge from ourselves in pleasures, and this is easily done, not by the worse, but by the better sort ; for there are some, some few, who would never betray nor break their ancient word, but who, seeing no meaning in a sacrifice nor in a burden, escape from it through pleasure as through a drug, and this pleasure they find in all manner of things, and always that spirit near them which would destroy their sacred mark, persuades them that they are right, and that in such pursuits the sacrifice is evaded. So some will steep themselves in

## On Something

rhyme, some in landscapes, some in pictures, some in the watching of the complexity and change of things, some in music, some in action, some in mere ease. It seems as though the men and women who would thus forget their sacredness are better loved and better warned than those who take the other path, for they never forget certain gracious things which should be proper to the mind, nor do they lose their friends. But that they have taken a wrong path you may easily perceive from this sign: that these pleasures, like any other drug, do not feed or satisfy, but must be increased with every dose, and even so soon pall and are continued not because they are pleasures any longer, but because, dull though they have become, without them there is active pain.

Take neither the one path nor the other, but retain, I beseech you, when the time comes, that quality of sacredness of which I speak, for there is no alternative. Some trouble fell upon our race, and all of us must take upon ourselves the business and the burden. If you will attempt any way out at all it will but lead you to some worse thing. We have not all choices before us, but only one of very few, and each of those few choices is mortal, and all but one is evil.

You should remember this also, dear little



## The Portrait of a Child

child, that at the beginning—oh, only at the very beginning of life—even your reason that God gave may lead you wrong. For with those memories strong upon you of perfect will, of clear intelligence, and of harmonious beauty all about, you will believe the world in which you stand to be the world from which you have come and to which you are also destined. You have but to treat this world for but a very little while as though it were the thing you think it to find it is not so.

Do you know that that which smells most strongly in this life of immortality, and which a poet has called “the ultimate outpost of eternity,” is insecure and perishes? I mean the passionate affection of early youth. If that does not remain, what then do you think can remain? I tell you that nothing which you take to be permanent round about you when you are very young is more than the symbol or clothes of permanence. Another poet has written, speaking of the chalk hills:—

Only a little while remain  
The Downs in their solemnity.

Nor is this saying forced. Men and women cannot attach themselves even to the hills where they first played.

Some men, wise but unillumined, and not

## On Something

conscious of that light which I here physically see shining all round and through you in the picture which is before my eyes as I write, have said that to die young and to end the business early was a great blessing. We do not know. But we do know that to die long after and to have gone through the business must be blessed, since blessedness and holiness and sacredness are bound together in one.

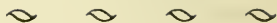
But, of these three, be certain that sacredness is your chief business, blessedness after your first childhood you will never know, and holiness you may only see as men see distant mountains lifted beyond a plain; it cannot be your habitation. Sacredness, which is the mark of that purpose whose heir is blessedness, whose end is holiness, will be upon you until you die; maintain it, and let it be your chief concern, for though you neglect it, it will remain and avenge itself.

All this I have seen in your picture as you go across the grass, and it was an accident of the camera that did it. If any one shall say these things do not attach to the portrait of a child, let him ask himself whether they do not attach to the portrait that might be drawn, did human skill suffice, of the life of a woman or a man which springs from the demeanour of childhood; or let him ask himself whether, if a face in old

## The Portrait of a Child

age and that same face in childhood were equally and as by a revelation set down each in its full truth, and the growth of the one into the other were interpreted by a profound intelligence, what I have said would not be true of all that little passage of ours through the daylight.

## On Experience



THERE are three phases in the life of man, so far as his thoughts upon his surroundings are concerned.

The first of these is the phase of youth, in which he takes certain matured things for granted, and whether he realizes his illusion or no, believes them to be eternal. This phase ends sharply with every man, by the action of one blow. Some essence is dissolved, some binding cordage snaps, or some one dies.

