

Essays in Rebellion eBook

Essays in Rebellion

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Page 1

THE CATFISH

Before the hustling days of ice and of “cutters” rushing to and fro between Billingsgate and our fleets of steam-trawlers on the Dogger Bank, most sailing trawlers and long-line fishing-boats were built with a large tank in their holds, through which the sea flowed freely. Dutch eel-boats are built so still, and along the quays of Amsterdam and Copenhagen you may see such tanks in fishing-boats of almost every kind. Our East Coast fishermen kept them chiefly for cod. They hoped thus to bring the fish fresh and good to market, for, unless they were overcrowded, the cod lived quite as contentedly in the tanks as in the open sea. But in one respect the fishermen were disappointed. They found that the fish arrived slack, flabby, and limp, though well fed and in apparent health.

Perplexity reigned (for the value of the catch was much diminished) until some fisherman of genius conjectured that the cod lived only too contentedly in those tanks, and suffered from the atrophy of calm. The cod is by nature a lethargic, torpid, and plethoric creature, prone to inactivity, content to lie in comfort, swallowing all that comes, with cavernous mouth wide open, big enough to gulp its own body down if that could be. In the tanks the cod rotted at ease, rapidly deteriorating in their flesh. So, as a stimulating corrective, that genius among fishermen inserted one catfish into each of his tanks, and found that his cod came to market firm, brisk, and wholesome. Which result remained a mystery until his death, when the secret was published and a strange demand for catfish arose. For the catfish is the demon of the deep, and keeps things lively.

This irritating but salutary stimulant in the tank (to say nothing of the myriad catfishes in the depths of ocean!) has often reminded me of what the Lord says to Mephistopheles in the Prologue to *Faust*. After observing that, of all the spirits that deny, He finds a knave the least of a bore, the Lord proceeds:

“Des Menschen Thaetigkeit kann allzuleicht erschlaffen,
Er liebt sich bald die unbedingte Ruh;
Drum geb’ ich ihm gern den Gesellen zu,
Der reizt und wirkt und muss als Teufel, schaffen.”

Is not the parallel remarkable? Man’s activity, like the cod’s, turns too readily to slumber; he is much too fond of unconditioned ease; and so the Lord gives him a comrade like a catfish, to stimulate, rouse, and drive to creation, as a devil may. There sprawls man, by nature lethargic and torpid as a cod, prone to inactivity, content to lie in comfort swallowing all that comes, with wide-open mouth, big enough to gulp himself down, if that could be. There he sprawls, rotting at ease, and rapidly deteriorating in body and soul, till one little demon of the spiritual deep is inserted into his surroundings,

and makes him firm, brisk, and wholesome in a trice—"in half a jiffy," as people used to say.

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“Der reizt und wirkt”—the words necessarily recall a much older parable than the catfish—the parable of the little leaven inserted in a piece of dough until it leavens the whole lump by its “working,” as cooks and bakers know. Goethe may have been thinking of that. Leaven is a sour, almost poisonous kind of stuff, working as though by magic, moving in a mysterious way, causing the solid and impracticable dough to upheave, to rise, expand, bubble, swell, and spout like a volcano. To all races there has been something devilish, or at least demonic, in the action of leaven. It is true that in the ancient parable the comparison lay between leaven and the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven was like a little leaven that leavens the whole lump, and Goethe says that Mephisto, one of the Princes of Evil, also works like that. But whether we call the leaven a good or evil thing makes little difference. The effect of its mysterious powers of movement and upheaval is in the end salutary. It works upon the lump just as the catfish, that demon of the deep, preserves the lumpish cod from the apathy and degeneration of comfort, and as Mephisto, that demon of the world, acts upon the lethargy of mankind working within him, stimulating, driving to production as a devil may.

“A society needs to have a ferment in it,” said Professor Sumner of Yale, in his published essays. Sometimes, he said, the ferment takes the form of an enthusiastic delusion or an adventurous folly; sometimes merely of economic opportunity and hope of luxury; in other ages frequently of war. And, indeed, it was of war that he was writing, though himself a pacific man, and in all respects a thinker of obstinate caution. A society needs to have a ferment in it—a leaven, a catfish, a Mephisto, the queer, unpleasant, disturbing touch of the kingdom of heaven. Take any period of calm and rest in the life of the world or the history of the arts. Take that period which great historians have agreed to praise as the happiest of human ages—the age of the Antonines. How benign and unruffled it was! What bland and leisurely culture could be enjoyed in exquisite villas beside the Mediterranean, or in flourishing municipalities along the Rhone! Many a cultivated and comfortable man must have wished that reasonable peace to last for ever. The civilised world was bathed in the element of calm, the element of gentle acquiescence. All looked so quiet, so imperturbable; and yet all the time the little catfish of Christianity (or the little leaven, if you will) was at its work, irritating, disturbing, stimulating with salutary energy to upheaval, to rebellion, to the soul’s activity that saves from bland and reasonable despair. Like a fisherman over-anxious for the peace of the cod in his tank, the philosophic Emperor tried to stamp the catfish down, and hoped to preserve a philosophic quietude by the martyrdom of Christians in those flourishing municipalities on the Rhone. Of course he failed, as even the most humane and philosophic persecutors usually fail, but had he succeeded, would not the soul of Europe have degenerated into a flabbiness, lethargy, and desperate peace?

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Take history where you will, when a new driving force enters the world, it is a nuisance, a disturbing upheaval, a troubling agitation, a plaguey fish. Think how the tiresome Reformation disturbed the artists of Italy and Renaissance scholars; or how Cromwell disgusted the half-way moderates, how the Revolution jogged the sentimental theorists of France, how Kant shattered the Supreme Being of the Deists, and Byron set the conventions of art and life tottering aghast. Take it where you will, the approach of the soul's catfish is watched with apprehension and violent dislike, all the more because it saves from torpor. It saves from what Hamlet calls—

“That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat—
Of habits devil.”

In the Futurist exhibition held in Sackville Street in 1912, one of the most notable pictures was called “Rebellion.” The catalogue told us that it represented “the collision of two forces, that of the revolutionary element made up of enthusiasm and red lyricism against the force of inertia and the reactionary resistance of tradition.” The picture showed a crowd of scarlet figures rushing forward in a wedge. Before them went successive wedge-shaped lines, impinging upon dull blue. They represented, we were told, the vibratory waves of the revolutionary element in motion. The force of inertia and the reactionary resistance of tradition were pictured as rows on rows of commonplace streets. The waves of the revolutionary element had knocked them all askew. Though they still stood firmly side by side to all appearance (to keep up appearances, as we say) they were all knocked aslant, “just as a boxer is bent double by receiving a blow in the wind.”

We may be sure that inertia in all its monotonous streets does not like such treatment. It likes it no more than the plethoric cod likes the catfish close behind its tail. And it is no consolation either to inertia or cod to say that this disturbing element serves an ultimate good, rendering it alert, firm, and wholesome of flesh. However salutary, the catfish is far from popular among the placid residents of the tank, and it is fortunate that neither in tanks nor streets can the advisability of catfish or change be submitted to the referendum of the inert. In neither case would the necessary steps for advance in health and activity be adopted. To be sure, it is just possible to overdo the number of catfish in one tank. At present in this country, for instance, and, indeed, in the whole world, there seem to be more catfish than cod, and the resulting liveliness is perhaps a little excessive, a little “jumpy.” But in the midst of all the violence, turmoil, and upheaval, it is hopeful to remember that of the deepest and most salutary change which Europe has known it was divinely foretold that it would bring not peace but a sword.

II

REBELLION

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For certain crimes mankind has ordained penalties of exceptional severity, in order to emphasise a general abhorrence. In Rome, for example, a parricide, or the murderer of any near relation, was thrown into deep water, tied up in a sack together with a dog, a cock, a viper, and a monkey, which were probably symbols of his wickedness, and must have given him a lively time before death supervened. Similarly, the English law, always so careful of domestic sanctitude in women, provided that a wife who killed her husband should be dragged by a horse to the place of execution and burnt alive. We need not recall the penalties considered most suitable for the crime of religious difference—the rack, the fire, the boiling oil, the tearing pincers, the embrace of the spiky virgin, the sharpened edge of stone on which the doubter sat, with increasing weights tied to his feet, until his opinions upon heavenly mysteries should improve under the stress of pain. When we come to rebellion, the ordinance of English law was more express. In the case of a woman, the penalty was the same as for killing her husband—that crime being defined as “petty treason,” since the husband is to her the sacred emblem of God and King. So a woman rebel was burnt alive as she stood, head, quarters, and all. But male rebels were specially treated, as may be seen from the sentence passed upon them until the reign of George III.[1] These were the words that Judge Jeffreys and Scroggs, for instance, used to roll out with enjoyable eloquence upon the dazed agricultural labourer before them:

“The sentence of the Court now is that you be conveyed from hence to the place from where you came, and from there be drawn to the place of execution upon hurdles; that you be hanged by the neck; that you be cut down alive; that your bowels be taken out and burnt in your view; that your head be severed from your body; that your body be divided into four quarters, and your quarters be at the disposition of the King: and may the God of infinite mercy be merciful to your soul. Amen.”

“Why all this cookery?” once asked a Scottish rebel, quoted by Swift. But the sentence, with its confiding appeal to a higher Court than England’s, was literally carried out upon rebels in this country for at least four and a half centuries. Every detail of it (and one still more disgusting) is recorded in the execution of Sir William Wallace, the national hero of Scotland, more generally known to the English of the time as “the man of Belial,” who was executed at Tyburn in 1305.[2] The rebels of 1745 were, apparently, the last upon whom the full ritual was performed, and Elizabeth Gaunt, burnt alive at Tyburn in 1685 for sheltering a conspirator in the Rye House Plot, was the last woman up to now intentionally put to death in this country for a purely political offence. The long continuance of so savage a sentence is proof of the abhorrence in which the crime of rebellion has been held. And in many minds the abhorrence still subsists. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, for instance, one of our greatest authorities on criminal law, wrote in 1880:

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"My opinion is that we have gone too far in laying capital punishment aside, and that it ought to be inflicted in many cases not at present capital. I think, for instance, that political offences should in some cases be punished with death. People should be made to understand that to attack the existing state of society is equivalent to risking their own lives."[3]

Among ourselves the opinion of this high authority has slowly declined. No one supposed that Doctor Lynch, for instance, would be executed as a rebel for commanding the Irish Brigade that fought for the Boers during the South African War, though he was condemned to death by the highest Court in the kingdom. No Irish rebel has been executed for about a century, unless his offence involved some one's death. On the other hand, during the Boer War, the devastation of the country and the destruction of the farms were frequently defended on the ground that, after the Queen's proclamations annexing the two Republics, all the inhabitants were rebels; and some of the extreme newspapers even urged that for that reason no Boer with arms in his hand should be given quarter. On the strength of a passage in Scripture, Mr. Kipling, at the time, wrote a pamphlet identifying rebellion with witchcraft. A few Cape Boers who took up arms for the assistance of their race were shot without benefit of prisoners of war. And in India during 1907 and 1908 men of unblemished private character were spirited away to jail without charge or trial and kept there for months—a fate that could not have befallen any but political prisoners.

Outside our own Empire, I have myself witnessed the suppression of rebellions in Crete and Macedonia by the destruction of villages, the massacre of men, women, and children, and the violation of women and girls, many of whom disappeared into Turkish harems. And I have witnessed similar suppressions of rebellion by Russia in Moscow, in the Baltic Provinces, and the Caucasus, by the burning of villages, the slaughter of prisoners, and the violation of women. All this has happened within the last sixteen years, the worst part within nine and a half. Indeed, in Russia the punishments of exile, torture, and hanging have not ceased since 1905, though the death penalty has been long abolished there except for political offences. In the summer of 1909 I was also present during the suppression of the outbreak in Barcelona, which culminated in the execution of Senor Ferrer under a military Court.

From these recent events it is evident that Sir James Stephen's attitude towards rebellion is shared by many civilised governments. Belligerents—that is to say, subjects of one State engaged in war with another State—have now nominally secured certain rights under International Law. The first Hague Conference (1899) framed a "Convention with respect to the Laws and Customs of Wars on Land" which forbade the torture or cruel treatment of prisoners,

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the refusal of quarter, the destruction of private property, unless such destruction were imperatively demanded by the necessities of war, the pillage of towns taken by assault, disrespect to religion and family honour (including, I suppose, the honour of women and girls), and the infliction of penalties on the population owing to the acts of individuals for which it could not be regarded as collectively responsible.

In actual war this Convention is not invariably observed, as was seen at Tripoli in 1911, but in the case of rebellion there is no such Convention at all. I have known all those regulations broken with impunity, and in most cases without protest from the other Powers. Just as, under the old law of England, the rebel was executed with circumstances of special atrocity, so at the present time, under the name of crushing rebellion, men are tortured and flogged, no quarter is given, they are executed without trial, their private property is pillaged, their towns and villages are destroyed, their women violated, their children killed, penalties are imposed on districts owing to acts for which the population is not collectively responsible—and nothing said. That each Power is allowed to deal with its own subjects in its own way is becoming an accepted rule of international amenity. It was not the rule of Cromwell, nor of Canning, nor of Gladstone, but it has now been consecrated by the Liberal Government which came into power in 1906.

In the summer of 1909, it is true, the rule was broken. Mulai Hafid, Sultan of Morocco, was reported to be torturing his rebel prisoners according to ancestral custom, and rumours came that he had followed a French king's example in keeping the rebel leader, El Roghi, in a cage like a tame eagle, or had thrown him to the lions to be torn in pieces before the eyes of the royal concubines. Then the European Powers combined to protest in the name of humanity. It was something gained. But no great courage was required to rebuke the Sultan of Morocco, if England, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Spain combined to do it; and his country was so desirable for its minerals, barley, and dates that a little courage in dealing with him might even prove lucrative in the end. When Russia treated her rebellious subjects with tortures and executions more horrible than anything reported from Morocco, the case was very different. Then alliances and understandings were confirmed, substantial loans were arranged in France and England, Kings and Emperors visited the Tsar, and the cannon of our fleet welcomed him to our waters amid the applause of our newspapers and the congratulations of a Liberal Government.

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It is evident, then, that, in Sir James Stephen's words, subjects are in most countries still made to understand that to attack the existing state of society is equivalent to risking their own lives. Under our own rule, no matter what statesmen like Gladstone and John Morley have in past years urged in favour of the mitigation of penalties for political offences, such offences are, as a matter of fact, punished with special severity; unless, of course, the culprit is intimately connected with great riches, like Dr. Jameson, who was imprisoned as a first-class misdemeanant for the incalculable crime of making private war upon another State; or unless the culprit is intimately connected with votes, like Mr. Ginnell, the Irish cattle-driver, who was treated with similar politeness. Otherwise, until quite lately, even in this country we executed a political criminal with unusual pain. In India we recently kept political suspects imprisoned without charge or trial. And in England we have lately sentenced women to terms of imprisonment that certainly would never have been imposed for their offences on any but political offenders.

This exceptional severity springs from a primitive and natural conception of the State—a conception most logically expressed by Hobbes of Malmesbury under the similitude of a “mortal God” or Leviathan, the almost omnipotent and unlimited source of authority.

“The Covenant of the State,” says Hobbes, “is made in such a manner as if every man should say to every man: ‘I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him and authorise all his actions in like manner.’ This done, the multitude so united is called a Commonwealth, in Latin Civitas. This is the generation of that great Leviathan, that mortal God, to whom we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence.”

Hobbes considered the object of this Covenant to be peace and common defence. “Without a State,” he said, “the life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” The preservation of the State was to him of transcendent importance.

“Loss of liberty,” he wrote, “is really no inconvenience, for it is the only means by which we have any possibility of preserving ourselves. For if every man were allowed the liberty of following his own conscience, in such differences of consciences, they would not live together in peace an hour.”

Under such a system, it follows that rebellion is the worst of crimes. Hobbes calls it a war renewed—a renouncing of the Covenant. He was so terrified of it that he dwelt upon the danger of reading Greek and Roman history (probably having Plutarch and his praise of rebels most in mind)—“which venom,” he says, “I will not doubt to compare to the biting of a mad dog.” In all leaders of rebellion he found only three conditions—to be discontented with their own lot, to be eloquent speakers, and to be men of mean judgment and capacity (*De Corpore Politico*, II.). And as to punishment:

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“On rebels,” he said, “vengeance is lawfully extended, not only to the fathers, but also to the third and fourth generations not yet in being, and consequently innocent of the fact for which they are afflicted.”

We may take Hobbes as the philosopher of the extreme idea of the State and the consequent iniquity of rebellion. His is the ideal of the Hive, in which the virgin workers devote their whole lives without complaint to the service of the Queen and her State-supported grubs, while the drones are mercilessly slaughtered as soon as one of them has fulfilled his rapturous but suicidal functions for the future swarm. This ideal found its highest human example in the Spartan State, which trained its men to have no private existence at all, and even to visit their own wives by stealth. But we find the ideal present in some degree among Central Africans when they bury valuable slaves and women alive with their chief; and among the Japanese when mothers kill themselves if their sons are prevented from dying for their country; and among the Germans when the drill-sergeant shouts his word of command.

In fact, all races and countries are disciples of Hobbes when they address the Head of the State as “Your Majesty” or “Your Excellence,” when they decorate him with fur and feathers, and put a gold hat on his head and a gold walking-stick in his hand, and gird him with a sword that he never uses, and play him the same tune wherever he goes, and spread his platform with crimson though it is clean, and bow before him though he is dishonourable, and call him gracious though he is nasty-tempered, and august though he may be a fool. In the first instance, we go through all this make-believe because the Leviathan of the State is necessary for peace and self-defence, and without it our life would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. But we further endow the State with a personality we can almost see and handle, and we regard it as something that is able not only to protect our peace but to shed a reflected splendour on ourselves, giving us an importance not our own—just as schoolboys glory in their school, or Churchmen in their Church, or cricketers in their county, or fox-hunters in their pack of hounds.

It is this conception that makes rebellion so rare and so dangerous. In hives it seems never to occur. In rookeries, the rebels are pecked to death and their homes torn in pieces. In human communities we have seen how they are treated. Rebellion is the one crime for which there is no forgiveness—the one crime for which hanging is too good.

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Why is it, then, that all the world loves a rebel? Provided he is distant enough in time and space, all the world loves a rebel. Who are the figures in history round whom the people's imagination has woven the fondest dreams? Are they not such rebels as Deborah and Judith[4] and Joan of Arc; as Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the Gracchi and Brutus, William Tell, William Wallace, Simon de Montfort, Rienzi, Wat Tyler, Jack Cade, Shan O'Neill, William the Silent, John Hampden and Pym, the Highlanders of the Forty-five, Robert Emmet and Wolf Tone and Parnell, Bolivar, John Brown of Harper's Ferry, Kossuth, Mazzini and Garibaldi, Danton, Victor Hugo, and the Russian revolutionists? These are haphazard figures of various magnitude, but all have the quality of rebellion in common, and all have been honoured with affectionate glory, romance, and even a mythology of worship.