I say no matter how clearly the reason of a man tells him that all about him is changeable, and that perfect and matured things and characters upon whose perfection and maturity he reposes for his peace must disappear, his attitude in youth towards those things is one of a complete security as towards things eternal. For the young man, convinced as he is that his youth and he himself are there for ever, sees in one lasting framework his father's garden, his mother's face, the landscape from his windows, his friendships, and even his life; the very details of food, of clothing, and of lesser custom, all these are fixed

## On Experience

for him. Fixed also are the mature and perfect things. This aged friend, in whose excellent humour and universal science he takes so continual a delight, is there for ever. That considered judgment of mankind upon such and such a troubling matter, of sex, of property, or of political right, is anchored or rooted in eternity. There comes a day when by some one experience he is startled out of that morning dream. It is not the first death, perhaps, that strikes him, nor the first loss—no, not even, perhaps, the first discovery that human affection also passes (though that should be for every man the deepest lesson of all). What wakes him to the reality which is for some dreadful, for others august, and for the faithful divine, is always an accident. One death, one change, one loss, among so many, unseals his judgment, and he sees thenceforward, nay, often from one particular moment upon which he can put his finger, the doom which lies upon all things whatsoever that live by a material change.

The second phase which he next enters is for a thoughtful man in a sceptical and corrupted age the crucial phase, whereby will be determined, not indeed the fate of his soul, but the justice, and therefore the advantage to others, of his philosophy.

He has done with all illusions of permanence

## On Something

and repose. Henceforward he sees for himself a definite end, and the road which used to lead over the hills and to be lost beyond in the haze of summer plains now leads directly to a visible place; that place is a cavern in the mountain side, dark and without issue. He must die. Henceforward he expects the passing of all to which he is attached, and he is braced against loss by something lent to him which is to despair as an angel is to a demon; something in the same category of emotion, but just and fortifying, instead of void and vain and tempting and without an end. A man sees in this second phase of his experience that he must lose. Oh, he does not lose in a gamble! It is not a question of winning a stake or forfeiting it, as the vulgar falsehood of commercial analogy would try to make our time believe. He knows henceforward that there is no success, no final attainment of desire, because there is no fixity in any material thing. As he sits at table with the wisest and keenest of his time, especially with the old, hearing true stories of the great men who came before him, looking at well-painted pictures, admiring the proper printing of collected books, and praising the just balance of some classical verse or music which time has judged and made worthy, he so admires and enjoys with a full consciousness that these things are flowing past him. He cannot

## On Experience

rely; he attempts no foothold. The equilibrium of his soul is only to be discovered in marching and continually marching. He now knows that he must go onward, he may not stand, for if he did he would fall. He must go forward and see the river of things run by. He must go forward—but to what goal?

There is a third phase, in which (as the experience of twenty Christian centuries determines) that goal also is discovered, and for some who so discover it the experience of loss begins to possess a meaning.

What this third phase is I confess I do not know, and as I have not felt it I cannot describe it, but when that third phase is used as I have suggested a character of wisdom enters into those so using it; a character of wisdom which is the nearest thing our dull time can show to inspiration and to prophecy.

It is to be noted also that in this third phase of man's experience of doom those who are not wise are most unwise indeed; and that where the age of experience has not produced this sort of clear maturity in the spirit, then it produces either despair or folly, or an exaggerated shirking of reality, which, being a falsehood, is wickeder than despair, and far more inhuman than mere foolishness. Thus those who in the third phase of which I speak have not attained the wisdom

## On Something

which I here recognize will often sink into a passion of avarice, accumulating wealth which they cannot conceivably enjoy; a stupidity so manifest that every age of satire has found it the most facile of commonplaces. Or, again, those who fail to find wisdom in that last phase will constantly pretend an unreal world, making plans for a future that cannot be there. So did a man eleven years ago in the neighbourhood of Regent Street, for this man, being eighty-seven years of age, wealthy, and wholly devoid of friends, or near kindred, took a flat, but he insisted that the lease should be one of not less than sixty years. In a hundred ways this last phase if it is degraded is most degraded; and, though it is not worst, it is most sterile when it falls to a mere regret for the past.

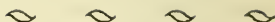
Now it is here that the opposite, the wisdom, of old age appears; for the old, when they are wise, are able to point out to men and to women of middle age what these least suspect, and can provide them with a good medicine against the insecurity of the soul. The old in their wisdom can tell those just beneath them this: that though all things human pass, all bear their fruit. They can say: "You believe that such and such a woman, with her courtesy, her travel, her sharp edge of judgment, her large humanity, and her love of the comedy of the world, being



## On Experience

dead can never be replaced. There are, growing up around you, characters quite insufficient, and to you, perhaps, contemptible, who will in their fruiting display all these things." There never was, nor has been, a time (say those who are acquainted with the great story of Europe) when Christendom has failed. Out of dead passages there has sprung up suddenly, and quite miraculously, whatever was thought to be lost. So it has been with our music, so with the splendour of our armies, so with the fabric of our temples, so with our deathless rhymes. The old, when they are wise, can do for men younger than they what history does for the reader; but they can do it far more poignantly, having expression in their eyes and the living tones of a voice. It is their business to console the world.

## On Immortality



HERE and there, scattered rarely among men as men are now, you will find one man who does not pursue the same ends as his fellows; but in a peculiar manner leads his life as though his eyes were fixed upon some distant goal or his appetites subjected to some constant and individual influence.

Such a man may be doing any one of many things. He may be a poet, and his occupation may be the writing of good verse, pleased at its sound and pleased as well by the reflection of the pleasure it will give to others. Or he may be devoted, and follow a creed, a single truth or a character which he loves, and whose influence and glory he makes it his business to propagate. Or he may be but a worker in some material, a carver in wood, or a manager of commercial affairs, or a governor and administrator of men, and yet so order his life that his work and his material are his object: not his gain in the end—not his appreciable and calculable gain at least—nor his immediate and ephemeral pleasures.

## On Immortality

Such men, if you will examine them, will prove intent upon one ultimate completion of their being which is also (whether they know it or not) a reward, and those who have carefully considered the matter and give it expression say that such men are out a-hunting for Immortality.

Now what is that? There was a man, before the Normans came to England, who sailed from the highest Scandinavian mountains, I think, towards these shores, and landing, fought against men and was wounded so that he was certain to die. When they asked him why he had undertaken that adventure, he answered: "That my name might live between the lips of men."

The young, the adventurous, the admired—how eagerly and how properly do they not crave for glory. Fame has about it a divine something as it were an echo of perfect worship and of perfect praise, which, though it is itself imperfect, may well deceive the young, the adventurous, and the admired. How great to think that things well done and the enlargement of others shall call down upon our names, even when all is lost but the mere names, a continuous and an increasing benediction. Nay, more than this: how great to think of the noise only of an achievement, and to be sure that the poem written, the carving concluded, or the battle won, the achievement of itself, though

## On Something

the name of the achiever be perished or unknown, shall awake those tremendous echoes.

But wait a moment. What is that thing which so does and so desires? What end does *it* find in glory? *It* is not the receiver of the benefit; *it* will not hear that large volume of recognition and of salute. Twist it how you will no end is here, nor in such a pursuit is the pursuer satisfied.

It is true that men who love to create for themselves imaginary stuff, and to feed their cravings, if they cannot with substance then with dreams, perpetually pretend a satisfaction in such acquirements which the years as they proceed tell them with increasing iteration that they do not feel. The young, the adventurous, the admired, may at first be deceived by such a glamour, and it is in the providential scheme of human affairs, and it is for the good of us all that the pleasing cheat should last while the good things are doing. Thus do substantial verse and noble sculpture and building whose stuff is lasting and whose beauty is almost imperishable, rise to the advantage of mankind—but oh! there is no lasting in the dream.