So, too, the most attractive periods in history have been times of rebellion—the Reformation in Germany, the Revolt of the Netherlands from Spain, the Civil Wars in England, the War of Independence in America, the prolonged revolution in Russia. Within the last hundred years alone, how numerous the rebellions have been, as a rule how successful, and in every case how much applauded, except by the dominant authority attacked! We need only recall the French revolutions of 1832, 1848, and 1870 to 1871, including the Commune; the Greek War of Independence up to 1829; the Polish insurrections of 1830, 1863, and 1905; the liberation of the Danubian Principalities, 1858; of Bulgaria and Thessaly, 1878; of Crete, 1898; the revolution in Hungary, 1848; the restoration of Italy, 1849 to 1860; the revolution in Spain, 1868; the independence of the South American States, 1821 to 1825; the revolution in Russia, Finland, the Caucasus and Baltic Provinces, 1905; the revolution in Persia, 1907 to 1909; and the revolution of the Young Turks, 1908 to 1909. Among these we must also count the Nationalist movements in Ireland, Egypt, and India, as well as the present movement of women against the Government in our own country.

Under these various instances two distinct kinds of rebellion are obviously included—the rising of subject nationalities against a dominant power, as in Greece, Italy, the Caucasus, India, and Ireland; and the rising of subjects against their own Government, as in France, Russia, Persia, and Turkey, or in England in the case of the Suffragettes. It is difficult to say which kind is the more detested and punished with the greater severity by the central authority attacked. Was the Nationalist rising in the Caucasus or the Baltic Provinces suppressed with greater brutality than the almost simultaneous rising of Russian subjects in Moscow? I witnessed all three, and I think it was; chiefly because soldiers have less scruple in the slaughter and violation of people whose language they do not understand. Did our Government feel greater animosity towards the recent Indian movement

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or the Irish movement of thirty years ago than towards the rioters for the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867? I think they did. Vengeance upon external or Nationalist rebels is incited by racial antipathy. But, on the other hand, the outside world is more ready to applaud a Nationalist rebellion, especially if it succeeds, and we feel a more romantic affection for William Tell or Garibaldi than for Oliver Cromwell or Danton; I suppose because it is easier to imagine the splendour of liberty when a subject race throws off a foreign yoke.

So the history of rebellion involves us in a mesh of contradictions. Rebels have been generally regarded as deserving more terrible penalties than other criminals, yet all the world loves a rebel, at a distance. Nationalist rebellions are crushed with even greater ferocity than the internal rebellions of a State, and yet the leaders of Nationalist rebellions are regarded by the common world with a special affection of hero-worship. Obviously, we are here confronted with two different standards of conduct. On one side is the standard of Government, the States and Law, which denounces the rebel, and especially the Nationalist rebel, as the worst of sinners; on the other side we have the standard of the individual, the soul and liberty, which loves a rebel, especially a Nationalist rebel, and denies that he is a sinner at all.

Let us leave the Nationalist rebel, whose justification is now almost universally admitted (except by the dominant Power), even if he is unsuccessful, and consider only the rebel inside the State—the rebel against his own Leviathan—whose position is far more dubious. Job's Leviathan appears to have been a more fearsome and powerful beast than the elephant, but in India the elephant is taken as the symbol of wisdom, and when an Indian boy goes in for a municipal examination, he prays to the elephant-god for assistance. Now the ideal State of the elephant is the herd, and yet this herd of wisdom sometimes develops a rebel or "rogue" who seems to be striving after some fresh manner of existence and works terrible havoc among the elephantine conventions. Usually the herd combines to kill him and there is an end of the matter. Yet I sometimes think that the occasional and inexplicable appearance of the "rogue" at intervals during many thousand years may really have been the origin of that wisdom to which the Indians pray.

Similarly, mankind, which sometimes surpasses even the elephant in wisdom, has been continually torn between the idol of the Herd and the profanity of the rebel or Rogue, and it is perhaps through the rebel—the variation, as Darwin would call him—that man makes his advance. The rebel is what distinguishes our States and cities from the beehives and ant-heaps to which they are commonly compared. The progress of ants and bees appears to have been arrested. They seem to have developed a completely socialised polity thousands of years ago,

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perhaps before man existed, and then to have stopped—stopped *dead*, as we say. But mankind has never stopped. If a country's progress is arrested—if a people becomes simply conservative in habits, they may die slowly, like Egypt, or quickly, like Sparta, but they die and disappear, unless inspired by new life, like Japan, or by revolution, like France and possibly Russia. For, as we are almost too frequently told, change is the law of human life.

And may not this be just the very reason we are seeking for—the very reason why all the world loves a rebel, at a distance? Perhaps the world unconsciously recognises in him a symbol of change, a symbol of the law of life. We may not like him very near us—not uncomfortably near, as we say. For most change is uncomfortable. When I was shut up for many weeks in a London hospital, I felt a shrinking horror of going out, as though my skin had become too tender for this rough world. After I had been shut up for four months in a siege, daily exposed to shells, bullets, fever, and starvation, I felt no relief when the relief came, but rather a dread of confronting the perils of ordinary life. So quickly does the curse of stagnation fall upon us. And in support of stagnation are always ranged the immense forces of Society, the prosperous, the well-to-do, the people who are content if to-morrow is exactly like to-day. In support of stagnation stands the power of every kind of government—the King who sticks to his inherited importance, the Lords who stick to their lands and titles, the experts who stick to their theories, the officials who stick to their incomes, routine, and leisure, the Members of Parliament who stick to their seats.

But even more powerful than all these forces in support of stagnation is the enormous host of those whose first thought is necessarily their daily bread—men and women who dare not risk a change for fear of to-morrow's hunger—people for whom the crust is too uncertain for its certainty to be questioned. We often ask why it is that the poor—the working-people—endure their poverty and perpetual toil without overwhelming revolt. The reason is that they have their eyes fixed on the evening meal, and for the life of them they dare not lose sight of it.

So the rebel need never be afraid of going too fast. The violence of inertia—the suction of the stagnant bog—is almost invincible. Like the horse, we are creatures of cast-iron habit. We abandon ourselves easily to careless acquiescence. We make much of external laws, and, like a mother bemused with torpid beer when she overlays her child, we stifle the law of the soul because its crying is such a nuisance. Like a new baby, a new thought is fractious, restless, and incalculable. It saps our strength; it gives us no peace; it exposes a wider surface to pain. There is something indecent, uncontrolled, and unconscionable about it. Our friends like it best when it is asleep, and they like us better when it is buried.

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There is very little danger of rebellion going too far. The barriers confronting it are too solid, and the Idol of the Herd is too carefully enshrined. A perpetual rebellion of every one against everything would give us an insecure, though exciting, existence, and we are protected by man's disposition to obedience and his solid love of custom. Against the first vedettes of rebellion the army of routine will always muster, and it gathers to itself the indifferent, the startled cowards, the thinkers whose thought is finished, the lawyers whose laws are fixed—an innumerable host. They proceed to treat the rebels as we have seen. In all ages, rebellion has been met by the standing armies of permanence. If captured, it is put to the ordeal of fire and water, so as to try what stuff it is made of. Faith is rebellion's only inspiration and support, and a deal of faith is needed to resist the battle and the test. It was in thinking of the faith of rebels that an early Christian writer told of those who, having walked by faith, have in all ages been tortured, not accepting deliverance; and others have had trial of mockings and scourgings, and of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.[5] That is the test and the reward of faith. So strong is the grip of the Leviathan, so determined is mankind to allow no change in thought or life to survive if he can possibly choke it.

One of the most learned and inspiring of writers on political philosophy has said in a book published in 1910:

"It is advantageous to the organism [of the Slate] that the rights of suggestion, protest, veto, and revolt should be accorded to its members." [6]

That sounds very simple. We should all like to agree with it. But under that apparently innocent sentence one of the most perplexing of human problems lies hidden: what are the rights of liberty, what are the limits of revolt? Only in a State of ideal anarchy can liberty be complete and revolt universal, because there would be nothing to revolt against. And anarchy, though it is the goal of every man's desire, seems still far away, being, indeed, the Kingdom of Heaven, which that God rules whose service is perfect freedom and which only angels are qualified to inhabit. For though the law of the indwelling spirit is the only law that ought to count, not many of us are so little lower than the angels as to be a law unto ourselves.

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In a really democratic State, where the whole people had equal voices in the government and all could exercise free power of persuasion, active rebellion, I think, would be very rare and seldom justified. But there are, I believe, only four democratic States in the world. All four are small, and of these Finland is overshadowed by despotism, and Australia and New Zealand have their foreign relations controlled and protected by the mother country. Hitherto the experiment of a really democratic government has never been tried on this planet, except since 1909 in Norway, and even there with some limitations; and though democracy might possibly avert the necessity of rebellion, I rather doubt whether it can be called advantageous to any State to accord to its members the right of revolt. The State that allows revolt—that takes no notice of it—has abdicated; it has ceased to exist. But whether advantageous or not, no State has ever accorded that right in matters of government; nor does mankind accord it, without a prolonged struggle, even in religious doctrine and ordinary life. Every revolt is tested as by fire, and we do not otherwise know the temper of the rebels or the value of their purpose. Is it a trick? Is it a fad? Is it a plot for contemptible ends? Is it a riot—a moment's effervescence—or a revolution glowing from volcanic depths? We only know by the tests of ridicule, suffering, and death. In his "Ode to France," written in 1797, Coleridge exclaimed:

"The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion."

They rebel in vain because the Sensual and the Dark cannot hold out long against the pressure of the Herd—against the taunts of Society, against poverty, the loss of friends, the ruin of careers, the discomforts of prison, the misery of hunger and ill-treatment, and the terror of death. It is only by the supreme triumph over such obstacles that revolt vindicates its righteousness.

And so, if any one among us is driven to rebellion by an irresistible necessity of soul, I would not have him wonder at the treatment he will certainly receive. Such treatment is the hideous but inevitable test of his rebellion's value, for so persecuted they the rebels that were before him. Whether he rebels against a despotism like the Naples of fifty years ago or the Russia of to-day; or whether he rebels against the opinions or customs of his fellow-citizens, he will inevitably suffer, and the success that justifies rebellion may not be of this world. But if his cause is high, the shame of his suffering will ultimately be attributed to the government or to the majority, never to himself. There is a sense in which rebellion never fails. It is almost always a symptom of intolerable wrong, for the penalties are so terrible that it would not be attempted without terrible provocation. "Rebellion," as Burke said, "does not arise from a desire for change, but from the impossibility of suffering more." It concentrates attention upon the wrong. At the worst, though it be stamped into a grave, its spirit goes marching on, and the inspiration of all history would be lost were it not for rebellions, no matter whether they have succeeded or failed.

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It may be said that if the State cannot accord the right of revolt, the door is left open to all the violences, cruelty, and injustice with which Rebellion is at present suppressed. But that does not follow. The Liberal leaders of the last generation endeavoured to draw a distinction whereby political offenders should be treated better than ordinary criminals rather than worse, and, though their successors went back from that position, we may perhaps discern a certain uneasiness behind their appearance of cruelty, at all events in the case of titled and distinguished offenders. In war we have lately introduced definite rules for the exclusion of cruelty and injustice, and in some cases the rules are observed. The same thing could be done in rebellion. I have often urged that the rights of war, now guaranteed to belligerents, should be extended to rebels. The chances are that a rebellion or civil war has more justice on its side than international war, and there is no more reason why men should be tortured and refused quarter, or why women should be violated and have their children killed before their eyes by the agents of their own government than by strangers. Yet these things are habitually done, and my simple proposal appears ludicrously impossible. Just in the same way, sixty years ago, it was thought ludicrously impossible to deprive a man of his right to whip his slave.

But in any case, whether or not the rebel is to remain for all time an object of special vengeance to the State and Society, he has compensations. If he wins, the more barbarous his suppression has been, so much the finer is his triumph, so much the sweeter the wild justice of his revenge. It is a high reward when the slow world comes swinging round to your despised and persecuted cause, while the defeated persecutor whines at your feet that at heart he was with you all the time. If the rebel fails—well, it is a terrible thing to fail in rebellion. Bodily or social execution is almost inevitably the result. But, if his cause has been high, whether he wins or loses, he will have enjoyed a comradeship such as is nowhere else to be found—a comradeship in a common service that transfigures daily life and takes suffering and disgrace for honour. His spirit will have been illumined by a hope and an indignation that make the usual aims and satisfactions of the world appear trivial and fond. To him it has been granted to hand on the torch of that impassioned movement and change by which the soul of man appears slowly to be working out its transfiguration. And if he dies in the race, he may still hope that some glimmer of freedom will shine where he is buried.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: The following extract from *Drakard's Paper* for Feb. 23, 1813, shows the attempt at reform just a century ago, and the opposition to reform characteristic of officials: "House of Commons, Wed., Feb. 17. Sir Samuel Romilly rose, in pursuance of his notice, to move for leave to bring in a bill to repeal an Act of King William, making it capital to steal property above the value of 5s. in a dwelling house, &c.....

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“The next bill he proposed to introduce related to a part of the punishment for the crime of high treason, which was not at present carried into execution. The sentence for this crime, however, was, that the criminal should be dragged upon a hurdle to the place of execution, that he should be hanged by the neck, but cut down before he was dead, that his bowels should then be taken out and burnt before his face. As to that part of the sentence which relates to embowelling, it was never executed now, but this omission was owing to accident, or to the mercy of the executioner, not to the discretion of the judge.

“The Solicitor-General stated general objections to the plan of his learned friend.

“Leave was given to bring in the bills.”]

[Footnote 2: See *The History of Tyburn*, by Alfred Marks.]

[Footnote 3: *History of the Criminal Law of England*, vol. i. p. 478.]

[Footnote 4: Judith was not strictly a rebel, except that Nabuchodonosor claimed sovereignty over all the world and was avenging himself on all the earth. See Judith ii. 1.]

[Footnote 5: Hebrews xi. 35-38.]

[Footnote 6: *The Crisis of Liberalism*, by J.A. Hobson, p. 82.]

III

“EITHER COWARDS OR UNHAPPY”

Present grandeur is always hard to realise. The past and the distant are easily perceived. Like a far-off mountain, their glory is conspicuous, and the iridescent vapours of romance quickly gather round it. The main outline of a distant peak is clear, for rival heights are plainly surpassed, and sordid details, being invisible, cannot detract from it or confuse. The comfortable spectator may contemplate it in peace. It does not exact from him quick decisions or disquieting activity. The storms that sweep over it contribute to his admiration without wetting his feet, and his high estimate of its beauty and greatness may be enjoyed without apprehension of an avalanche. So the historian is like a picturesque spectator cultivating his sense of the sublime upon a distant prospect of the Himalayas. It is easy for him to admire, and the appreciation of a far-off heroic movement gives him quite a pleasant time. At his leisure he may descant with enthusiasm upon the forlorn courage of sacrificed patriots, and hymn, amidst general applause, the battles of freedom long since lost or won.



But in the thick of present life it is different. The air is obscured by murky doubt, and unaccustomed shapes stand along the path, indistinguishable under the light malign. Uncertain hope scarcely glimmers, nor can the termination of the struggle be divined. Tranquillity, giving time for thought, and the security that leaves the judgment clear, have both gone, and may never return. The ears are haunted with the laughter of vulgarity, and the judicious discouragement of prudence. Is there not as much to be said for

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taking one line as another? If there is talk of conflict, were it not better to leave the issue in the discriminating hands of One whose judgment is indisputable? Yet in the very midst of hesitations, mockery, and good advice, the next step must be taken, the decision must be swift, the choice is brief but eternal. There is no clear evidence of heroism around. The lighters do not differ much from the grotesque, the foolish, and the braggart ruck of men. No wonder that culture smiles and passes aloof upon its pellucid and elevating course. Culture smiles; the valet de chambre lurking in most hearts sniffs at the name of hero; hideous applause comes from securely sheltered crowds who hound victims to the combat, bloodthirsty as spectators at a bull-fight. In the sweat and twilight and crudity of the actual event, when so much is merely ludicrous and discomfiting, and all is enveloped in the element of fear, it is rare to perceive a glory shining, or to distinguish greatness amid the mud of contumely and commonplace.

Take the story of Italy's revival—the “Resurrection,” as Italians call it. In the summer of 1911, Italy was celebrating her jubilee of national rebellion, and English writers who spend their years, day by day or week by week, sneering at freedom, betraying nationality, and demanding vengeance on rebels, burst into ecstatic rhapsodies about that glorious but distant uprising. They raised the old war-cry of liberty over battle-fields long silent; they extolled to heaven the renown of the rebellious dead; their very periods glowed with Garibaldian red, white, and green; and rising to Byronic exaltation they concluded their nationalist effusions by adjuring freedom's weather-beaten flag:

“Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind!”

So they cried, echoing the voice of noble ghosts. But where in the scenes of present life around them have they hailed that torn but flying banner? What have they said or done for freedom's emblem in Persia, or in Morocco, or in Turkey? What support have they given it in Finland, or in the Caucasus, or in the Baltic Provinces? To come within our own sphere, what ecstatic rhapsodies have they composed to greet the rising nationalism of Ireland, or of India, or of Egypt? Or, in this country herself, what movement of men or of women striving to be free have they welcomed with their paeans of joy? Not once have they perceived a glory in liberty's cause to-day. Wherever a rag of that torn banner fluttered, they have denounced and stamped it down, declaring it should fly no more. Their admiration and enthusiasm are reserved for a buried past, and over triumphant rebellion they will sentimentalise for pages, provided it is securely bestowed in some historic age that can trouble them no more.

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Leaving them to their peace, let us approach a great name among our English singers of liberty. Swinburne stands in the foremost rank. In a collection of “English Songs of Italian Freedom,” edited by Mr. George Trevelyan, who himself has so finely narrated the epic of Italy’s redemption—in that collection Swinburne occupies a place among the very highest. No one has paid nobler tribute to the heroes of that amazing revolution. No one has told the sorrow of their failures with more sympathetic rage, or has poured so burning a scorn and so deep an obloquy upon their oppressors, whether in treacherous Church or alien State. It is magnificent, but alas! it was not war. By the time he wrote, the war was over, the victory won. By that time, not only the British crowd, but even people of rank, office, and culture could hardly fail to applaud. The thing had become definite and conspicuous. It was finished. It stood in quite visible splendour at a safe and comfortable distance. Ridicule had fallen impotent. Hesitation could now put down its foot. Superiority could smile, not in doubt, but in welcome. The element of fear was dissipated. The coward could shout, “I was your friend all along!” If a man wrote odes at all, he could write them to freedom then.

“By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept,
Remembering Thee,
That for ages of agony hast endured and slept,
And would’st not see.”

How superb! But when that was written the weeping and agony were over, the sleeper had awakened, the eyes saw. It was easy then to sing the heroism of rebellious sorrow. But afterwards, while an issue was still doubtful, while the cry of freedom was rising amid the obscurity, the dust, and uncertainty of actual combat, with how blind a scorn did that great poet of freedom pour upon Irishman and Boer a poison as virulent as he had once poured upon the priests and kings of Italy!