There comes a day of truth inwardly but ineradicably perceived, when such things, such aspirations, are clearly known for what they are. Of all the affections that pass, of all those things which being made by a power itself

## On Immortality

perishable, must be unmade again, some may be less, others more lasting, but not one remains for ever.

Nor is this all. What is it, I say, which did the thing and suffered the desire? Not the receiver, still less the work achieved, it was the man that so acted and so desired; and that part of him which was affected thus we call the Soul. Then, surely (one may reason) the soul has, apt to its own nature, a completion which is also a reward, and there is something before it which is not the symbol or the cheat of perfect praise, but is perfect praise; there is surely something before it which is not the symbol or the cheat of life, but life completed.

Now stand at night beneath a clear heaven solemn and severe with stars, comprehend (as the great achievement of our race permits us now to do) what an emptiness and what a scale are there, and you will easily discover in that one glance, or you will feel at least the appalling thing which tempts men to deny their immortality.

There is no man who has closely inquired upon this, and there is none who has troubled himself and admitted a reasonable anxiety upon it, who has not well retained the nature of despair. Those who approach their fellow-beings with assertion and with violence in such a matter, affirming their discovery, their conviction, or

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their acquired certitude, do an ill service to their kind. It is not thus that the last things should be approached nor the most tremendous problem which man is doomed to envisage be propounded and solved. Ah! the long business in this world! The way in which your deepest love goes up in nothingness and breaks away, and the way in which the strongest and the most continuous element of your dear self is dissipated and fails you in some moment; if I do not understand these things in a man nor comprehend how the turn of the years can obscure or obliterate a man's consciousness of what his end should be, then I act in brute ignorance, or what is much worse, in lack of charity.

How should you not be persuaded, ephemeral intelligence? Does not every matter which you have held closely enough and long enough escape you and withdraw? Is not that doom true of things which were knit into us, and were of necessity, so to speak, prime parts of our being? Is it not true of the network and the structure which supports whatever we are, and without which we cannot imagine ourselves to be? We ourselves perish. Of that there is no doubt at all. One is here talking and alive. His friends are with him: on the time when they shall meet again he is utterly not there. The motionless flesh before his mourners is nothing. It is not a

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simulacrum, it is not an outline, it is not a recollection of the man, but rather something wholly gone useless. As for that voice, those meanings in the eyes, and that gesture of the hand, it has suddenly and entirely ceased to be.

Then how shall we deny the dreadful conclusion (to which how many elder civilizations have not turned!) that we must seek in vain for any gift to the giver for any workers' wage, or, rather, to put it more justly, for a true end to the life we lead. Yet it is not so. The conclusion is more weighty by far that all things bear their fruit: that the comprehender and the master of so much, the very *mind*, suffers to no purpose and in one moment a tragic, final, and unworthy catastrophe agrees with nothing other that we know. It is not thus of the good things of the earth that turn kindly into the earth again. It cannot be thus with that which makes of all the earth a subject thing for contemplation and for description, for understanding, and, if it so choose—for sacrifice.

Those of our race who have deliberately looked upon the scroll and found there nothing to read, who have lifted the curtain and found beyond it nothing to see, have faced their conclusions with a nobility which should determine us; for that nobility does prove, or, if it does not prove, compels us to proclaim, that the soul of man which

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breeds it has somewhere a lasting home. The conclusion is imperative.

Let not any one pretend in his faith that his faith is immediately evident and everywhere acceptable. There is in all who pretend to judgment a sense of the doubt that lies between the one conviction and the other, and all acknowledge that the scales swing normally upon the beam for normal men. But they swing—and one is the heavier.

The poets, who are our interpreters, know well and can set forth the contrast between such intimations and such despair.

The long descent of wasted days  
To these at last have led me down :  
Remember that I filled with praise  
The meaningless and doubtful ways  
That lead to an eternal town.

Moreover, since we have spoken of the night it is only reasonable to consider the alternate dawn. The quality of light, its merry action on the mind, the daylit sky under whose benediction we repose and in which our kind has always seen the picture of its final place : are these then visions and deccits ?



## On Sacramental Things    ∞    ∞    ∞

**I**T is good for a man's soul to sit down in the silence by himself and to think of those things which happen by some accident to be in communion with the whole world. If he has not the faculty of remembering these things in their order and of calling them up one after another in his mind, then let him write them down as they come to him upon a piece of paper. They will comfort him; they will prove a sort of solace against the expectation of the end. To consider such things is a sacramental occupation. And yet the more I think of them the less I can quite understand in what elements their power consists.

A woman smiling at a little child, not knowing that others see her, and holding out her hands towards it, and in one of her hands flowers; an old man, lean and active, with an eager face, walking at dusk upon a warm and windy evening westward towards a clear sunset below dark and flying clouds; a group of soldiers, seen suddenly in manœuvres, each man intent upon his business, all working at the wonderful trade, taking their places with exactitude and order and yet with

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elasticity; a deep, strong tide running back to the sea, going noiselessly and flat and black and smooth, and heavy with purpose under an old wall; the sea smell of a Channel seaport town; a ship coming up at one out of the whole sea when one is in a little boat and is waiting for her, coming up at one with her great sails merry and every one doing its work, with the life of the wind in her, and a balance, rhythm, and give in all that she does which marries her to the sea—whether it be a fore and aft rig and one sees only great lines of the white, or a square rig and one sees what is commonly and well called a leaning tower of canvas, or that primal rig, the triangular sail, that cuts through the airs of the world and clove a way for the first adventures, whatever its rig, a ship so approaching an awaiting boat from which we watch her is one of the things I mean.

I would that the taste of my time permitted a lengthy list of such things: they are pleasant to remember! They do so nourish the mind! A glance of sudden comprehension mixed with mercy and humour from the face of a lover or a friend; the noise of wheels when the guns are going by; the clatter-clank-clank of the pieces and the shouted halt at the head of the column; the noise of many horses, the metallic but united and harmonious clamour of all those ironed hoofs, rapidly occupying the highway; chief and most

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persistent memory, a great hill when the morning strikes it and one sees it up before one round the turning of a rock after the long passes and despairs of the night.

When a man has journeyed and journeyed through those hours in which there is no colour or shape, all along the little hours that were made for sleep and when, therefore, the waking soul is bewildered or despairs, the morning is always a resurrection—but especially when it reveals a height in the sky.

This last picture I would particularly cherish, so great a consolation is it, and so permanent a grace does it lend later to the burdened mind of a man.

For when a man looks back upon his many journeys—so many rivers crossed, and more than one of them forded in peril; so many swinging mountain roads, so many difficult steeps and such long wastes of plains—of all the pictures that impress themselves by the art or kindness of whatever god presides over the success of journeys, no picture more remains than that picture of a great hill when the day first strikes it after the long burden of the night.

Whatever reasons a man may have for occupying the darkness with his travel and his weariness, those reasons must be out of the ordinary and must go with some bad strain upon the mind.

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Perhaps one undertook the march from an evil necessity under the coercion of other men, or perhaps in terror, hoping that the darkness might hide one, or perhaps for cool, dreading the unnatural heat of noon in a desert land; perhaps haste, which is in itself so wearying a thing, compelled one, or perhaps anxiety. Or perhaps, most dreadful of all, one hurried through the night afoot because one feared what otherwise the night would bring, a night empty of sleep and a night whose dreams were waking dreams and evil.

But whatever prompts the adventure or the necessity, when the long burden has been borne, and when the turn of the hours has come; when the stars have grown paler; when colour creeps back greyly and uncertainly to the earth, first into the greens of the high pastures, then here and there upon a rock or a pool with reeds, while all the air, still cold, is full of the scent of morning; while one notices the imperceptible disappearance of the severities of Heaven until at last only the morning star hangs splendid; when in the end of that miracle the landscape is fully revealed, and one finds into what country one has come; then a great hill before one, losing the forests upwards into rock and steep meadow upon its sides, and towering at last into the peaks and crests of the inaccessible places, gives a soul

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to the new land. . . . The sun, in a single moment and with the immediate summons of a trumpet-call, strikes the spear-head of the high places, and at once the valley, though still in shadow, is transfigured, and with the daylight all manner of things have come back to the world.