Let us emerge from the depression of such common blindness, and recall the memory of one whose vision never failed even in the midst of present gloom to detect the spark of freedom. A few great names stand beside his. Shelley, Landor, the Brownings, all gave the cause of Italy great and, in one case, the most exquisite verse, while the conflict was uncertain still. Even the distracted and hesitating soul of Clough, amid the dilettante contemplation of the arts in Rome, was rightly stirred. The poem that declared, “’Tis better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all,” displayed in him a rare decision, while, even among his hideous hexameters, we find the great satiric line—fit motto for spectators at the bull-fights of freedom—“So that I ’list not, hurrah for the glorious army of martyrs!” But the name of Byron rises above them all, not merely that he alone showed himself capable of deed, but that the deed gave to his words a solidity and concrete power such as deeds always give. First of Englishmen, as Mr. Trevelyan says, Byron perceived that a living Italy was struggling beneath the outward semblance of Metternich’s “order”; and as early as 1821 he prepared to join the Carbonari of Naples in their revolt for Italian liberty:

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"I suppose that they consider me," he wrote, "as a depot to be sacrificed, in case of accidents. It is no great matter, supposing that Italy would be liberated, who or what is sacrificed. It is a grand object—the very *poetry* of politics. Only think—a free Italy!"

That was written in freedom's darkest age, between Waterloo and the appearance of Mazzini, and that grand object was not to be reached for forty years. In the meantime, true to his guiding principle:

"Then battle for freedom whenever you can,
And, if not shot or hang'd, you'll get knighted,"

Byron had sacrificed himself for Greece as nobly as he was prepared to sacrifice himself for Italy. It was a time of darkness hardly visible. In the very year when Byron witnessed the collapse of the Carbonari rebellion, Leopardi, as Mr. Trevelyan tells us, wrote to his sister on her marriage: "The children you will have must be either cowards or unhappy; choose the unhappy." The hope of freedom appeared extinct. Tyrants, as Byron wrote, could be conquered but by tyrants, and freedom found no champion. The Italians themselves were merged in the slime of despairing satisfaction, and he watched them creeping, "crouching, and crab-like," along their streets. But through that dark gate of unhappiness which Leopardi named as the one choice for all but cowards, led the thin path that freedom must always take. Great as were Mazzini's services to all Europe, his greatest service to his countrymen lay in arousing them from the slough of contentment to a life of hardship, sacrifice, and unhappiness. When, after the loss of Rome in 1849, Garibaldi called for volunteers to accompany his hazardous retreat, he said to them: "I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, and death." Swinburne himself may have had those words in mind when, writing also of Garibaldi, he said of freedom:

"She, without shelter or station,
She, beyond limit or bar,
Urges to slumberless speed
Armies that famish, that bleed,
Sowing their lives for her seed,
That their dust may rebuild her a nation,
That their souls may relight her a star."

"Happy are all they that follow her," he continued, and in a sense we may well deem their fate happiness. But it is in the sense of what Carlyle in a memorable passage called the allurements to action. "It is a calumny on men," he wrote, "to say they are roused to heroic action by ease, hope of pleasure, reward in this world or the next. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death are the allurements that act on the heart of man." Under the spell and with the reward of those grim allurements the battles of freedom, so visible in the resurrection of Italy, so unrecognised in freedom's recurrent and contemporary conflicts, must invariably be fought. We may justly talk, if we please,

of the joy in such conflicts, but Thermopylae was a charnel, though, as Byron said, it was a proud one; and it is always against the wind that the banner of freedom streams.

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IV

DEEDS NOT WORDS

As he wrote—as he wrote his best, while the shafts of the spirit lightened in his brain—Heine would sometimes feel a mysterious figure standing behind him, muffled in a cloak, and holding, beneath the cloak, something that gleamed now and then like an executioner's axe. For a long while he had not perceived that strange figure, when, on visiting Germany, after fourteen years' exile in Paris, as he crossed the Cathedral Square in Cologne one moonlight night, he became aware that it was following him again. Turning impatiently, he asked who he was, why he followed him, and what he was hiding under his cloak. In reply, the figure, with ironic coolness, urged him not to get excited, nor to give way to eloquent exorcism:

"I am no antiquated ghost," he continued. "I'm quite a practical person, always silent and calm. But I must tell you, the thoughts conceived in your soul—I carry them out, I bring them to pass.

"And though years may go by, I take no rest until I transform your thoughts into reality. You think; I act.

"You are the judge, I am the gaoler, and, like an obedient servant, I fulfil the sentence which you have ordained, even if it is unjust.

"In Rome of ancient days they carried an axe before the Consul. You also have your Lictor, but the axe is carried behind you.

"I am your Lictor, and I walk perpetually with bare executioner's axe behind you—I am the deed of your thought."

No artist—no poet or writer, at all events—could enjoy a more consolatory vision. The powerlessness of the word is the burden of writers, and "Who hath believed our report?" cry all the prophets in successive lamentation. They so naturally suppose that, when truth and reason have spoken, truth and reason will prevail, but, as the years go by, they mournfully discover that nothing of the kind occurs. Man, they discover, does not live by truth and reason: he rather resents the intrusion of such quietly argumentative forms. When they have spoken, nothing whatever is yet accomplished, and the conflict has still to begin. The dog returns to his own vomit; the soul convicted of sin continues sinning, and he that was filthy is filthy still. Thence comes the despair of all the great masters of the word. The immovable world admires them, it praises their style, it forms aesthetic circles for their perusal, and dines in their honour when they are dead. But it goes on its way immovable, grinding the poor, enslaving the slave, admiring

hideousness, adulating vulgarity for its wealth and insignificance for its pedigree. Grasping, pleasure-seeking, indifferent to reason, and enamoured of the lie, so it goes on, and the masters of the word might just as well have hushed their sweet or thunderous voices. For, though they speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not action, what are they but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal?

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To such a mood, how consolatory must be the vision of that muffled figure, with the two-handed engine, always following close! And to Heine himself the consolation came with especial grace. He had been virulently assailed by the leaders of the party to which he regarded himself as naturally belonging—the party for whose sake he endured the charming exile of Paris, then at the very height of her intellectual supremacy. The exile was charming, but unbearable dreams and memories would come. “When I am happy in your arms,” he wrote, “you must never speak to me of Germany, I cannot bear it; I have my reasons. I implore you, leave Germany alone. You must not plague me with these eternal questions about home, and friends, and the way of life. I have my reasons; I cannot bear it.” All this was suffered—for a quarter of a century it was suffered—just for an imaginary and unrealised German revolution. And, if Heine was not to be counted as a German revolutionist, what was the good of it all? What did the sorrows of exile profit him, if he had no part in the cause? He might just as well have gone on eating, drinking, and being merry on German beer. Yet Ludwig Boerne, acknowledged leader of German revolutionists, had scornfully written of him (I translate from Heine’s own quotation, in his pamphlet on Boerne):

“I can make allowance for child’s-play, and for the passions of youth. But when, on the day of bloody conflict, a boy who is chasing butterflies on the battle-field runs between my legs; or when, on the day of our deepest need, while we are praying earnestly to God, a young dandy at our side can see nothing in the church but the pretty girls, and keeps whispering to them and making eyes—then, I say, in spite of all philosophy and humanity, one cannot restrain one’s indignation.”

Much more followed, but in those words lay the sting of the scorn. It is a scorn that many poets and writers suffer when confronted by the man of action, or even by the man of affairs. When it comes to action, all the finest words ever spoken, and all the most beautiful poems and books ever written, seem so irrelevant, as Hilda Wangel said of reading. “How beggarly all arguments appear before a defiant deed!” cried Walt Whitman. “Every man,” said Ruskin, “feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments in the world count less than a single lovely action.” The powerlessness of the word—that, as I said, has been the burden of speakers and writers. That is what drove Dante to politics, and Byron to Greece, and Goethe to the study of bones.

But Heine laid himself open more than most to such scorn as Boerne’s. There was little of the active revolutionist in his nature. About the revolutionist hangs something Hebraic (if we may still use Heine’s own distinction, never very definite, and now worn so thin), but Heine prided himself upon a sunlit cheerfulness that he called Greek. He loved the garish world; he was in love with every

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woman; but the true revolutionist must be the modern monk. It is no good asking the revolutionist out to dinner; he will neither say anything amusing, nor know the difference between chalk and cheese. But Heine's good sayings went the round of Parisian society, and he loved the subtleties of wine and the table. "That dish," he said once, "should be eaten on one's knees." Only on paper, and then rarely, was his heart lacerated by savage indignation. Except for brief periods of poverty, in the Zion of exile he lived very much at ease, nor did the zeal of the Lord ever consume him. Did it not seem that a true revolutionist was justified in comparing him to a boy chasing butterflies on the battle-field? Here, if anywhere, one might have thought, was one of those charming poets whom the Philosopher would have honoured, and feasted, and loaded with beautiful gifts, and then conducted, laurel-crowned, far outside the walls of the perfect city, to the sound of flutes and soft recorders.

To such scorn Heine attempted the artist's common answer. He replied to Boerne's revolutionary scorn of the mere poet, with a poet's fastidious scorn of the smudgy revolutionist. He tells us of his visit to Boerne's rooms, where he found such a menagerie as could hardly be seen in the Jardin des Plantes—German polar bears, a Polish wolf, a French ape. Or we read of the one revolutionary assembly he attended, and how up till then he had always longed to be a popular orator, and had even practised on oxen and sheep in the fields; but that one meeting, with its dirt, and smells, and stifling tobacco smoke, sickened him of oratory. "I saw," he writes,

"I saw that the path of a German tribune is not strewn with roses—not with clean roses. For example, you have to shake hands vigorously with all your auditors, your 'dear brothers and cousins.' Perhaps Boerne means it metaphorically when he says that, if a king shook him by the band, he would at once hold it in the fire, so as to clean it; but I mean it literally, and not metaphorically, when I say that, if the people shook me by the hand, I should at once wash it."

We all know those meetings now—the fraternal handshake, the menagerie smell, the reek of tobacco, the indistinguishable hubbub of tongues, the frothy violence, the bottomless inanity of abstract dissensions, that have less concern with human realities than the curve of the hyperbola through space. We all know that, and sometimes, perhaps, at the sight of some artist or poet like Heine—or, shall we say? like William Morris—in the sulphurous crater of that volcanic tumult, we may have been tempted to exclaim, "Not here, O Apollo, are haunts meet for thee!" But we had best restrain such exclamation, for we have had quite enough of the artistic or philanthropic temperaments that talk a deal about fighting the battle of the poor and the oppressed, but take very good care to keep at a clean and comfortable distance from

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those whose battle they are fighting, and appear more than content to live among the tyrants and oppressors they denounce. And we remind ourselves, further, that what keeps the memory of William Morris sweet is not his wall-papers, his beaten work of bronze or silver, his dreamy tapestries of interwoven silks or verse, but just that strange attempt of his, however vain, however often deceived, to convert the phrases of liberty into realities, and to learn something more about democracy than the spelling of its name.

Heine's first line of defence was quite worthless. It was the cheap and common defence of the commonplace, fastidious nature that has hardly courage to exist outside its nest of culture. His second line was stronger, and it is most fully set out in the preface to his *Lutetia*, written only a year before his death. He there expresses the artist's fear of beauty's desecration by the crowd. He dreads the horny hand laid upon the statues he had loved. He sees the laurel groves, the lilies, the roses—"those idle brides of nightingales"—destroyed to make room for useful potato-patches. He sees his *Book of Songs* taken by the grocer to wrap up coffee and snuff for old women, in a world where the victorious proletariat triumphs. But that line of defence he voluntarily abandons, knowing in his heart, as he said, that the present social order could not endure, and that all beauty it preserved was not to be counted against its horror.

It is at the end of the same preface that the well-known passage occurs, thus translated by Matthew Arnold:

"I know not if I deserve that a laurel-wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame; and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a *sword*; for I was a brave soldier in the war of liberation of humanity."

The words appear strangely paradoxical. No one questions Heine's place among the poets of the world. As a matter of fact, he was quite as sensitive to criticism as other poets, and his courage was not more conspicuous than most people's. But, nevertheless, those words contain his last and true defence against the scorn of revolutionists, or men of affairs, like Boerne. There is no need to make light of Boerne's achievement; that also has its high place in the war of liberation. But, powerless as the word may seem, there was in Heine's word a liberating force that is felt in our battle to this day. He did not wield the axe himself, but behind him has moved a mysterious figure, muffled in a cloak—a Lictor following his footsteps with an axe—the deed of Heine's thought.

V

THE BURNING BOOK

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"How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed!" cried Walt Whitman, as I quoted in the last essay. He was thinking, perhaps, of Harper's Ferry and of John Brown hanging on the crab-apple tree, while his soul went marching on. It is the lament of all writers and speakers who are driven by inward compulsion to be something more than artists in words, and who seek to jog the slow-pacing world more hurriedly forward. How long had preachers, essayists, orators, and journalists argued slavery round and round before the defiant deed crashed and settled it! "Who hath believed our report?" the prophets have always cried, until the arm of the Lord was revealed; and the melancholy of all prophetic writers is mainly due to the conscious helplessness of their words. If men would only listen to reason—if they would listen even to the appeals of justice and compassion, we suppose our prophets would grow quite cheerful at last. But to justice and compassion men listen only at a distance, and the prophet is near.

Nevertheless, in his address as Chancellor of Manchester University in June 1912, Lord Morley, who has himself often sounded the prophetic note, asserted that "a score of books in political literature rank as acts, not books." He happened to be speaking on the anniversary of Rousseau's birth, two hundred years ago, and in no list of such books could Rousseau's name be forgotten. "Whether a score or a hundred," Lord Morley went on, "the *Social Contract* was one," and, as though to rouse his audience with a spark, he quoted once more the celebrated opening sentence, "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." That sentence is not true either in history or in present life. It would be truer to say that man has everywhere been born in chains and, very slowly, in some few parts of the world, he is becoming free. The sentence is neither scientific as historic theory nor true to present life, and yet Lord Morley rightly called it electrifying. And the same is true of the book which it so gloriously opens. As history and as philosophy, it is neither original nor exact. It derived directly from Locke, and many aspects of the world and thought since Darwin's time confute it. But, however much anticipated, and however much exposed to scientific ridicule, it remains one of the burning books of the world—one of those books which, as Lord Morley said, rank as acts, not books.

"Let us realise," he continued, "with what effulgence such a book burst upon communities oppressed by wrong, sunk in care, inflamed by passions of religion or of liberty, the two eternal fields of mortal struggle." So potent an influence depends much upon the opportunity of time—the fulfilment of the hour's need. A book so abstract, so assertive of theory, and standing so far apart from the world's actual course, would hardly find an audience now. But in the eighteenth century, so gaily confident in the power of reason, so trustful of good intentions, so ready to acclaim

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noble phrase and generality, and so ignorant of the past and of the poor—in the midst of such a century the *Social Contract* was born at the due time. Add the vivid imagination and the genuine love for his fellow-men, to which Lord Morley told us Maine attributed Rousseau's ineffaceable influence on history, and we are shown some of the qualities and reasons that now and again make words burn with that effulgence, and give even to a book the power of a deed.

Lord Morley thought there might be a score, or perhaps even a hundred, of such books in political literature. He himself gave two other instances beside the *Social Contract*. He mentioned *The Institutions of the Christian Religion*, of Calvin, "whose own unconquerable will and power to meet occasion made him one of the commanding forces in the world's history." And he mentioned Tom Paine's *Common Sense* as "the most influential political piece ever composed." I could not, offhand, give a list of seventeen other books of similar power to make up the score. I do not believe so many exist, and as to ninety-seven, the idea need not be considered. There have been books of wide and lasting political influence—Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics*, Machiavelli's *Prince*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Locke's *Civil Government*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Paine's *Right of Man*, Mill's *Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*, Green's *Political Obligation*, and many more. But these are not burning books in the sense in which the *Social Contract* was a burning book. With the possible exception of *The Subjection of Women*, they were cool and philosophic. With the possible exception of Machiavelli, their writers might have been professors. The effect of the books was fine and lasting, but they were not aflame. They did not rank as acts. The burning books that rank as acts and devour like purifying fire must be endowed with other qualities.

Such books appear to have been very few, though, in a rapid survey, one is likely to overlook some. In all minds there will arise at once the great memory of Swift's *Drapier's Letters*, passionately uttering the simple but continually neglected law that "all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery." Carlyle's *French Revolution* and *Past and Present* burnt with similar flame; so did Ruskin's *Unto this Last* and the series of *Fors Clavigera*; so did Mazzini's *God and the People*, Karl Marx's *Kapital*, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, Tolstoy's *What shall we do?* and so did Proudhon's *Qu'est ce que la Propriete?* at the time of its birth. Nor from such a list could one exclude *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by which Mrs. Beecher Stowe anticipated the deed of Harper's Ferry nine years before it came.

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These are but few books and few authors. With Lord Morley's three thrown in, they still fall far short of a score. Readers will add other names, other books that ranked as acts and burnt like fire. To their brief but noble roll, I would also add one name, and one brief set of speeches or essays that hardly made a book, but to which Lord Morley himself, at all events, would not be likely to take exception. He mentioned Burke's famous denunciation of Rousseau, and, indeed, the natures and aspects of no two distinguished and finely-tempered men could well be more opposed. But none the less, I believe that in Burke, before growing age and growing fears and habits chilled his blood, there kindled a fire consuming in its indignation, and driving him to words that, equally with Rousseau's, may rank among the acts of history. In support of what may appear so violent a paradox when speaking of one so often claimed as a model of Conservative moderation and constitutional caution, let me recall a few actual sentences from the speech on "Conciliation with America," published three years before Rousseau's death. The grounds of Burke's imagination were not theoretic. He says nothing about abstract man born free; but, as though quietly addressing the House of Commons to-day, he remarks:

"The Colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in a Parliament in which they are not represented."

That simple complaint had roused in the Colonies, thus deprived of the mark and seal of British freedom, a spirit of turbulence and disorder. Already, under a policy of negation and suppression, the people were driving towards the most terrible kind of war—a war between the members of the same community. Already the cry of "no concession so long as disorders continue" went up from the central Government, and, with passionate wisdom, Burke replied:

"The question is not whether their spirit deserves blame or praise, but what, in the name of God, shall we do with it?"

Then come two brief passages which ought to be bound as watchwords and phylacteries about the foreheads of every legislator who presumes to direct our country's destiny, and which stand as a perpetual indictment against all who endeavour to exclude the men or women of this country from constitutional liberties:

"In order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate without attacking some of those principles or deriding some of those feelings for which our ancestors have shed their blood."

The second passage is finer still, and particularly apt to the present civil contest over Englishwomen's enfranchisement:

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“The temper and character which prevail in our Colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition. Your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.”