Hope is the word which gathers the origins of those things together, and hope is the seed of what they mean, but that new light and its new quality is more than hope. Livelihood is come back with the sunrise, and the fixed certitude of the soul; number and measure and comprehension have returned, and a just appreciation of all reality is the gift of the new day. Glory (which, if men would only know it, lies behind all true certitude) illumines and enlivens the seen world, and the living light makes of the true things now revealed something more than truth absolute; they appear as truth acting and creative.

This first shaft of the sun is to that hill and valley what a word is to a thought. It is to that hill and valley what verse is to the common story told; it is to that hill and valley what music is to verse. And there lies behind it, one is very sure, an infinite progress of such exaltations, so that one begins to understand, as the pure light shines and grows and as the limit of shadow descends the vast shoulder of the steep, what has been meant by those great phrases which

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still lead on, still comfort, and still make darkly wise, the un comforted wondering of mankind. Such is the famous phrase: "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those that serve Him."

So much, then, is conveyed by a hill-top at sunrise when it comes upon the traveller or the soldier after the long march of a night, the bending of the shoulders, and the emptiness of the dark.

Many other things put one into communion with the whole world.

Who does not remember coming over a lifting road to a place where the ridge is topped, and where, upon the further side, a broad landscape, novel or endeared by memory (for either is a good thing), bursts upon the seized imagination as a wave from the open sea, swelling up an inland creek, breaks and bursts upon the rocks of the shore? There is a place where a man passes from the main valley of the Rhone over into the valley of the Isère, and where the Grésivandan so suddenly comes upon him. Two gates of limestone rock, high as the first shoulders of the mountains, lead into the valley which they guard; it is a province of itself, a level floor of thirty miles, nourished by one river, and walled in up to the clouds on either side.

Or, again, in the champagne country, moving

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between great blocks of wood in the Forest of Rheims and always going upward as the ride leads him, a man comes to a point whence he suddenly sees all that vast plain of the invasions stretching out to where, very far off against the horizon, two days away, twin summits mark the whole site sharply with a limit as a frame marks a picture or a punctuation a phrase.

There is another place more dear to me, but which I doubt whether any other but a native of that place can know. After passing through the plough lands of an empty plateau, a traveller breaks through a little fringe of chestnut hedge and perceives at once before him the wealthiest and the most historical of European things, the chief of the great capitals of Christendom and the arena in which is now debated (and has been for how long!) the Faith, the chief problem of this world.

Apart from landscape other things belong to this contemplation: Notes of music, and, stronger even than repeated and simple notes of music, a subtle scent and its association, a familiar printed page. Perhaps the test of these sacramental things is their power to revive the past.

There is a story translated into the noblest of English writing by Dasent. It is to be found in his "Tales from the Norse." It is called the Story of the Master Maid.

## On Something

A man had found in his youth a woman on the Norwegian hills: this woman was faëry, and there was a spell upon her. But he won her out of it in various ways, and they crossed the sea together, and he would bring her to his father's house, but his father was a King. As they went over-sea together alone, he said and swore to her that he would never forget how they had met and loved each other without warning, but by an act of God, upon the Dovrefjeld. Come near his father's house, the ordinary influences of the ordinary day touched him; he bade her enter a hut and wait a moment until he had warned his father of so strange a marriage; she, however, gazing into his eyes, and knowing how the divine may be transformed into the earthly, quite as surely as the earthly into the divine, makes him promise that he will not eat human food. He sits at his father's table, still steeped in her and in the seas. He forgets his vow and eats human food, and at once he forgets.

Then follows much for which I have not space, but the woman in the hut by her magic causes herself to be at last sent for to the father's palace. The young man sees her, and is only slightly troubled as by a memory which he cannot grasp. They talk together as strangers; but looking out of the window by accident the King's son sees a bird and its mate; he points



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them out to the woman, and she says suddenly :  
"So was it with you and me high up upon the  
Dovrefjeld." Then he remembers all.

Now that story is a symbol, and tells the  
truth. We see some one thing in this world,  
and suddenly it becomes particular and sacra-  
mental ; a woman and a child, a man at evening,  
a troop of soldiers ; we hear notes of music, we  
smell the smell that went with a passed time, or  
we discover after the long night a shaft of light  
upon the tops of the hills at morning : there is a  
resurrection, and we are refreshed and renewed.

But why all these things are so neither I nor  
any other man can tell.

In Patria      ~      ~      ~      ~      ~

THERE is a certain valley, or rather profound cleft, through the living rock of certain savage mountains through which there roars and tumbles in its narrow trench the Segre, here but a few miles from its rising in the upland grass.

This cleft is so disposed that the smooth limestone slabs of its western wall stand higher than the gloomy steps of cliff upon its eastern, and thus these western cliffs take the glare of the morning sunlight upon them, or the brilliance of the moon when she is full or waning in the first part of her course through the night.

The only path by which men can go down that gorge clings to the eastern face of the abyss and is for ever plunged in shadow. Down this path I went very late upon a summer night, close upon midnight, and the moon just past the full. The air was exceedingly clear even for that high place, and the moon struck upon the limestone of the sheer opposing cliffs in a manner neither natural nor pleasing, but suggesting horror, and, as it were, something absolute, too simple for mankind.

## In Patria

It was not cold, but there were no crickets at such a level in the mountains, nor any vegetation there except a brush here and there clinging between the rocks and finding a droughty rooting in their fissures. Though the map did not include this gorge, I could guess that it would be impossible for me, save by following that dreadful path all night, to find a village, and therefore I peered about in the dense shadow as I went for one of those overhanging rocks which are so common in that region, and soon I found one. It was a refuge better than most that I had known during a lonely travel of three days, for the whole bank was hollowed in, and there was a distinct, if shallow, cave bordering the path. Into this, therefore, I went and laid down, wrapping myself round in a blanket I had brought from the plains beyond the mountains, and, with my loaf and haversack and a wine-skin that I carried for a pillow, I was very soon asleep.

. . . . .

When I woke, which I did with suddenness, it seemed to me to have turned uncommonly cold, and when I stepped out from my blanket (for I was broad awake) the cold struck me still more nearly, and was not natural in such a place. But I knew how a mist will gather suddenly upon these hills, and I went out and stood upon the

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path to see what weather the hour had brought me. The sky, the narrow strip of sky above the gorge, was filled with scud flying so low that now and then bulges or trails of it would strike against that western cliff of limestone and wreath down it, and lift and disappear, but fast as the scud was moving there was no noise of wind. I seemed not to have slept long, for the moon was still riding in heaven, though her light now came in rapid waxing and waning between the shreds of the clouds. Beneath me a little angrier than before (so that I thought to myself, "Up in the hills it has been raining") roared the Segre.

As I stood thus irresolute and quite awakened from sleep, I saw to my right the figure of a little man who beckoned. No fear took me as I saw him, but a good deal of wonder, for he was oddly shaped, and in the darkness of that pathway I could not see his face. But in his presence by some accident of the mind many things changed their significance: the gorge became personal to me, the river a voice, the fitful moonlight a warning, and it seemed as though some safety was to be sought, or some certitude, upwards, whence I had come, and I felt oddly as though the little figure were a guide.