It may be said that these words, unlike the words with which Rousseau kindled revolution, failed of their purpose. The Government remained deaf and blind to the demand of British freedom; a terrible war was not averted; one of the greatest disasters in our history ensued. None the less, they glow with the true fire, and the book that contains them ranks with acts, and, indeed, with battles. That we should thus be coupling Rousseau and Burke—two men of naturally violent antipathy—is but one of the common ironies of history, which in the course of years obliterates differences and soothes so many hatreds. To be accepted and honoured by the same mind, and even for similar service, the two apparent opposites must have had something in common. What they had in common was the great qualities that Maine discovered in Rousseau—the vivid imagination and the genuine love for their fellow-men; and by imagination I mean the power of realising the thoughts, feelings, and sufferings of others. Thus from these two qualities combined in the presence of oppression, cruelty, or the ordinary stupid and callous denial of freedom, there sprang that flame of indignation from which alone the burning book derives its fire. Examine those other books whose titles I have mentioned, and their origin will in every case be found the same. They are the flaming children of rage, and rage is begotten by imaginative power out of love for the common human kind.

VI

“WHERE CRUEL RAGE”

“Fret not thyself,” sang the cheerful Psalmist—“fret not thyself because of evildoers.” For they shall soon be cut down like the grass; they shall be rooted out; their sword shall go through their own heart; their arms shall be broken; they shall consume as the fat of lambs, and as the smoke they shall consume away; though they flourish like a green bay-tree, they shall be gone, and though we seek them, their place shall nowhere be found.

A soothing consolation lies in the thought. Why should we fluster ourselves, why wax so hot, when time thus brings its inevitable revenges? Composed in mind, let us pursue our own unruffled course, with calm assurance that justice will at length prevail. Let us comply with the dictates of sweetness and light, in reasonable expectation that iniquity will melt away of itself, like a snail before the fire. If we have confidence that vengeance

is the Lord's and He will repay, where but in that faith shall we find an outlet for our indignation at once so secure, so consolatory, and so cheap?

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It was the pious answer made by Dr. Delany to Swift at the time when, torn by cruel rage, Swift was entering upon the struggle against Ireland's misery. Swift appealed to him one day "whether the corruptions and villainies of men in power did not eat his flesh and exhaust his spirits?" But Delany answered, "That in truth they did not." "Why—why, how can you help it? How can you avoid it?" asked the indignant heart. And the judicious answer came: "Because I am commanded to the contrary; 'Fret not thyself because of the ungodly.'" Under the qualities revealed in Swift and Delany by that characteristic scene, is also revealed a deeply-marked distinction between two orders of mankind, and the two speakers stand as their types. Dr. Delany we all know. He may be met in any agreeable society—himself agreeable and tolerant, unwilling to judge lest he be judged, solicitous to please, careful not to lose esteem, always welcome among his numerous acquaintances, sweetly reasonable, and devoutly confident that the tale of hideous wrong will right itself without his stir. No figure is more essential for social intercourse, or moves round the cultivated or political circle of his life with more serene success.

To the great comfort of cultivated and political circles, the type of Swift is not so frequent or so comprehensible. What place have those who fret not themselves because of evildoers—what place in their tolerant society have they for uncouth personalities, terrible with indignation? It is true that Swift was himself accounted a valued friend among the best wits and writers of his time. Bolingbroke wrote to him: "I loved you almost twenty years ago; I thought of you as well as I do now, better was beyond the power of conception." Pope, also after twenty years of intimate friendship, could write of him: "My sincere love of that valuable, indeed incomparable, man will accompany him through life, and pursue his memory were I to live a hundred lives." Arbuthnot could write to him:

"DEAR FRIEND,—The last sentence of your letter plunged a dagger in my heart. Never repeat those sad, but tender, words, that you will try to forget me. For my part, I can never forget you—at least till I discover, which is impossible, another friend whose conversation could procure me the pleasure I have found in yours."

The friends of Swift—the men who could write like this—men like Bolingbroke, Pope, Arbuthnot, Addison, Steele, and Gay—were no sentimentalists; they rank among the shrewdest and most clear-eyed writers of our literature. And, indeed, to me at all events, the difficulty of Swift's riddle lies, not in his savagery, but in his charm. When we think of that tiger burning in the forests of the night, how shall we reconcile his fearful symmetry with eyes "azure as the heavens," which Pope describes as having a surprising archness in them? Or when a man is reputed the most embittered misanthrope in history, how was it

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that his intimate friend, Sheridan, could speak of that “spirit of generosity and benevolence whose greatness, and vigour, when pent up in his own breast by poverty and dependence, served only as an evil spirit to torment him”? Of his private generosity, and his consideration for the poor, for servants, and animals, there are many instances recorded. For divergent types of womanhood, whether passionate, witty, or intellectual, he possessed the attraction of sympathetic intimacy. A woman of peculiar charm and noble character was his lifelong friend from girlhood, risking reputation, marriage, position, and all that many women most value, just for that friendship and nothing more. Another woman loved him with more tragic destiny. To Stella, in the midst of his political warfare, he could write with the playfulness that nursemaids use for children, and most men keep for their kittens or puppies. In the “Verses on his own Death,” how far removed from the envy, hatred, and malice of the literary nature is the affectionate irony of those verses beginning:

“In Pope I cannot read a line,
But with a sigh I wish it mine;
When he can in one couplet fix
More sense than I can do in six,
It gives me such a jealous fit,
I cry, ‘Plague take him and his wit.’
I grieve to be outdone by Gay
In my own humorous biting way;
Arbuthnot is no more my friend
Who dares to irony pretend,
Which I was born to introduce;
Refined it first, and showed its use.”

And so on down to the lines:

“If with such talents Heaven has blest ‘em,
Have I not reason to detest ‘em?”

To damn with faint praise is the readiest defence of envious failure; but to praise with jealous damnation reveals a delicate generosity that few would look for in the hater of his kind. Nor let us forget that Swift was himself the inventor of the phrase “Sweetness and light.”

These elements of charm and generosity have been too much overlooked, and they could not redeem the writer’s savagery in popular opinion, being overshadowed by that cruel indignation which ate his flesh and exhausted his spirit. Yet it was, perhaps, just from such elements of intuitive sympathy and affectionate goodwill that the indignation sprang. Like most over-sensitive natures, he found that every new relation in life, even

every new friendship that he formed, only opened a gate to new unhappiness. The sorrows of others were more to him than to themselves, and, like a man or woman that loves a child, he discovered that his affection only exposed a wider surface to pain. On the death of a lady with whom he was not very intimately acquainted, "I hate life," he cried, "when I think it exposed to such accidents: and to see so many thousand wretches burdening the earth while such as her die, makes me think God did never intend life for a blessing." It was not any spirit of hatred or cruelty, but an intensely personal sympathy

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with suffering, that tore his heart and kindled that furnace of indignation against the stupid, the hateful, and the cruel to whom most suffering is due; and it was a furnace in which he himself was consumed. Writing whilst he was still a youth, in *The Tale of a Tub*, he composed a terrible sentence, in which all his rage and pity and ironical bareness of style seem foretold: "Last week," he says, "I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse." "Only a woman's hair," was found written on the packet in which the memorial of Stella was preserved, and I do not know in what elegy there breathes a prouder or more poignant sorrow.

When he wrote the *Drapier Letters*, Ireland lay before him like a woman flayed. Of the misery of Ireland it was said (I think by Sheridan):

"It fevered his blood, it broke his rest, it drove him at times half frantic with furious indignation, it sunk him at times in abysses of sullen despondency, it awoke in him emotions which in ordinary men are seldom excited save by personal injuries."

This cruel rage over the wrongs of a people whom he did not love, and whom he repeatedly disowned, drove him to the savage denunciations in which he said of England's nominee: "It is no dishonour to submit to the lion, but who, with the figure of a man, can think with patience of being devoured alive by a rat?" It drove him also to the great principle, still too slowly struggling into recognition in this country, that "all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery." It inspired his *Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures*, in which the advice to "burn everything that came from England except the coals and the people," might serve as the motto of the Sinn Fein movement. And it inspired also that other "Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Ireland from being a burden to their Parents and Country, and making them beneficial to the Public. Fatten them up for the Dublin market; they will be delicious roast, baked, or boiled."

As wave after wave of indignation passed over him, his wrath at oppression extended to all mankind. In *Gulliver's Travels* it is the human race that lies before him, how much altered for the worse by being flayed! But it is not pity he feels for the victim now. In man he only sees the littleness, the grossness, the stupidity, or the brutal degradation of Yahoos. Unlike other satirists—unlike Juvenal or Pope or the author of *Penguin Island*, who comes nearest to his manner—he pours his contempt, not upon certain types of folly or examples of vice, but upon the race of man as a whole. "I heartily hate," he wrote to Pope soon after *Gulliver* was published, "I heartily hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth." The philanthropist will often idealise man in the

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abstract and hate his neighbour at the back door, but that was not Swift's way. He has been called an inverted hypocrite, as one who makes himself out worse than he is. I should rather call him an inverted idealist, for, with high hopes and generous expectations, he entered into the world, and lacerated by rage at the cruelty, foulness, and lunacy he there discovered, he poured out his denunciations upon the crawling forms of life whose filthy minds were well housed in their apelike and corrupting flesh—a bag of loathsome carrion, animated by various lusts.

“Noli aemulari,” sang the cheerful Psalmist; “Fret not thyself because of evildoers.” How easy for most of us it is to follow that comfortable counsel! How little strain it puts upon our popularity or our courage! And how amusing it is to watch the course of human affairs with tolerant acquiescence! Yes, but, says Swift, “amusement is the happiness of those who cannot think,” and may we not say that acquiescence is the cowardice of those who dare not feel? There will always be some, at least, in the world whom savage indignation, like Swift's, will continually torment. It will eat their flesh and exhaust their spirits. They would gladly be rid of it, for, indeed, it stifles their existence, depriving them alike of pleasure, friends, and the objects of ambition—isolating them in the end as Swift was isolated. If only the causes of their indignation might cease, how gladly they would welcome the interludes of quiet! But hardly is one surmounted than another overtops them like a wave, nor have the stern victims of indignation the smallest hope of deliverance from their suffering, until they lie, as Swift has now lain for so many years, where cruel rage can tear the heart no more—“Ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit.”

VII

THE CHIEF OF REBELS

“It is time that I ceased to fill the world,” said the dying Victor Hugo, and we recognise the truth of the saying, though with a smile. For each generation must find its own way, nor would it be a consolation to have even the greatest of ancient prophets living still. But yet there breathes from the living a more intimate influence, for which an immortality of fame cannot compensate. When men like Tolstoy die, the world is colder as well as more empty. They have passed outside the common dangers and affections of man's warm-blooded circle, lighted by the sun and moon. Their spirit may go marching on; it may become immortal and shine with an increasing radiance, perpetual as the sweet influences of the Pleiades. But their place in the heavens is fixed. We can no longer watch how they will meet the glorious or inglorious uncertainties of the daily conflict. We can no longer make appeal for their succour against the new positions and new encroachments of the eternal adversary. The sudden splendour of action is no longer theirs, and if we would know the loss implied

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in that difference, let us imagine that Tolstoy had died before the summer of 1908, when he uttered his overwhelming protest against the political massacres ordained by Russia. In place of that protest, in place of the poignant indignation which appealed to Stolypin's hangmen to fix their well-soaped noose around his own old neck, since, if any were guilty, it was he—in place of the shame and wrath that cried, "I cannot be silent!" we should have had nothing but our own memory and regret, murmuring to ourselves, "If only Tolstoy had been living now! But perhaps, for his sake, it is better he is not."

And now that he is dead, and the world is chilled by the loss of its greatest and most fiery personality, the adversary may breathe more freely. As Tolstoy was crossing a city square—I suppose the "Red Square" in Moscow—on the day when the Holy Synod of Russia excommunicated him from the Church, he heard someone say, "Look! There goes the devil in human form!" And for the next few weeks he continued to receive letters clotted with anathemas, damnations, threats, and filthy abuse. It was no wonder. To all thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, to all priests of established religions, to the officials of every kind of government, to the Ministers, whether of parliaments or despots, to all naval and military officers, to all lawyers, judges, jurymen, policemen, gaolers, and executioners, to all tax-collectors, speculators, and financiers, Tolstoy was, indeed, the devil in human form. To them he was the gainsayer, the destroyer, the most shattering of existent forces. And, in themselves, how large and powerful a section of every modern State they are! They may almost be called the Church and State incarnate, and they seldom hesitate to call themselves so. But, against all their authorities, formulae, and traditions, Tolstoy stood in perpetual rebellion. To him their parchments and wigs, their cells and rods and hang-ropes, their mitres, chasubles, vestments, incense, chantings, services, bells, and books counted as so much trumpery. For him external law had no authority. If it conflicted with the law of the soul, it was the soul's right and duty to disregard or break it. Speaking of the law which ordained the flogging of peasants for taxes, he wrote: "There is but one thing to say—that no such law can exist; that no ukase, or insignia, or seals, or Imperial commands can make a law out of a crime." Similarly, the doctrines of the Church, her traditions, sacraments, rituals, and miracles—all that appeared to him to conflict with human intelligence and the law of his soul—he disregarded or denied. "I deny them all," he wrote in his answer to the Holy Synod's excommunication (1901); "I consider all the sacraments to be coarse, degrading sorcery, incompatible with the idea of God or with the Christian teaching." And, as the briefest statement of the law of his soul, he added:

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"I believe in this: I believe in God, whom I understand as Spirit, as Love, as the Source of all. I believe that he is in me, and I in him. I believe that the will of God is most clearly and intelligibly expressed in the teaching of the man Jesus, whom to consider as God, and pray to I esteem the greatest blasphemy. I believe that man's true welfare lies in fulfilling God's will, and his will is that men should love one another, and should consequently do to others as they wish others to do to them—of which it is said in the Gospels that this is the law and the prophets."

The world has listened to rebels against Church and State before, and still it goes shuffling along as best it can under external laws and governments, seeking from symbols, rituals, and miraculous manifestation such spiritual consolation as it may imbibe. To such rebels the world, after burning, hanging, and quartering them for several centuries, has now become fairly well accustomed, though it still shoots or hangs them now and then as a matter of habit. But Tolstoy's rebellion did not stop at Church and State. He rebelled against all the ordinary proposals and ideals of rebels themselves, and to him there was not very much to choose between the Socialism of Marxists and the despotism of Tsars. Liberals, Radicals, Social Democrats, Social Revolutionists, and all the rest of the reforming or rebellious parties—what were they doing but struggling to re-establish external laws, external governments, officials, and authorities under different forms and different names? In the Liberal movements of the day he took no part, and he had little influence upon the course of revolution. He formed no party; no band of rebels followed the orders of the rebel-in-chief; among all the groups of the first Duma there was no Tolstoyan group, nor could there have been any. When we touch government, he would say, we touch the devil, and it is only by admitting compromise or corruption that men seek to maintain or readjust the power of officials over body and soul. "It seems to me," he wrote to the Russian Liberals in 1896,

"It seems to me now specially important to do what is right quietly and persistently, not only without asking permission from Government, but consciously avoiding participation in it.... What can a Government do with a man who will not publicly lie with uplifted hand, or will not send his children to a school he thinks bad, or will not learn to kill people, or will not take part in idolatry, or in coronations, deputations, and addresses, or who says and writes what he thinks and feels?... It is only necessary for all these good, enlightened, and honest people whose strength is now wasted in Revolutionary, Socialistic, or Liberal activity (harmful to themselves and to their cause) to begin to act thus, and a nucleus of honest, enlightened, and moral people would form around them, united in the same thoughts and the same feelings. Public

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opinion—the only power which subdues Governments—would become evident, demanding freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, justice, and humanity.”

From a distance, the bustling politicians and reformers of happier lands might regard this quietism or wise passiveness as a mere counsel of despair, suitable enough as a shelter in the storm of Russia’s tyranny, but having little significance for Western men of affairs. Yet even so they had not silenced the voice of this persistent rebel; for he rose in equal rebellion against the ideals, methods, and standards of European cities. Wealth, commerce, industrial development, inventions, luxuries, and all the complexity of civilisation were of no more account to him than the toys of kings and the tag-rag of the churches. Other rebels had preached the gospel of pleasure to the poor, and had themselves acted on their precepts. Other reformers, even religious reformers, had extolled the delights of women, wine, and song. But here was a man despising these as the things after which the Gentiles seek. Love intrigues, banquets, wealthy establishments, operas, theatres, poetry, and fashionable novels—what had they to do with the kingdom of God that is within? He touched nothing from which he did not strip the adornment. He left life bare and stern as the starry firmament, and he felt awe at nothing, not even at the starry firmament, but only at the sense of right and wrong in man. He did not summon the poor to rise against “the idle rich,” but he summoned the idle rich, the well-to-do, the gentry of independent means, the comfortable annuitants, the sportsmen, the writers and dramatists of pleasure, the artists of triviality, the pretty rhymers, and the people who are too busy for thought, to rise against themselves. It was a much harder summons to obey, and generally they answered with a shrug and a mutter of “madness,” “mere asceticism,” or “a fanatic’s intolerance.”

Yet they could not choose but hear. Mr. Kipling, in agreement with an earlier prophet, once identified rebellion with the sin of witchcraft, and about Tolstoy there was certainly a witching power, a magic or demonic attraction, that gave the hearer no peace. Perhaps more even than from his imaginative strength, it arose from his whole-hearted sincerity, always looking reality straight in the face, always refusing compromise, never hesitating to follow where reason led. Compromise and temporise and choose the line of least resistance, as we habitually do, there still remains in most people a fibre that vibrates to that iron sincerity. And so it was that, from the first, Tolstoy brought with him a disturbing and incalculable magic—an upheaving force, like leaven stirring in the dough, or like a sword in unconditioned and unchartered peace.

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Critics have divided his life into artistic and prophetic hemispheres; they have accused him of giving up for man what was meant for artistic circles. But the seas of both hemispheres are the same, and there was no division in Tolstoy's main purpose or outlook upon life from first to last. In his greatest imaginative works (and to me they appear the highest achievement that the human imagination has yet accomplished in prose)—in the struggles and perplexities and final solutions of Petroff, Nekhludoff, and Levin; in the miserable isolation of Ivan Ilyitch; in the resurrection of the prostitute Maslova; and in the hardly endurable tragedy of Anna Karenin herself, there runs exactly the same deep undercurrent of thought and exactly the same solution of life's question as in the briefer and more definite statements of the essays and letters. The greatest men are generally all of a piece, and of no one is this more true than of Tolstoy. Take him where you please, it is strange if after a few lines you are not able to say, "That is the finger of Tolstoy; there is the widely sympathetic and compassionate heart, so loving mankind that in all his works he has drawn hardly one human soul altogether detested or contemptible. But at the same time there is the man whose breath is sincerity, and to whom no compromise is possible, and no mediocrity golden."