He was so short as I watched him that I thought him almost a dwarf, though I have seen men as small guiding the mules over the breaches

## In Patria

in the ridge of the hills. He was hunchback, or the great pack he was carrying made him seem so. His thin legs were long for his body, and he walked too rapidly, with bent knees; his right hand he leant upon a great sapling; upon his head was a very wide hat, the stuff of which I could not see in the darkness. Now and again he would turn and beckon me, and he always went on a little way before. As for me, partly because he beckoned, but more because I felt prescient of a goal, I followed him.

No mountain path seems the same when you go up it and when you go down it. This it was which rendered unfamiliar to me the shapes of the rocks and the turnings of the gorge as I hurried behind my companion. With every passing moment, moreover, the light grew less secure, the scud thickened, and as we rose towards the lower level of those clouds the mass of them grew more even, until at last the path and some few yards of the emptiness which sank away to our left was all one could discern. The mist was full of a diffused moonlight, but it was dense. I wondered when we should strike out of the gorge and begin to find the upland grasses that lead toward the highest summits of those hills, for thither I was sure were we bound.

Soon I began to recognize that easier trend in the rock wall, those increasing and flattened

## On Something

gullies which mark the higher slope. Here and there an unmelted patch of snow appeared, grass could be seen, and at last we were upon the roll of the high land where it runs up steeply to the ridge of the chain. Moss and the sponging of moisture in the turf were beneath our feet, the path disappeared, and our climb got steeper and steeper; and still the little man went on before, pressing eagerly and breasting the hill. I neither felt fatigue nor noticed that I did not feel it. The extreme angle of the slope suited my mood, nor was I conscious of its danger, though its fantastic steepness exhilarated me because it was so novel to be trying such things at night in such a weather. The moon, I think, must by this time have been near its sinking, for the mist grew full of darkness round about us, and at last it was altogether deep night. I could see my companion only as a blur of difference in the darkness, but even as this change came I felt the steepness relax beneath my climbing feet, the round level of the ridge was come, and soon again we were hurrying across it until there came, in a hundred yards or so, a moment in which my companion halted, as men who know the mountains halt when they reach an edge below which they know the land to break away.

## In Patria

He was waiting, and I waited with him: we had not long so to stand.

The mist which so often lifts as one passes the crest of the hills lifted for us also, and, below, it was broad day.

Ten thousand feet below, at the foot of forest cascading into forest, stretched out into an endless day, was the Weald. There were the places I had always known, but not as I had known them: they were in another air. There was the ridge, and the river valley far off to the eastward, and Pasham Pines, Amberley wild brooks, and Petworth the little town, and I saw the Rough clearly, and the hills out beyond the county, and beyond them farther plains, and all the fields and all the houses of the men I knew. Only it was much larger, and it was more intimate, and it was farther away, and it was certainly divine.

A broad road such as we have not here and such as they have not in those hills, a road for armies, sank back and forth in great gradients down to the plain. These and the forests were foreign; the Weald below, so many thousand feet below, was not foreign but transformed. The dwarf went down that road. I did not follow him. I saw him clearly now. His curious little coat of mountain stuff, his thin, bent legs walking rapidly, and the chestnut sapling by

## On Something

which he walked, holding it in his hand by the middle. I could see the brown colour of it, and the shininess of the bark of it, and the ovals of white where the branchlings had been cut away. So I watched him as he went down and down the road. He never once looked back and he no longer beckoned me.

In a moment, before a word could form in the mind, the mist had closed again and it was mortally cold; and with that cold there came to me an appalling knowledge that I was alone upon such a height and knew nothing of my way. The hand which I put to my shoulder where my blanket was found it wringing wet. The mist got greyer, my mind more confused as I struggled to remember, and then I woke and found I was still in the cave. All that business had been a dream, but so vivid that I carried it all through the day, and carry it still.

. . . . .

It was the very early morning; the gorge was full of mist, the Segre made a muffled roaring through such a bank of cloud; the damp of the mist was on everything. The stones in the pathway glistened, the air was raw and fresh, awaiting the rising of the sun. I took the path and went downward.



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