To the philosophers of the world his own solution may appear a simple issue, indeed, out of all his questioning, struggles, and rebellions. It was but a return to well-worn commandments. "Do not be angry, do not lust, do not swear obedience to external authority, do not resist evil, but love your enemies"—these commands have a familiar, an almost parochial, sound. Yet in obedience to such simple orders the chief of rebels found man's only happiness, and whether we call it obedience to the voice of the soul or the voice of God, he would not have minded much. "He lives for his soul; he does not forget God," said one peasant of another in Levin's hearing; and Tolstoy takes those quiet words as Levin's revelation in the way of peace. For him the soul, though finding its highest joy of art and pleasure only in noble communion with other souls, stood always lonely and isolated, bare to the presence of God. The only submission possible, and the only possible hope of peace, lay in obedience to the self thus isolated and bare. "O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments!" cried the ancient poet, uttering the voice that speaks to the soul in loneliness; "O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river."

VIII

THE IRON CROWN

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When we read of a man who, for many years, wore on his left arm an iron bracelet, with spikes on the inside which were pressed into the flesh, we feel as though we had taken a long journey from our happy land. When we read that the bracelet was made of steel wire, with the points specially sharpened, and the whole so clamped on to the arm that it could never come off, but had to be cut away after death, we might suppose that we had reached the world where Yogi and Sanyasi wander in the saffron robe, or sit besmeared with ashes, contemplating the eternal verities, unmoved by outward things. Like skeletons of death they sit; thorns tear their skin, their nails pierce into their hands, day and night one arm is held uplifted, iron grows embedded in their flesh, like a railing in a tree trunk, they hang in ecstasy from hooks, they count their thousand miles of pilgrimage by the double yard-measure of head to heel, moving like a geometer caterpillar across the burning dust. To overcome the body so that the soul may win her freedom, to mortify—to murder the flesh so that the spirit may reach its perfect life, to torture sense so that the mind may dwell in peace, to obliterate the limits of space, to silence the ticking of time, so that eternity may speak, and vistas of infinity be revealed—that is the purport of their existence, and in hope of attaining to that consummation they submit themselves with deliberate resolve to the utmost anguish and abasement that the body can endure.

Contemplating from a philosophic distance the Buddhist monasteries that climb the roof of the world, or the indistinguishable multitudes swarming around the shrines on India's coral strand, we think all this sort of thing is natural enough for unhappy natives to whom life is always poor and hard, and whose bodies, at the best, are so insignificant and so innumerable that they may well regard them with contempt, and suffer their torments with indifference. But the man of whose spiky bracelet we read was not in search of Nirvana's annihilation, nor had he ever prayed in nakedness beside the Ganges. Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, was as little like a starveling Sanyasi as any biped descendant of the anthropoids could possibly be. A noticeable man, singularly handsome, of conspicuous, indeed of almost precarious, personal attraction, a Prince of the Church, clothed, quite literally, in purple and fine linen, faring as sumptuously as he pleased every day, welcome at the tables of the society that is above religion, irreproachable in address, a courtier in manner, a diplomatist in mind, moving in an entourage of state and worldly circumstance, occupied in the arts, constructing the grandest building of his time, learned without pedantry, agreeably cultivated in knowledge, urbane in his judgment of mankind, a power in the councils of his country, a voice in the destinies of the world—so we see him moving in a large and splendid orbit, complete in fine activities, dominant in his assured position, almost superhuman in success. And as he moves, he presses into the flesh of his left arm those sharpened points of steel.

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“Remember!” We hear again the solemn tone, warning of mortality. We see again the mummy, drawn between tables struck silent in their revelry. We listen to the slave whispering in the ear while the triumph blares. “Remember!” he whispers. “Remember thou art man. Thou shalt go! Thou shalt go! Thy triumph shall vanish as a cloud. Time’s chariot hurries behind thee. It comes quicker than thine own!” So from the iron bracelet a voice tells of the transitory vision. All shall go; the jewelled altars and the dim roofs fragrant with incense; the palaces, the towers, and domed cathedrals; the refined clothing, the select surroundings, the courteous receptions of the great; the comfortable health, the noble presence, the satisfactory estimation of the world—all shall go. They shall fade away; they shall be removed as a vesture, and like a garment they shall be rolled up. Press the spikes into thy mouldering flesh. Remember! Even while it lives, it is corrupting, and the end keeps hurrying behind. Remember! Remember thou art man.

But below that familiar voice which warns the transient generations of their mortality, we may find in those sharpened spikes a more profound and nobler intention. “Remember thou art man,” they say; but it is not against overweening pride that they warn, nor do they remind only of death’s wings. “Remember thou art man,” they say, “and as man thou art but a little lower than the angels, being crowned with glory and honour. This putrefying flesh into which we eat our way—this carrion cart of your paltry pains and foolish pleasures—is but the rotten relic of an animal relationship. Remember thou art man. Thou art the paragon of animals, the slowly elaborated link between beast and god, united by this flesh with tom-cats, swine, and hares, but united by the spirit with those eternal things that move fresh and strong as the ancient heavens in their courses, and know not fear. What pain of spikes and sharpened points, what torment that this body can endure from cold or hunger, from human torture and burning flame, what pleasure that it can enjoy from food and wine and raiment and all the satisfactions of sense is to be compared with the glory that may be revealed at any moment in thy soul? Subdue that bestial and voracious body, ever seeking to extinguish in thee the gleam of heavenly fire. Press the spikes into the lumpish and uncouth monster of thy flesh. Remember! Remember thou art God.”

“Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” We have grown so accustomed to the cry that we hardly notice it, and yet that the cry should ever have been raised—that it should have arisen in all ages and in widely separated parts of the world—is the most remarkable thing in history. Pleasure is so agreeable, and none too common; or, if one wanted pain for salt, are there not pains enough in life’s common round? Does it not take us all our time to mitigate the cold, the heat, and hunger; to escape

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the beasts and rocks and thunderbolts that bite and break and blast us; to cure the diseases that rack and burn and twist our poor bodies into hoops? Why should we seek to add pain to pain, and raise a wretched life to the temperature of a torture-room? It is the most extraordinary thing, at variance alike with the laws of reason and moderation. Certainly, there is a kind of self-denial—a carefulness in the selection of pleasure—which all the wise would practise. To exercise restraint, to play the aristocrat in fastidious choice, to guard against satiety, and allow no form of grossness to enter the walled garden or to drink at the fountain sealed—those are to the wise the necessary conditions of calm and radiant pleasure, and in outward behaviour the Epicurean and the Stoic are hardly to be distinguished. For the Epicurean knows well that asceticism stands before the porch of happiness, and the smallest touch of excess brings pleasure tumbling down.

But mankind seems not to trouble itself about this delicate adjustment, this cautious selection of the more precious joy. In matters of the soul, man shows himself unreasonable and immoderate. He forgets the laws of health and chastened happiness. The salvation of his spirit possesses him with a kind of frenzy, making him indifferent to loss of pleasure, or to actual pain and bodily distress. He will seek out pain as a lover, and use her as a secret accomplice in his conspiracy against the body's domination. Under the stress of spiritual passion he becomes an incalculable force, carried we know not where by his determination to preserve his soul, to keep alight just that little spark of fire, to save that little breath of life from stifling under the mass of superincumbent fat. We may call him crazy, inhuman, a fanatic, a devil-worshipper; he does not mind what we call him. His eyes are full of a vision before which the multitude of human possessions fade. He is engaged in a contest wherein his soul must either overcome or perish everlastingly; and we may suppose that, even if the soul were not immortal, it would still be worth the saving.

It is true that in this happy country examples of ascetic frenzy are comparatively rare. There is little fear of overdoing the mortification of the flesh. We practise a self-denial that takes the form of training for sport, but, like the spectators at a football match, we do our asceticism chiefly by proxy, and are fairly satisfied if the clergy do not drink or give other cause for scandal. It is very seldom that Englishmen have been affected by spiritual passion of any kind, and that is why our country, of all the eastern hemisphere, has been least productive of saints. But still, in the midst of our discreet comfort and sanity of moderation, that spiky bracelet of steel, eating into the flesh of the courtly and sumptuous Archbishop, may help to remind us that, whether in war, or art, or life, it is only by the passionate refusal of comfort and moderation that the high places of the spirit are to be reached. "Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground!" is the song of all pioneers, and if man is to be but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour, the crown will be made of iron or, perhaps, of thorns.

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IX

"THE IMPERIAL RACE"

"The public are particularly requested not to tease the Cannibals." So ran one of the many flaming notices outside the show. Other notices proclaimed the unequalled opportunity of beholding "The Dahomey Warriors of Savage South Africa; a Rare and Peculiar Race of People; all there is Left of them"—as, indeed, it might well be. Another called on the public "not to fail to see the Coloured Beauties of the Voluptuous Harem," no doubt also the product of Savage South Africa. But of all the gilded placards the most alluring, to my mind, was the request not to tease the Cannibals. It suggested so appalling a result.

I do not know who the Cannibals were. Those I saw appeared to be half-caste Jamaicans, but there may have been something more savage inside, and certainly a Dahomey warrior from South Africa would have to be ferocious indeed if his fierceness was to equal his rarity. But the particular race did not matter. The really interesting thing was that the English crowd was assumed to be as far superior to the African savage as to a wild beast in a menagerie. The proportion was the same. The English crowd was expected to extend to the barbarians the same inquisitive patronage as to jackals and hyenas in a cage, when in front of the cages it is written, "Do not irritate these animals. They bite."

The facile assumption of superiority recalled a paradoxical remark that Huxley made about thirty years ago, when that apostle of evolution suddenly scandalised progressive Liberalism by asserting that a Zulu, if not a more advanced type than a British working man, was at all events happier. "I should rather be a Zulu than a British workman," said Huxley in his trenchant way, and the believers in industrialism were not pleased. By the continual practice of war, and by generations of infanticide, under which only the strongest babies survived, the Zulus had certainly at that time raised themselves to high physical excellence, traces of which still remain in spite of the degeneracy that follows foreign subjection. I have known many African tribes between Dahomey and Zululand too well to idealise them into "the noble savage." I know how rapidly they are losing both their bodily health and their native virtues under the deadly contact of European drink, clothing, disease, and exploitation. Yet, on looking round upon the London crowds that were particularly requested not to tease the cannibals, my first thought was that Huxley's paradox remained true.

The crowds that swarmed the Heath were not lovely things to look at. Newspapers estimated that nearly half a million human beings were collected on the patch of sand that Macaulay's imagination transfigured into "Hampstead's swarthy moor." But even if we followed the safe rule and divided the estimated number by half, a quarter of a million was quite enough. "Like bugs—the

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more, the worse,” Emerson said of city crowds, and certainly the most enthusiastic social legislator could hardly wish to make two such men or women stand where one stood before. Scarlet and yellow booths, gilded roundabouts, sword-swallowers in purple fleshings, Amazons in green plush and spangles were gay enough. Booths, roundabouts, Amazon queens, and the rest are the only chance of colour the English people have, and no wonder they love them. But in themselves and in mass the crowds were drab, dingy, and black. Even “ostridges” and “pearlies,” that used to break the monotony like the exchange of men’s and women’s hats, are thought to be declining. America may rival that dulness, but in no other country of Europe, to say nothing of the East and Africa, could so colourless a crowd be seen—a mass of people so devoid of character in costume, or of tradition and pride in ornament.

But it was not merely the absence of colour and beauty in dress, or the want of national character and distinction—a plainness that would afflict even a Russian peasant from the Ukraine or a Tartar from the further Caspian. It was the uncleanness of the garments themselves that would most horrify the peoples not reckoned in the foremost ranks of time. A Hindu thinks it disgusting enough for a Sahib to put on the same coat and trousers that he wore yesterday without washing them each morning in the tank, as the Hindu washes his own garment. But that the enormous majority of the Imperial race should habitually wear second, third, and fourth-hand clothes that have been sweated through by other people first, would appear to him incredible. If ever he comes to England, he finds that he must believe it. It is one of the first shocks that strike him with horror when he emerges from Charing Cross. “Can these smudgy, dirty, evil-smelling creatures compose the dominant race?” is the thought of even the most “loyal” Indian as he moves among the crowd of English workpeople. And it is only the numbing power of habit that silences the question in ourselves. Cheap as English clothing is, second-hand it is cheaper still, and I suppose that out of that quarter-million people on the Heath every fine Bank Holiday hardly one per cent. wears clothes that no one has worn before him. Hence the sickening smell that not only pervades an English crowd but hangs for two or three days over an open space where the crowd has been. “I can imagine a man keeping a dirty shirt on,” said Nietzsche, “but I cannot imagine him taking it off and putting it on again.” He was speaking in parables, as a philosopher should; but if he had stood among an English working crowd, his philosophic imagination would have been terribly strained by literal fact.

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Scrubby coat and trousers, dirty shirt, scarf, and cap, socks more like anklets for holes, and a pair of split boots; bedraggled hat, frowsy jacket, blouse and skirt, squashy boots, and perhaps a patchy “pelerine” or mangy “boa”—such is accepted as the natural costume for the heirs of all the ages. Prehistoric man, roaming through desert and forest in his own shaggy pelt, was infinitely better clad. So is the aboriginal African with a scrap of leopard skin, or a single bead upon a cord. To judge by clothing, we may wonder to what purpose evolution ever started upon its long course of groaning and travelling up to now. And more than half-concealed by that shabby clothing, what shabby forms and heads we must divine! How stunted, puny, and ill-developed the bodies are! How narrow-shouldered the men, how flat-breasted the women! And the faces, how shapeless and anaemic! How deficient in forehead, nose, and jaw! Compare them with an Afghan’s face; it is like comparing a chicken with an eagle. Writing in the *Standard* of April 8, 1912, a well-known clergyman assured us that “when a woman enters the political arena, the bloom is brushed from the peach, never to be restored.” That may seem a hard saying to Primrose Dames and Liberal Women, but the thousands of peaches that entered the arena (as peaches will) on Hampstead Heath, had no bloom left to brush, and no political arena could brush it more.

Deficient in blood and bone, the products of stuffy air, mean food, and casual or half-hearted parentage, often tainted with hereditary or acquired disease, the faces are; but, worse than all, how insignificant and indistinguishable! It is well known that a Chinaman can hardly distinguish one Englishman from another, just as we can hardly distinguish the Chinese. But in an English working crowd, even an Englishman finds it difficult to distinguish face from face. Yet as a nation we have always been reckoned conspicuous for strong and even eccentric individuality. Our well-fed upper and middle classes—the public school, united services, and university classes—reach a high physical average. Perhaps, on the whole, they are still the best specimens of civilised physique. Within thirty years the Germans have made an astonishing advance. They are purging off their beer, and working down their fat. But, as a rule, the well-fed and carefully trained class in England still excels in versatility, decision, and adventure. Unhappily, it is with few—only with a few millions of well-to-do people, a fraction of the whole English population—and with a few country-bred people and open-air workers, that we succeed. The great masses of the English nation are tending to become the insignificant, indistinguishable, unwholesome, and shabby crowd that becomes visible at football matches and on Bank Holidays upon the Heath.

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It is true that familiarity breeds respect. It is almost impossible for the average educated man to know anything whatever about the working classes. The educated and the workpeople move, as it were, in worlds of different dimensions, incomprehensible to each other. Very few men and women from our secondary schools and universities, for instance, can long enjoy solemnly tickling the faces of passing strangers with a bunch of feathers, or revolving on a wooden horse to a steam organ, or gazing at a woman advertised as “a Marvel of Flesh, Fat, and Beauty.” The educated seldom appreciate such joys in themselves. If they like trying them, it is only “in the second intention.” They enjoy out of patronage, or for literary sensation, rather than in grave reality. They are excluded from the mind to which such things genuinely appeal. But let not education mock, nor culture smile disdainfully at the short and simple pleasures of the poor. If by some miracle of revelation culture could once become familiar from the inside with one of those scrubby and rather abhorrent families, the insignificance would be transfigured, the faces would grow distinguishable, and all manner of admired and even lovable characteristics would be found. How sober people are most days of the week; how widely charitable; how self-sacrificing in hopes of saving the pence for margarine or melted fat upon the children’s bread! They are shabby, but they have paid for every scrap of old clothing with their toil; they are dirty, but they try to wash, and would be clean if they could afford the horrible expense of cleanliness; they are ignorant, but within twenty years how enormously their manners to each other have improved! And then consider their Christian thoughtlessness for the morrow, how superb and spiritual it is! How different from the things after which the Gentiles of the commercial classes seek! On a Bank Holiday I have known a mother and a daughter, hanging over the very abyss of penury, to spend two shillings in having their fortunes told. Could the lilies of the field or Solomon in all his glory have shown a finer indifference to worldly cares?

Mankind, as we know, in the lump is bad, but that it is not worse remains the everlasting wonder. It is not the squalor of such a crowd that should astonish; it is the marvel that they are not more squalid. For, after all, what is the root cause of all this dirt and ignorance and shabbiness and disease? It is not drink, nor thriftlessness, nor immorality, as the philanthropists do vainly talk; still less is it crime. It is the “inequality” of which Canon Barnett has often written—the inequality that Matthew Arnold said made a high civilisation impossible. But such inequality is only another name for poverty, and from poverty we have yet to discover the saviour who will redeem us.

X

THE GREAT UNKNOWN

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There are strange regions where the monotony of ignoble streets is broken only by an occasional church, a Board School, or a public-house. From the city's cathedral to every point of the compass, except the west, they stretch almost without limit till they reach the bedraggled fields maturing for development. They form by far the larger part of an Empire's capital. Each of them is, in fact, a vast town, great enough, as far as numbers go, to make the Metropolis of a powerful State. Out of half a dozen of them, such as Islington, Bethnal Green, or Bermondsey, the County Council could build half a score of Italian republics like the Florence or Pisa of old days, if only it had the mind. Each possesses a character, a peculiar flavour, or, at the worst, a separate smell. Many of them are traversed every day by thousands of rich and well-educated people, passing underground or overhead. Yet to nearly all of us they remain strange and almost untrodden. We do not think of them when we think of London. Them no pleasure-seeker counts among his opportunities, no foreigner visits as essential for his study of the English soul. Not even our literary men and Civil Servants, who talk so much about architecture, discuss their architecture in the clubs. Not one in a thousand of us has ever known a human soul among their inhabitants. To the comfortable classes the Libyan desert is more familiar.

At elections, even politicians remember their existence. From time to time a philanthropist goes down there to share God's good gifts with his poorer brethren, or to elevate the masses with tinkling sounds or painted boards. From time to time an adventurous novelist is led round the opium-shops, dancing-saloons, and docks, returning with copy for tales of lust and murder that might just as well be laid in Siberia or Timbuctoo. When we scent an East End story on its way, do we not patiently await the battered head, the floating corpse, the dynamiter's den, or a woman crying over her ill-begotten babe? Do we not always get one or other of the lot? To read our story-tellers from Mr. Kipling downward, one might suppose the East End to be inhabited by bastards engaged in mutual murder, and the marvel is that anyone is left alive to be the subject of a tale. You may not bring an indictment against a whole nation, but no sensational writer hesitates to libel three million of our fellow-citizens. Put it in Whitechapel, and you may tell what filthy lie you please.

About once in a generation some "Bitter Cry" pierces through custom, and the lives of "the poor" become a subject for polite conversation and amateur solicitude. For three months, or even for six, that subject appears as the intellectual "*roti*" at dinner-tables; then it is found a little heavy, and cultured interest returns to its natural courses of plays, pictures, politics, a dancing woman, and the memorials of Kings. It is almost time now that the poor came up again,

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for a quarter of a century has gone since they were last in fashion, and men's collars and women's skirts have run their full orbit since. Excellent books have appeared, written with intimate knowledge of working life—books such as Charles Booth's *London* or Mr. Richard Free's *Seven Years Hard*, to mention only two; but either the public mind was preoccupied with other amusements, or it had not recovered from the lassitude of the last philanthropic debauch. Nothing has roused that fury of charitable curiosity which accompanies a true social revival, and leaves its victims gasping for the next excitement. The time was, perhaps, ripe, but no startling success awaited Mr. Alexander Paterson's book, *Across the Bridges*. Excellent though it was, its excellence excluded it from fashion. For it was written with the restraint of knowledge, and contained no touch of melodrama from beginning to end. Not by knowledge or restraint are the insensate sensations of fashion reached.

Mr. Paterson's experience lay on the south side of the river, and the district possesses peculiarities of its own. On the whole, I think, the riverside streets there are rather more unhealthy than those in the East End. Many houses stand below water-level, and in digging foundations I have sometimes seen the black sludge of old marshes squirting up through the holes, and even bringing with it embedded reeds that perhaps were growing when Shakespeare acted there. The population is more distinctly English than on the north side. Where the poverty is extreme it is more helpless. Work as a whole is rather steadier, but not so good. The smell is different and very characteristic, partly owing to the hop-markets. Life seems to me rather sadder and more depressing there, with less of gaiety and independence; but that may be because I am more intimate with the East End, and intimacy with working people nearly always improves their aspect. It is, indeed, fortunate for our sensational novelists that they remain so ignorant of their theme, for otherwise murders, monsters, and mysteries would disappear from their pages, and goodness knows how they would make a living then!

It is not crime and savagery that characterise the unknown lands where the working classes of London chiefly live. Matthew Arnold said our lower classes were brutalised, and he was right, but not if by brutality he meant cruelty, violence, or active sin. What characterises them and their streets is poverty. Poverty and her twins, unhappiness and waste. Under unhappiness, we may include the outward conditions of discomfort—the crowded rooms, the foul air, the pervading dirt, the perpetual stench of the poor. In winter the five or six children in a bed grow practised in turning over all at the same time while still asleep, so as not to disturb each other. In a hot summer the bugs drive the families out of the rooms to sleep on the doorstep. Cleanliness is an expensive luxury almost as far beyond poverty's

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reach as diamonds. The foul skin, the unwashed clothes, the layer of greasy smuts, the boots that once fitted someone, and are now held on by string, the scraps of food bought by the pennyworth, the tea, condensed milk, fried fish, bread and “strawberry flavour,” the coal bought by the “half-hundred,” the unceasing noise, the absence of peace or rest, the misery of sickness in a crowd—all such things may be counted among the outward conditions of unhappiness, and only people who have never known them would call them trivial. But by the unhappiness that springs from poverty I mean far worse than these.

The definition of happiness as “an energy of the soul along the lines of excellence, in a fully developed life” is ancient now, but I have never found a better. From happiness so defined, poverty excludes our working-classes in the lump, almost without exception. For them an energy of the soul along the lines of excellence is almost unknown, and a fully developed life impossible. In both these respects their condition has probably become worse within the last century. If there is a word of truth in what historians tell us, a working-man must certainly have had a better chance of exercising an energy of his soul before the development of factories and machinery. What energy of the personal soul is exercised in a mill-hand, a tea-packer, a slop-tailor, or the watcher of a thread in a machine? How can a man or woman engaged in such labour for ten hours a day at subsistence wage enjoy a fully developed life? It seems likely that the old-fashioned workman who made things chiefly with his own hands and had some opportunity of personal interest in the work, stood a better chance of the happiness arising from an energy of the soul. His life was also more fully developed by the variety and interest of his working material and surroundings. This is the point to which our prophets who pour their lamentations over advancing civilisation should direct their main attack, as, indeed, the best of them have done. For certainly it is an unendurable result if the enormous majority of civilised mankind are for ever to be debarred from the highest possible happiness.

The second offspring of poverty in these working regions of our city is waste. And I have called waste the twin brother of unhappiness because the two are very much alike. By waste I do not here mean the death-rate of infants, though that stands at one in four. No one, except an exploiter of labour, would desire a mere increase in the workpeople’s number without considering the quality of the increase. But by waste I mean the multitudes of boys and girls who never get a chance of fulfilling their inborn capacities. The country’s greatest shame and disaster arise from the custom which makes the line between the educated and the uneducated follow the line between the rich and the poor, almost without deviation. That a nature capable of high development should be precluded by poverty from all development

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is the deepest of personal and national disasters, though it happen, as it does happen, several thousand times a year. Physical waste is bad enough—the waste of strength and health that could easily be retained by fresh air, open spaces, and decent food, and is so retained among well-to-do children. This physical waste has already created such a broad distinction that foreigners coming among us detect two species of the English people. But the mental waste is worse. It is a subject that Mr. Paterson dwells upon, and he speaks with authority, as one who has taught in the Board Schools and knows the life of the people across the bridges from the banana-box to the grave.

“Boys who might become classical scholars,” he writes, “stick labels on to parcels for ten years, others who have literary gifts clear out a brewer’s vat. Real thinkers work as porters in metal warehouses, and after shouldering iron fittings for eleven hours a day, find it difficult to set their minds in order.... With even the average boy there is a marked waste of mental capital between the ages of ten and thirty, and the aggregate loss to the country is heavy indeed.”

At fourteen, just when the “education” of well-to-do boys is beginning, the working boy’s education stops. For ten or eleven years he has been happy at school. He has looked upon school as a place of enjoyment—of interest, kindness, warmth, cleanliness, and even quiet of a kind. The school methods of education may not be the best. Mr. Paterson points out all that is implied in the distinction between the “teachers” of the Board Schools and the “masters” of the public schools. Too much is put in, not enough drawn out from the child’s own mind. The teacher cannot think much of individual natures, when faced with a class of sixty. Yet it would be difficult to overrate the service of the Board Schools as training grounds for manners, and anyone who has known the change in our army within twenty-five years will understand what I mean. At fourteen the boy has often reached his highest mental and spiritual development. When he leaves school, shades of the prison-house begin to close upon him. He jumps at any odd job that will bring in a few shillings to the family fund. He becomes beer-boy, barber’s boy, van-boy, paper-boy, and in a year or two he is cut out by the younger generation knocking at the door. He has learnt nothing; he falls out of work; he wanders from place to place. By the time he is twenty-two, just when the well-to-do are “finishing their education,” his mind is dulled, his hope and interest gone, his only ambition is to get a bit of work and keep it. At the best he develops into the average working-man of the regions I have called unknown. Mr. Paterson thus describes the class:

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"These are the steady bulk of the community, insuring the peace of the district by their habits and opinions far more effectively than any vigilance of police or government. Yet, if they are indeed satisfactory, how low are the civic standards of England, how fallen the ideals and beauties of Christianity! No man that has dreams can rest content because the English worker has reached his high level of regular work and rare intoxication."

One does not rest content; far from it. But the perpetual wonder is, not that "the lower classes are brutalised," but that this brutality is so tempered with generosity and sweetness. It is not their crime that surprises, but their virtue; not their turbulence or discontent, but their inexplicable acquiescence. And yet there are still people who sneer at "the mob," "the vulgar herd," "the great unwashed," as though principles, gentility, and soap were privileges in reward of merit, and not the accidental luck of money's chaotic distribution.

XI

THE WORTH OF A PENNY

A year or two ago, some wondered why strike had arisen out of strike; why the whole world of British labour had suddenly and all at once begun to heave restlessly as though with earthquake; why the streams of workpeople had in quick succession left the grooves along which they usually ran from childhood to the grave. "It is entirely ridiculous," said the *Times*, with the sneer of educated scorn, "it is entirely ridiculous to suppose that the whole industrial community has been patiently enduring real grievances which are simultaneously discovered to be intolerable." But to all outside the circle of the *Times*, the only ridiculous part of the situation was that the industrial community should patiently have endured their grievances so long.

That working people should simultaneously discover them to be intolerable, is nothing strange. It is all very well to lie in gaol, from which there seems no chance of escape. Treadmill, oakum, skilly, and the rest—one may as well go through with them quietly, for fear of something worse. But if word goes round that one or two prisoners have crept out of gaol, who would not burn to follow? Would not grievances then be simultaneously discovered to be intolerable? The seamen were but a feeble lot; their union was poor, their combination loose. They were cooped up within the walls of a great Employers' Federation, which laughed at their efforts to scramble out. Yet they escaped; the walls were found to be not so very high and strong; in one place or another they crumbled away, and the prisoners escaped. They gained what they wanted; their grievances were no longer intolerable. What working man or woman on hearing of it did not burn to follow, and did not feel the grievances of life harder to be tolerated than before? If that feeble lot could win their pennyworth of freedom, who

might not expect deliverance? People talk of “strike fever” as though it were an infection; and so it is. It is the infection of a sudden hope.

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After the sneer, the *Times* proceeded to attribute the strikes to a natural desire for idleness during the hot weather. Seldom has so base an accusation been brought against our country, even by her worst enemies. The country consists almost entirely of working people, the other classes being a nearly negligible fraction in point of numbers. The restlessness and discontent were felt far and wide among nearly all the working people, and to suggest that hundreds of thousands contemplated all the risks and miseries of stopping work because they wanted to be idle in the shade displayed the ignorance our educated classes often display in speaking of the poor. For I suppose the thing was too cruel for a joke.

Hardly less pitiable than such ignorance was the nonchalant excuse of those who pleaded: "We have our grievances too. We all want something that we haven't got. We should all like our incomes raised. But we don't go about striking and rioting." It reminds one of Lord Rosebery's contention, some fifteen years ago, that in point of pleasure all men are fairly equal, and the rich no happier than the poor. It sounds very pretty and philosophic, but those who know what poverty is know it to be absolutely untrue. If Lord Rosebery had ever tried poverty, he would have known it was untrue. All the working people know it, and they know that the grievances in which one can talk about income are never to be compared with the grievances which hang on the turn of a penny, or the chance of a shilling more or a shilling less per week.

To a man receiving L20 a week the difference of L2 one way or other is important, but it is not vital. If his income drops to L18 a week he and his family have just as much to eat and drink and wear; probably they live in the same house as before; the only change is a different place for the summer holiday, and, perhaps, the dress-circle instead of the stalls at a theatre. To a man with L200 a week the loss of L20 a week hardly makes any difference at all. He may grumble; he may drop a motor, or a yacht, but in his ordinary daily life he feels no change. To a docker making twenty shillings a week the difference of two shillings is not merely important, it is vital. The addition of it may mean three rooms for the family instead of two; it may mean nine shillings a week instead of seven to feed five mouths; it may mean meat twice a week, or half as much more bread and margarine than before, or a saving for second-hand clothes, and perhaps threepenn'orth of pleasure. In full work a docker at the old 7d. an hour would make more than twenty shillings a week; but the full weeks are rare, and about eighteen shillings would be all he could get on an average. The extra penny an hour for three days' work might bring him in about half a crown. To him and to his wife and children the difference was not merely important, it was vital.

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Or take the case of the 15,000 women who struck for a rise in South London, and got it. We may put their average wage at nine shillings a week. In the accounts of a woman who is keeping a family of three, including herself, on that wage, a third of the money goes to the rent of one room. Two shillings of the rest go for light, fuel, and soda. That leaves four shillings a week to feed and clothe three people. Even Lord Rosebery could hardly maintain that the opportunities for pleasure on that amount were equal to his own. But the women jam-makers won an advance of two shillings by their strike; the box-makers from 1_s_ 3_d_ to three shillings; even the glue and size workers got a shilling rise. It was hardly up to Lord Rosebery's standard yet. It did not represent the *Times* paradise of sitting idle in the shade. But think what it means when week by week you have jealously watched nine solid pennies going in bread, nine more in meat, and another six in tea! Or think what such an addition means to those working-women from the North, who at the same time protested in Trafalgar Square against the compulsory insurance because the payment of threepence a week would lose them two of their dinners—twice the penn'orth of bread and ha'porth of cheese that they always enjoyed for dinner!

When I was assisting in an inquiry into wages and expenditure some years ago, one head of a family added as a note at the foot of his budget: "I see that we always spend more than we earn, but as we are never in debt I attribute this result to the thriftiness of my wife." Behind that sentence a history of grievances patiently endured is written, but only the *Times* would wonder that such grievances are discovered to be intolerable the moment a gleam of hope appears. When the *Times*, in the same article, went on to protest that if the railwaymen struck, they would be kicking not only against the Companies but "against the nature of things," I have no clear idea of the meaning. The nature of things is no doubt very terrible and strong, but for working people the most terrible and strongest part of it is poverty. All else is sophisticated; here is the thing itself. One remembers two sentences in Mr. Shaw's preface to *Major Barbara*:

"The crying need of the nation is not for better morals, cheaper bread, temperance, liberty, culture, redemption of fallen sisters and erring brothers, nor the grace, love, and fellowship of the Trinity, but simply for enough money. And the evil to be attacked is not sin, suffering, greed, priestcraft, kingcraft, demagoguery, monopoly, ignorance, drink, war, pestilence, nor any other of the scapegoats which reformers sacrifice, but simply poverty."

Strikes are the children of Poverty by Hope. For a long time past the wealth of the country has rapidly increased. Gold has poured into it from South Africa, dividends from all the world; trade has boomed, great fortunes have been made; luxury has

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redoubled; the standard of living among the rich has risen high. The working people know all this; they can see it with their eyes, and they refuse to be satisfied with the rich man's blessing on the poor. What concerns them more than the increase in the quantity of gold is the natural result in the shrinkage of the penny. It is no good getting sevenpence an hour for your work if it does not buy so much as the "full, round orb of the docker's tanner," which Mr. John Burns saw rising over the dock gates more than twenty years ago, when he stood side by side with Ben Tillett and Tom Mann, and when Sir H. Llewellyn Smith and Mr. Vaughan Nash wrote the story of the contest. If prosperity has increased, so have prices, and what cost a tanner then costs eightpence now, or more than that. To keep pace with such a change is well worth a strike, since nothing but strikes can avail. So vital is the worth of a penny; so natural is it to kick against the nature of things, when their nature takes the form of steady poverty amid expanding wealth. That is the simultaneous discovery which raised the ridicule of the *Times*—that, and the further discovery that, in Carlyle's phrase, "the Empire of old Mammon is everywhere breaking up." The intangible walls that resisted so obstinately are fading away. The power of wealth is suspected. Strike after strike secures its triumphant penny, and no return of Peterloo, or baton charges on the Liverpool St. George's Hall, driving the silent crowd over the edge of its steep basis "as rapidly and continually as water down a steep rock," as was seen during the strikes of August 1911, can now check the infection of such a hope. It was an old saying of the men who won our political liberties that the redress of grievances must precede supply. The working people are standing now for a different phase of liberty, but their work is their supply, and having simultaneously discovered their grievances to be intolerable, they are making the same old use of the ancient precept.

XII

"FIX BAYONETS!"

"Oh, que j'aime le militaire!" sighed the old French song, no doubt with a touch of frivolity; but the sentiment moves us all. Sages have thought the army worth preserving for a dash of scarlet and a roll of the kettledrum; in every State procession it is the implements of death and the men of blood that we parade; and not to nursemaids only is the soldier irresistible. The glamour of romance hangs round him. Terrible with knife and spike and pellet he stalks through this puddle of a world, disdainful of drab mankind. Multitudes may toil at keeping alive, drudging through their scanty years for no hope but living and giving life; he shares with very few the function of inflicting death, and moves gaily clad and light of heart. "No doubt, some civilian occupations are very useful," said the author of an old drill-book; I think it was Lord Wolseley, and it was a large admission for any officer to have made. It was certainly Lord Wolseley who wrote

in his *Soldier's Pocket-Book* that the soldier “must believe his duties are the noblest that fall to man’s lot”:

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“He must be taught to despise all those of civil life. Soldiers, like missionaries, must be fanatics. An army thoroughly imbued with fanaticism can be killed, but never suffer disgrace; Napoleon, in speaking of it, said, ‘Il en faut pour se faire tuer.’”

And not only to get himself killed, but to kill must the soldier be imbued with this fanaticism and self-glory. In the same spirit Mr. Kipling and Mr. Fletcher have told us in their *History of England* that there is only one better trade than being a soldier, and that is being a sailor:

“To serve King and country in the army is the second best profession for Englishmen of all classes; to serve in the navy, I suppose we all admit, is the best.”

As we all admit it, certainly it does seem very hard on all classes that there should be anything else to do in the world besides soldiering and sailing. It is most deplorable that, in Lord Wolseley’s words, some civilian occupations are very useful; for, if they were not, we might all have a fine time playing at soldiers—real soldiers, with guns!—from a tumultuous cradle to a bloody grave. If only we could abolish the civilian and his ignoble toil, what a rollicking life we should all enjoy upon this earthly field of glory!

Such was the fond dream of many an innocent heart, when in August of 1911 we saw the soldiers distributed among the city stations or posted at peaceful junctions where suburb had met suburb for years in the morning, and parted at evening without a blow. There the sentry stood, let us say, at a gate of Euston station. There he stood, embodying glory, enjoying the second best profession for Englishmen of all classes. He was dressed in clean khaki and shiny boots. On his head he bore a huge dome of fluffy bearskin, just the thing for a fashionable muff; oppressive in the heat, no doubt, but imparting additional grandeur to his mien. There he stood, emblematic of splendour, and on each side of him were encamped distressful little families, grasping spades and buckets and seated on their corded luggage, unable to move because of the railway strike, while behind him flared a huge advertisement that said, “The Sea is Calling you.” Along the kerbstone a few yards in front were ranged the children of the district, row upon row, uncombed, in rags, filthy from head to foot, but silent with joy and admiration as they gazed upon the face of war. For many a gentle girl and boy that Friday and Saturday were the days of all their lives—the days on which the pretty soldiers came.

Nor was it only the charm of nice clothes and personal appearance that attracted them. Horror added its tremulous delight. There the sentry stood, ready to kill people at a word. His right knee was slightly bent, and against his right foot he propped the long wooden instrument that he killed with. In little pouches round his belt he carried the pointed bits of metal that the instrument shoots out quicker

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than arrows. It was whispered that some of them were placed already inside the gun itself, and could be fired as fast as a teacher could count, and each would kill a man. And at the end of the gun gleamed a knife, about as long as a butcher's carving-knife. It would go through a fattish person's body as through butter, and the point would stick a little way through the clothes at his back. Down each side of the knife ran a groove to let the blood out, so that the man might die quicker. It was a pleasure to look at such a thing. It was better than watching the sheep and oxen driven into the Aldgate slaughter-houses. It was almost as good as the glimpse of the executioner driving up to Pentonville in his dog-cart the evening before an execution.

Few have given the Home Office credit for the amount of interesting and cheap amusement it then afforded by parcelling out the country among the military authorities. In a period of general lassitude and holiday, it supplied the populace with a spectacle more widely distributed than the Coronation, and equally encouraging to loyalty. For it is not only pleasure that the sight of the soldiers in their midst provides: it gives every man and woman and child an opportunity of realising the significance of uniforms. Here are soldiers, men sprung from the working classes, speaking the same language, and having the same thoughts; men who have been brought up in poor homes, have known hunger, and have nearly all joined the army because they were out of work. And now that they are dressed in a particular way, they stand there with guns and those beautiful gleaming knives, ready, at a word, to kill people—to kill their own class, their own friends and relations, if it so happens. The word of command from an officer is alone required, and they would do it. People talk about the reading of the Riot Act and the sounding of the bugles in warning before the shooting begins; but no such warning is necessary. Lord Mansfield laid it down in 1780 that the Riot Act was but "a step in terrorism and of gentleness." There is no need for such gentleness. At an officer's bare word, a man in uniform must shoot. And all for a shilling a day, with food and lodging! To the inexperienced intelligence of men and women, the thing seems incredible, and the country owes a debt of gratitude to the Home Office for showing the whole working population that it is true. Certainly, the soldiers themselves strongly object to being put to this use. Their Red Book of instructions insists that the primary duty of keeping order rests with the civil power. It lays it down that soldiers should never be required to act except in cases where the riot cannot reasonably be expected to be quelled without resorting to the risk of inflicting death. But the Home Office, in requiring soldiers to act throughout the whole country at points where no riot at all was reasonably expected, gave us all during that railway strike an object-lesson in the meaning of uniform more impressive than the pictures on a Board School wall. Mr. Brailsford has well said, "the discovery of tyrants is that, for a soldier's motive, a uniform will serve as well as an idea."

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Not a century has passed since the days when, as the noblest mind of those times wrote, a million of hungry operative men rose all up, came all out into the streets, and—stood there. “Who shall compute,” he asked:

“Who shall compute the waste and loss, the destruction of every sort, that was produced in the Manchester region by Peterloo alone! Some thirteen unarmed men and women cut down—the number of the slain and maimed is very countable; but the treasury of rage, burning, hidden or visible, in all hearts ever since, more or less perverting the effort and aim of all hearts ever since, is of unknown extent. ‘How came ye among us, in your cruel armed blindness, ye unspeakable County Yeomanry, sabres flourishing, hoofs prancing, and slashed us down at your brute pleasure; deaf, blind to all *our* claims and woes and wrongs; of quick sight and sense to your own claims only! There lie poor, sallow, work-worn weavers, and complain no more now; women themselves are slashed and sabred; howling terror fills the air; and ye ride prosperous, very victorious—ye unspeakable: give *us* sabres too, and then come on a little!’ Such are Peterloos.”

The parallel, if not exact, is close enough. During popular movements in Germany and Russia, the party of freedom has sometimes hoped that the troops would come over to their side—would “fraternise,” as the expression goes. The soldiers in those countries are even more closely connected with the people than our own, for about one in three of the young men pass into the army, whether they like it or not, and in two or three years return to ordinary life. Yet the hope of “fraternisation” has nearly always been in vain. Half a dozen here and there may stand out to defend their brothers and their homes. But the risk is too great, the bonds of uniform and habit too strong. Hitherto in England, we have jealously preserved our civil liberties from the dragooning of military districts, and the few Peterloos of our history, compared with the suppressions in other countries, prove how justified our jealousy has been. It may be true—we wish it were always true, that, as Carlyle says, “if your Woolwich grapeshot be but eclipsing Divine Justice, and the God’s radiance itself gleam recognisable athwart such grapeshot, then, yes, then, is the time coming for fighting and attacking.” We all wish that were always true, and that the people of every country would always act upon it. But for the moment, we are grateful for the reminder that, whether it eclipses Divine Justice or not, the grapeshot is still there, and that a man in uniform, at a word of command, will shoot his mother.

XIII

“OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US”

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We have forgotten, else it would be impossible they should try to befool us. We have forgotten the terrible years when England lay cold and starving under the clutch of the landlords and their taxes on food. Terror is soon forgotten, for otherwise life could not endure. Not seventy years have gone since that clutch was loosened, but the iron which entered into the souls of our fathers is no more remembered. How many old labourers, old operatives, or miners are now left to recall the wretchedness of that toiling and starving childhood before the corn-tax was removed? Few are remaining now, and they speak little and will soon be gone. The horror of it is scattered like the night, and we think no more of it, nor imagine its reality. It seems very long ago, like Waterloo or the coach to York—so long ago that we can almost hope it was not true.

And yet our fathers have told us of it. They and their fathers lived through it at its worst. Only six years have passed since Mrs. Cobden Unwin collected the evidence of aged labourers up and down the country, and issued their piteous memories in the book called *The Hungry 'Forties*. Ill-spelt, full of mistakes, the letters are stronger documents than the historian's eloquence. In every detail of misery, one letter agrees with the other. In one after another we read of the quartern loaf ranging from 7_d_ to 11-1/2_d_, and heavy, sticky, stringy bread at that; or we read of the bean porridge or grated potato that was their chief food; or, if they were rather better off, they told of oatmeal and a dash of red herring—one red herring among three people was thought a luxury. And then there was the tea—sixpence an ounce, and one ounce to last a family for a week, eked out with the scrapings of burnt crusts to give the water a colour. One man told how his parents went to eat raw snails in the fields. Another said the look of a butcher's shop was all the meat they ever got. "A ungary belly makes a man desprit," wrote one, but for poaching a pheasant the hungry man was imprisoned fourteen years. Seven shillings to nine shillings a week was the farm labourer's wage, and it took twenty-six shillings then to buy the food that seven would buy now. What a vivid and heartrending picture of cottage life under the landlord's tax is given in one old man's memory of his childish hunger and his mother's pitiful self-denial! "We was not allowed free speech," he writes, "so I would just pull mother's face when at meals, and then she would say, 'Boy, I can't eat this crust,' and O! the joy it would bring my little heart."

We have forgotten it. Wretched as is the daily life of a large part of our working people—the only people who really count in a country's prosperity—we can no longer realise what it was when wages were so low and food so dear that the struggle with starvation never ceased. But in those days there were men who saw and realised it. The poor die and leave no record. Their

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labour is consumed, their bodies rot unnamed, and their habitations are swept away. They do not tell their public secret, and at the most their existence is recorded in the registers of the parish, the workhouse, or the gaol. But from time to time men have arisen with the heart to see and the gift of speech, and in the years when the oppression of the landlords was at its worst a few such men arose. We do not listen to them now, for no one cares to hear of misery. And we do not listen, because most of them wrote in verse, and verse is not liked unless it tells of love or beauty or the sticky pathos of drawing-room songs. But it so happens that two of the first who saw and spoke also sang of love and beauty with a power and sweetness that compel us to listen still. And so, in turning their well-known pages, we suddenly come upon things called "The Masque of Anarchy" or "The Age of Bronze," and, with a moment's wonder what they are all about, we pass on to "The Sensitive Plant," or "When We Two Parted." As we pass, we may just glance at the verses and read:

"What is Freedom?—ye can tell
That which slavery is, too well—
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.
'Tis to work and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs....

'Tis to see your children weak
With their mothers pine and peak,
When the winter winds are bleak—
They are dying whilst I speak."

Or, turning on, perhaps, in search of the "Ode to the West Wind," we casually notice the song beginning:

"Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay you low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?"

And so to the conclusion:



“With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre.”

Or else, in looking once more for that exquisite scene between Haidee and Don Juan on the beach, we fall unawares upon these lines:

“Year after year they voted cent. per cent.,
Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions—why? for rent!
They roared, they dined, they drank, they swore they meant
To die for England—why then live?—for rent!

* * * * *

And will they not repay the treasures lent?
No; down with everything, and up with rent!
Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent,
Being, end, aim, religion—rent, rent, rent!”

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The men who uttered such lines were driven from their class, their homes, and their country. They were despised and hated, like all who protest against oppression and remind the smug world of uncomfortable things. But they were great poets. One of them was our sweetest singer, the other was, when he wrote, the most conspicuous figure in Europe, and the most shattering force. Even England, which cares so little for her greatest inheritance of passionate intellect, cannot yet forget them. But others who sang the same terrible theme she has long forgotten, or she keeps them only on the shelves of curious and dusty investigators. Such men, I mean, as Ebenezer Elliot, Ebenezer Jones, Ernest Jones, Thomas Cooper, William James Linton, and Gerald Massey, who so lately died.

They were not high-born, nor were they shining poets like the twin stars of freedom whom I have quoted. Little scholarship was theirs, little perfection of song. Some had taught themselves their letters at the forge, some in the depths of the mine, some sang their most daring lines in prison cells where they were not allowed even to write down the words. Nearly all knew poverty and hunger at first hand; nearly all were persecuted for righteousness' sake. For maintaining the cause of the poor and the helpless they were mocked and reviled; scorn was their reward. The governing classes whose comfort they disturbed wished them dead; so did the self-righteous classes whose conscience they ruffled. That is the common fate of any man or woman who probes a loathsome evil, too long skimmed over. The peculiarity of these men was that, when they were driven to speak, they spoke in lines that flew on wings through the country. Indignation made their verse, and the burning memory of the wrongs they had seen gave it a power beyond its own expression. Which shall we recall of those ghostly poems, once so quick with flame? Still, at moments of deep distress or public wrongdoing, we may hear the echo of the Corn-law Rhymer's anthem:

"When wilt thou save the people?
O God of mercy! when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!"

Or if we read his first little book of rhymes, that may be had for twopence now, we shall find the pictures of the life that was lived under Protection—the sort of life the landlords and their theorists invite us to enact again. From his "Black Hole of Calcutta" we take the lines:

"Bread-tax'd weaver, all can see
What that tax hath done for thee,
And thy children, vilely led,
Singing hymns for shameful bread,
Till the stones of every street
Know their little naked feet."

Or let us take one verse from the lines, “O Lord, how long?”

“Child, what hast thou with sleep to do?
Awake, and dry thine eyes!
Thy tiny hands must labour too;
Our bread is tax’d—arise!
Arise, and toil long hours twice seven,
For pennies two or three;
Thy woes make angels weep in Heaven—
But England still is free.”

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Or we might recall “The Coming Cry,” by Ebenezer Jones, with its great refrain:

“Perhaps it’s better than starvation,—once we’ll pray, and then
We’ll all go building workhouses, million, million men!”

Or we might recall Ernest Jones and his “Song of the ‘Lower Classes,’” where the first verse runs:

“We plow and sow, we’re so very, very low,
That we delve in the dirty clay;
Till we bless the plain with the golden grain
And the vale with the fragrant hay.
Our place we know, we’re so very, very low,
’Tis down at the landlord’s feet;
We’re not too low the grain to grow,
But too low the bread to eat.”

Or shall we take one verse from the terrible “Easter Hymn,” written by the same true-hearted prisoner for freedom:

“Like royal robes on the King of Jews,
We’re mocked with rights that we may not use;
’Tis the people so long have been crucified,
But the thieves are still wanting on either side.

Chorus—Mary and Magdalen, Peter and John,
Swell the sad burden, and bear it on.”

The iteration of the idea throughout the poem is tremendous in effect, and the idea comes close to Swinburne’s ode, “Before a Crucifix”:

“O sacred head, O desecrate,
O labour-wounded feet and hands,
O blood poured forth in pledge to fate
Of nameless lives in divers lands,
O slain and spent and sacrificed
People, the grey-grown speechless Christ.”

Time would fail to tell of Linton’s “Torch-Dance of Liberty,” or of Massey’s “Men of Forty-eight,” and there are many more—the utterance of men who spoke from the heart, knowing in their own lives what suffering was. But let us rather turn for a moment to the prose of a man who, also reared in hardship’s school, had learnt to succour misery. Speaking at the time when Protection was biting and clawing the ground in the last

death-struggle, as all men but the landlords hoped, Carlyle asked this question of the people:

“From much loud controversy, and Corn-law debating, there rises, loud though inarticulate, once more in these years, this very question among others, Who made the Land of England? Who made it, this respectable English Land, wheat-growing, metalliferous, carboniferous, which will let readily, hand over hand, for seventy millions or upwards, as it here lies: who did make it? ‘We,’ answer the much-consuming Aristocracy; ‘We!’ as they ride in, moist with the sweat of Melton Mowbray: ‘It is we that made it, or are the heirs, assigns and representatives of those who did!’—My brothers, You? Everlasting honour to you, then; and Corn-laws many as you will, till your own deep stomachs cry Enough, or some voice of Human pity for our famine bids you Hold!”

So our fathers have told us, and we have forgotten. It is all very long ago, and the Protectionist says

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that times have changed. Certainly times have changed, and it was deliverance from Protection that changed them most. But if landowners have changed, if they are now more alien from the people, and richer from other sources than land, we have no reason to suppose them less greedy or more pitiful; nor can a nation live on the off-chance of pity. Seventy years ago the net encompassed the land. We have seen how the people suffered under its entanglement. In the sight of all, landowners and speculators are now trying to spread that net again. Are we to suppose the English people have not the hereditary instinct of sparrows to keep them outside its meshes?

XIV

THE GRAND JURY

When Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, received a summons to attend the Grand Jury, or to answer the contrary at his peril, he was glad. "For now," he thought, "I shall share in the duties of democracy and be brought face to face with the realities of life."

"Mrs. Wilson," he said to the landlady, as she brought in his breakfast, "what does this summons mean by describing the Court as being in the suburbs of the City of London? Is there a Brixton Branch?"

"O Lordy me!" cried the landlady, "I do hope, sir, as you've not got yourself mixed up with no such things; but the Court's nigh against St. Paul's, as I know from going there just before my poor nephew passed into retirement, as done him no good."

"The summons," Mr. Clarkson went on, "the summons says I'm to inquire, present, do, and execute all and singular things with which I may be then and there enjoined. Why should only the law talk like that?"

"Begging your pardon, sir," replied the landlady, "I sometimes do think it comes of their dressing so old-fashioned. But I'd ask it of you not to read me no more of such like, if you'd be so obliging. For it do make me come over all of a tremble."

"I wonder if her terror arises from the hideousness of the legal style or from association of ideas?" thought Mr. Clarkson as he opened a Milton, of which he always read a few lines every morning to dignify the day.

On the appointed date, he set out eastward with an exhilarating sense of change, and thoroughly enjoyed the drive down Holborn among the crowd of City men. "It's rather strangely like going to the seaside," he remarked to the man next him on the motor-'bus. The man asked him if he had come from New Zealand to see the

decorations, and arrived late. “Oh no,” said Mr. Clarkson, “I seldom think the Colonies interesting, and I distrust decoration in every form.”

It was unfortunate, but the moment he mounted the Court stairs, the decoration struck him. There were the expected scenes, historic and emblematic of Roman law, blindfold Justice, the Balance, the Sword, and other encouraging symbols. But in one semicircle he especially noticed a group of men, women, and children, dancing to the tabor’s sound in naked freedom. “Please, could you tell me,” he asked of a stationary policeman, “whether that scene symbolises the Age of Innocence, before Law was needed, or the Age of Anarchy, when Law will be needed no longer?”

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"Couldn't rightly say," answered the policeman, looking up sideways; "but I do wish they'd cover them people over more decent. They're a houtrage on respectable witnesses."

"All art—" Mr. Clarkson was beginning, when the policeman said "Grand Jury?" and pushed him through a door into a large court. A vision of middle-age was there gathering, and a murmur of complaint filled the room—the hurried breakfast, the heat, the interrupted business, the reported large number of prisoners, likely to occupy two days, or even three.

Silence was called, and four or five elderly gentlemen in black-and-scarlet robes—"wise in their wigs, and flamboyant as flamingoes," as a daily paper said of the judges at the Coronation—some also decorated with gilded chains and deep fur collars, in spite of the heat, entered from a side door and took their seats upon a raised platform. Each carried in his hand a nosegay of flowers, screwed up tight in a paper frill with lace-work round the edges, like the bouquets that enthusiasts or the management throw to actresses.

"Are those flowers to cheer the prisoners?" Mr. Clarkson whispered, "or are they the rudimentary survivals of the incense that used to counteract the smell and infection of gaol-fever?"

"Covent Garden," was the reply, and the list of jurors was called. The first twenty-three were sent into another room to select their foreman, and, though Mr. Clarkson had not the slightest desire to be chosen, he observed that the other jurors did not even look in his direction. Finally, a foreman was elected, no one knew for what reasons, and all went back to the Court to be "charged." A gentleman in black-and-scarlet made an hour's speech, reviewing the principal cases with as much solemnity as if the Grand Jury's decisions would affect the Last Judgment, and Mr. Clarkson began to realise his responsibility so seriously that when the jurors were dismissed to their duties, he took his seat before a folio of paper, a pink blotting-pad, and two clean quill pens, with a resolve to maintain the cause of justice, whatever might befall.

"Page eight, number twenty-one," shouted the black-robed usher, who guided the jurors as a dog guides sheep, and wore the cheerful air of congenial labour successfully performed. Turning up the reference in the book of cases presented to each juror, Mr. Clarkson found: "Charles Jones, 35, clerk; forging and uttering, knowing the same to be forged, a receipt for money, to wit, a receipt for fees on a plaint note of the Fulham County Court, with intent to defraud."

"This threatens to be a very abstruse case," he remarked to a red-faced juror on his right.

"A half of bitter would elucidate it wonderful to my mind," was the answer.

But already a policeman had been sworn, and given his evidence with the decisiveness of a gramophone.

“Any questions?” said the foreman, looking round the table. No one spoke.

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“Signify, gentlemen, signify!” cried the genial usher, and all but Mr. Clarkson held up a hand.

“Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve,” counted the usher, totting up the hands till he reached a majority. “True Bill, True Bill! Next case. Page eleven, number fifty-two.”

“Do you mean to tell me that is all?” asked Mr. Clarkson, turning to his neighbour.

“Say no more, and I’ll make it a quart,” replied the red-faced man, ticking off the last case and turning up the new one, in which a doctor was already giving his evidence against a woman charged with the wilful murder of her newly-born male child.

“Signify, gentlemen, signify!” cried the usher. “Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. True Bill, True Bill! Next case. Page fourteen, number seventy-two.”

“Stop a moment,” stammered Mr. Clarkson, half rising; “if you please, stop one moment. I wish to ask if we are justified in rushing through questions of life and death in this manner. What do we know of this woman, for instance—her history, her distress, her state of mind?”

“Sit down!” cried some. “Oh, shut it!” cried others. All looked at him with the amused curiosity of people in a tramcar looking at a talkative child. The usher bustled across the room, and said in a loud and reassuring whisper: “All them things has got nothing to do with you, sir. Those is questions for the Judge and Petty Jury upstairs. The magistrates have sat on all these cases already and committed them for trial; so all you’ve got to do is to find a True Bill, and you can’t go wrong.”

“If we can’t go wrong, there’s no merit in going right,” protested Mr. Clarkson.

“Next case. Page fourteen, number seventy-two,” shouted the usher again, and as the witness was a Jew, his hat was sent for. “There’s a lot of history behind that hat,” said Mr. Clarkson, wishing to propitiate public opinion.

“Wish that was all there was behind it,” said the juror on his left. The Jew finished his evidence and went away. The foreman glanced round, and the usher had already got as far as “Signify,” when a venerable juror, prompted by Mr. Clarkson’s example, interposed.

“I should like to ask that witness one further question,” he said in a fine Scottish accent, and after considerable shouting, the Jew was recalled.

“I should like to ask you, my man,” said the venerable juror, “how you spell your name?” The name was spelt, the juror carefully inscribed it on a blank space opposite the charge, sighed with relief, and looked round. “Signify, gentlemen, signify!” cried the

usher. "Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. True Bill, True Bill! Next case. Page six, number eleven."

Number eleven was a genuine murder case, and sensation pervaded the room when the murdered man's wife was brought in, weeping. She sobbed out the oath, and the foreman, wishing to be kind, said, encouragingly, "State briefly what you know of this case."

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She sobbed out her story, and was led away. The foreman glanced round the tables.

"I think we ought to hear the doctor," said the red-faced man. The doctor was called and described a deep incised wound, severing certain anatomical details.

"I think we ought to hear the constable," said the red-faced man, and there was a murmur of agreement. A policeman came in, carrying a brown paper parcel. Having described the arrest, he unwrapped a long knife, which was handed round the tables for inspection. When it reached the red-faced juror, he regarded the blade closely up and down, with gloating satisfaction. "Are those stains blood?" he asked the policeman.

"Yes, sir; them there is the poor feller's blood."

The red-faced man looked again, and suddenly turning upon Mr. Clarkson, went through a pantomime of plunging the knife into his throat. At Mr. Clarkson's horrified recoil he laughed himself purple.

"Well said the Preacher you may know a man by his laughter," Mr. Clarkson murmured, while the red-faced man patted him amicably on the back.

"No offence, I hope; no offence!" he said. "Come and have some lunch. I always must, and I always do eat a substantial lunch. Nice, juicy cut from the joint, and a little dry sherry? What do you say?"

"Thank you very much indeed," said Mr. Clarkson, instantly benign. "You are most kind, but I always have coffee and a roll and butter."

"O my God!" exclaimed the red-faced man, and speaking across Mr. Clarkson to another substantial juror, he entered into discussion on the comparative merits of dry sherry and champagne-and-bitters.

Soon after two they both returned in the comfortable state of mind produced by the solution of doubt. But Mr. Clarkson's doubts had not been solved, and his state of mind was far from comfortable. All through the lunch hour he had been tortured by uncertainty. A plain duty confronted him, but how could he face it? He hated a scene. He abhorred publicity as he abhorred the glaring advertisements in the streets. He had never suffered so much since the hour before he had spoken at the Oxford Union on the question whether the sense for beauty can be imparted by instruction. He closed his eyes. He felt the sweat standing on his forehead. And still the cases went on. "Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. True Bill. True Bill. Two, four, six, eight..."

"Now then, sleepy!" cried the red-faced man in his ear, giving him a genial dig with his elbow. Mr. Clarkson quivered at the touch, but he rose.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I wish to protest against the continuation of this farce."

The jury became suddenly alert, and his voice was drowned in chaos. “Order, order! Chair, chair!” they shouted. “Everybody’s doing it!” sang one.

“I call that gentleman to order,” said the foreman, rising with dignity. “He has previously interrupted and delayed our proceedings, without bringing fresh light to bear upon our investigations. After the luncheon interval, I was pleased to observe that for one cause or another—I repeat, for one cause or another—he was distinctly—shall I say somnolent, gentlemen? Yes, I will say somnolent. And I wish to inform him that the more somnolent he remains, the better we shall all be pleased.”

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"Hear, hear! Quite true!" shouted the jury.

"Does it appear to you, sir, fitting to sit here wasting time?" Mr. Clarkson continued, with diminishing timidity. "Does it seem to you a proper task for twenty-three apparently rational beings—"

"Twenty-two! Twenty-two!" cried the red-faced man, adding up the jurors with the end of a pen, and ostentatiously omitting Mr. Clarkson.

The jurors shook with laughter. They wiped tears from their eyes. They rolled their heads on the pink blotting-paper in their joy. When quiet was restored, the foreman proceeded:

"I have already ruled that gentleman out of order, and I warn him that if he perseveres in his contumacious disregard of common decency and the chair, I shall proceed to extremities as the law directs. We are here, gentlemen, to fulfil a public duty as honourable British citizens, and here we will remain until that duty is fulfilled, or we will know the reason why."

He glanced defiantly round, assuming an aspect worthy of the last stand at Maiwand. Looking at Mr. Clarkson as turkeys might look at a stray canary, the jurors expressed their applause.

But the genial usher took pity, and whispered across the table to him, "It'll all come right, sir; it'll all come right. You wait a bit. The Grand Jury always rejects one case before it's done; sometimes two."

And sure enough, next morning, while Mr. Clarkson was reading Burke's speeches which he had brought with him, one of the jurors objected to the evidence in the eighty-seventh case. "We cannot be too cautious, gentlemen," he said, "in arriving at a decision in these delicate matters. The apprehension of blackmail in relation to females hangs over every living man in this country."

"Delicate matters; blackmail; relation to females; great apprehension of blackmail in these delicate matters," murmured the jury, shaking their heads, and they threw out the Bill with the consciousness of an independent and righteous deed.

Soon after midday, the last of the cases was finished, and having signified a True Bill for nearly the hundredth time, the jurors were conducted into the Court where a prisoner was standing in the dock for his real trial. As though they had saved a tottering State, the Judge thanked them graciously for their services, and they were discharged.

"Just a drop of something to show there's no ill-feeling?" said the red-faced man as they passed into the street.



“Thank you very much,” replied Mr. Clarkson warmly. “I assure you I have not the slightest ill-feeling of any kind. But I seldom drink.”

“Bless my soul!” said the red-faced man. “Then, what *do* you do?”

XV

A NEW CONSCRIPTION

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When the Territorial exclaims that, for his part, he would refuse to inhabit a planet on which there was no hope of war, the peaceful listener shudderingly charges the inventor of Territorials with promoting a bloodthirsty mind. After all the prayers for peace in our time—prayers in which even Territorials are expected to join on church parade—it appears an impious folly to appraise war as a necessity for human happiness. Or if indeed it be a blessing, however much in disguise, why not boldly pray to have the full benefit of it in our time, instead of passing it on, like unearned increment, for the advantage of posterity? Such a thing is unimaginable. A prayer for war would make people jump; it would empty a church quicker than the collection. Nevertheless, it is probable that the great majority of every congregation does in its heart share the Territorial's opinion, and, if there were no possibility of war ever again anywhere in the world, they would find life upon this planet a trifle flat.

The impulse to hostilities arises not merely from the delight in scenes of blood enjoyed at a distance, though that is the commonest form of military ardour, and in many a bloody battle the finest fruits of victory are reaped over newspapers and cigars at the bar or in the back garden. There is no such courage as glows in the citizen's bosom when he peruses the telegrams of slaughter, just as there is no such ferocity as he imbibes from the details of a dripping murder. "War! War! Bloody war! North, South, East, or West!" cries the soldier in one of Mr. Kipling's pretty tales; but in real life that cry arises rather from the music-halls than from the soldier, and many a high-souled patriot at home would think himself wronged if perpetual peace deprived him of his one opportunity of displaying valour to his friends, his readers, or his family. All these imaginative people, whose bravery may be none the less genuine for being vicarious, must be reckoned as the natural supporters of war, and, indeed, one can hardly conceive any form of distant conflict for which they would not stand prepared.

But still, the widespread dislike of peace is not entirely derived from their prowess; nor does it spring entirely from the nursemaid's love of the red coat and martial gait, though this is on a far nobler plane, and comes much nearer to the heart of things. The gleam of uniforms in a drab world, the upright bearing, the rattle of a kettledrum, the boom of a salute, the murmur of the "Dead March," the goodnight of the "Last Post" sounding over the home-faring traffic and the quiet cradles—one does not know by what substitutes eternal peace could exactly replace them. For they are symbols of a spiritual protest against the degradation of security. They perpetually re-assert the claim of a beauty and a passion that have no concern with material advantages. They sound defiance in the dull ears of comfort, and proclaim woe unto them that are at ease in the city of life. Dimly the nursemaid is aware of the protest; most people are dimly aware of it; and the few who seriously labour for an unending reign of peace must take it into account.

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It is useless to allure mankind by promises of a pig's paradise. Much has been rightly written about the horrors of war. Everyone knows them to be sudden, hideous, and overwhelming; those who have seen them can speak also of the squalor, the filthiness, the murderous swindling, and the inconceivable absurdity of the whole monstrous performance. But the horrors of peace, if not so obvious, come nearer to our daily life, and we are naturally terrified at its softness, its monotony, and its enfeebling relaxation. Of all people in the world the wealthy classes of England and America are probably the furthest removed from danger, and no one admires them in the least; no one in the least envies their treadmill of successive pleasures. The most unwarlike of men are haunted by the fear that perpetual peace would induce a general degeneration of soul and body such as they now behold amid the rich man's sheltered comforts. They dread the growth of a population slack of nerve, soft of body, cruel through fear of pain, and incapable of endurance or high endeavour. They dread the entire disappearance of that clear decisiveness, that disregard of pleasure, that quiet devotion of self in the face of instant death, which are to be found, now and again, in the course of every war. Even peace, they say, may be bought too dear, and what shall it profit a people if it gain a swill-tub of comforts and lose its own soul?

The same argument is chosen by those who would persuade the whole population to submit to military training, whether it is needful for the country's defence or not. Under such training, they suppose, the virtues that peace imperils would be maintained; a sense of equality and comradeship would pervade all classes, and for two or three years of life the wealthy would enjoy the realities of labour and discomfort. It is a tempting vision, and if this were the only means of escape from such a danger as is represented, the wealthy would surely be the first to embrace it for their own salvation. But is there no other means? asked Professor William James, and his answer to the question was that distinguished psychologist's last service. What we are looking for, he rightly said, is a moral equivalent for war, and he suddenly found it in a conscription, not for fighting, but for work. After showing that the life of many is nothing else but toil and pain, while others "get no taste of this campaigning life at all," he continued:

"If now—and this is my idea—there were, instead of military conscription, a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other benefits to the commonwealth would follow. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the growing fibre of the people; no one would remain blind, as the luxurious classes now are blind, to man's real relations to the globe he lives

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on, and to the permanently solid and hard foundations of his higher life. To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dish-washing, clothes-washing, and window-washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas."

Here, indeed, is a vision more tempting than ever conscription was. To be sure, it is not new, for Ruskin had a glimpse of it, and that was why he induced the Oxford undergraduates to vary their comfortable Greek studies and games at ball with a little honest work upon the Hinksey road. But the vision is irresistible. There cannot be the smallest doubt it will be realised, and when the young dukes, landed proprietors, financiers, motorists, officers in the Guards, barristers, and curates are marched off in gangs to their apportioned labour in the stoke-holes, coal-mines, and December fishing fleets, how the workmen will laugh, how exult!

Nor let it be supposed that the conscription would subject even the most luxurious conscripts to any unendurable hardship. So hateful is idleness to man that the toil of the poor is continually being adopted by the rich as sport. To climb a mountain was once the irksome duty of the shepherd and wandering hawker; now it is the privilege of wealth to hang by the finger-nails over an abyss. Once it was the penalty of slaves to pull the galleys; now it is only the well-to-do who labour day by day at the purposeless oar, and rack their bodies with a toil that brings home neither fish nor merchandise. Once it fell to the thin bowman and despised butcher to provide the table with flesh and fowl; now, at enormous expense, the rich man plays the poulterer for himself, and statesmen seek the strenuous life in the slaughter of a scarcely edible rhinoceros. Let the conscripts of comfort take heart. They will run more risks in the galleries of the mines than on the mountain precipice, and one night's trawl upon the Dogger Bank would provide more weight of fish than if they whipped the Tay from spring to winter.

Under this great conscription, a New Model would, indeed, be initiated, as far superior to the conscript armies as Cromwell's Ironsides were to the mercenaries of their time. The whole nation from prince to beggar would by this means be transformed, labour would cease to be despised or riches to be worshipped, the reproach of effeminacy would be removed, the horrors of peace mitigated, and the moral equivalent of war discovered. For the first time a true comradeship between class and class would arise, for, as Goethe said, work makes the comrade, and democracy might have a chance of becoming a reality instead of a party phrase. After three years' service down the sewers or at the smelting works, our men of leisure

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would no longer raise their wail over national degeneracy or the need of maintaining the standard of hardihood by barrack-square drill. As things are now, it is themselves who chiefly need the drill. "Those who live at ease," said Professor James, "are an island on a stormy ocean." In the summing up of the nation they, in their security, would hardly count, were they not so vocal; but the molten iron, the flaming mine, the whirling machine, the engulfing sea, and hunger always at the door take care that, for all but a very few among the people, the discipline of danger and perpetual effort shall not be wanting. You do not find the pitman, the dustman, or the bargee puling for bayonet exercise to make them hard, and if our nervous gentlemen were all serving the State in those capacities, they might even approach their addition sums in "Dreadnoughts" without a tremor. Besides, as Professor James added for a final inducement, the women would value them more highly.

XVI

THE LAST OF THE RUNNYMEDES

The high debate was over, and Lord Runnymede issued from the House, proud in his melancholy, like a garrison withdrawing from a fortress with colours flying and all the honours of war. He had sent a messenger (he called him an "orderly") for his carriage. He might have telephoned, but he disliked the Board-School voice that said "Number, please!" and he still more disliked the idea of a coachman speaking down a tube (as he imagined it) into his ear. Not that he was opposed to inventions, or the advance of science as such. He recognised the necessity of progress, and had not openly reproached his own sister when she instituted a motor in place of her carriage. But for himself the two dark bays were waiting—heads erect, feet firmly planted on the solid earth. For he loved horses, and the Runnymede stables maintained the blood of King Charles's importations from Arabian chivalry. Besides, what manners, what sense, could be expected of a chauffeur, occupied with oily wheels and engines, instead of living things and corn?

Some of the small crowd standing about the gate recognised him as he came out, and one called his name and said "What ho!" For his appearance was fairly well known through political caricatures, which usually represented him in plate-armour, holding a spear, and wearing a coat-of-arms. He had once instructed his secretary to write privately to an editor pointing out that the caricaturist had committed a gross error in heraldry; but in his heart he rather enjoyed the pictures, and it was the duty of one of his maids to stick them into a scrap-book, inscribed with the proper dates, for the instruction and entertainment of his descendants. In fact, he had lately been found showing the book to a boy of three, who picked out his figure by its long nose, and said "Granpa!" with unerring decision.

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But what was the good of son or grandchild now? He had nothing to hand down to them but the barren title, the old estate, and wealth safely invested in urban land and financial enterprises which his stockbroker recommended. Titles, estates, and wealth were but shadows without the vitalising breath of power. Cotton-spinners, boot-finishers, purveyors of food at popular prices could now possess such things, and they appeared to enjoy them. There were people, he believed, satisfied with comfort, amusements, rounds of visits, social ambitions, and domestic or luxurious joys. But for a Runnymede thus to decline would be worse than extinction.

For six centuries the Runnymedes had served their country. Edward I had summoned one of them to his “model Parliament,” and the present lord could still spell out a word or two of the ancient writ that hung framed in the hall at Stennynge, with the royal seal attached. Two of his ancestors had died by public violence (one killed in battle, fighting for the Yorkists, who Lord Runnymede inclined to think represented the Legitimist side; the other executed under Elizabeth, apparently by mistake), and regretting there were not more, he had searched the records of the Civil Wars and the 'Forty-five in vain. But never had a Runnymede failed in Parliament, or the Council of the King, as he preferred to call it; and their name had frequently appeared among the holders of subordinate but dignified offices, such as the Mastership of the Buckhounds, to which special knowledge gave an honourable claim.

Trained from his first pony in political tradition, and encouraged by every gamekeeper to follow the footsteps of his ancestors, Lord Runnymede had inevitably taken “Noblesse oblige” as his private motto. But of what service was nobility if its obligations were abolished? He sometimes pictured with a shudder the fate of the surviving French nobility—retaining their titles by courtesy, and compelled to fritter away their lives upon chateaux, travelling, aeroplanes, or amatory intrigues, instead of directing their wisdom and influence to the right government of the State. The guillotine was better. He could not imagine his descendants without a House of Lords to sit in. Without the Lords, he was indeed the last of the Runnymedes, and upon the scaffold he might at least die worthy of his name.

Compromise he despised as the artifice of lawyers and upstart politicians. It had been a dagger in his heart to hear his leader speaking of some readjustment between the two Houses as inevitable. He denied the necessity, unless the readjustment augmented the power of the Lords. Planting himself on Edward I's statute, he had vehemently maintained the right of the Lords to control finance, though he was willing to allow the commercial gentlemen in the Commons the privilege of working out the figures of national income and expenditure. He now regarded the threatened creation of Peers as a gross insult to public decency.

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Properly speaking, he protested, Peers cannot be created. You might as well put terriers into kennels and call them foxhounds. Now and then a distinguished soldier or even a statesman could be ennobled without much harm; and he supposed there was something to be said for a learned man, and a writer or two, though he preferred them to be childless. He had once published a book himself, with the Runnymede arms on the cover. But the thought of making Lords by batches vulgarised the King's majesty, and reversed the order of nature. "Are we worse than Chinamen," he asked, "that we seek to confer nobility on fellows sprung from unknown forefathers?" The Archbishop of Canterbury had appealed to the House to approach the question with mutual consideration and respect, high public spirit and common sense. But on such a question consideration was dangerous, and common sense fatal. He wished the Bishops had stuck to their own Convocation from Plantagenet times, instead of intruding their inharmonious white sleeves where they were not wanted. He was sorry he had subscribed so handsomely to the restoration of Stennynge Church. He ought to have ear-marked his contribution for the Runnymede aisle.

Worse still, the Archbishop had mentioned "the average voter in tramcar or railway train," and the words had called up a haunting vision of disgust. He often said that he had no objection to the working classes as such. He rather liked them. He found them intelligent and unpretentious. He could converse with them without effort, and they always had the interest of sport in common. He felt no depression in passing through the working quarters of the city, and at Stennynge he was well acquainted with all the cottagers and farmers alike. In one family he had put out a puppy at walk; in another he had let off a man who had poached a pheasant when his wife was ill; in a third he had stood godfather to the baby when the father was killed falling from a stack. He felt a kind of warmth towards the poor whenever he saw them upon his own estate.

But of the average voter, such as the Archbishop described, he could not think without pain and apprehension. Coming to London from any part of the country, he always closed his eyes as the train entered the suburbs. Those long rows of monotonous little houses—so decent, so uneventful, so temporary—oppressed him like a physical disease. If he contemplated them, they induced violent dyspepsia, such as he had once incurred by visiting the Crystal Palace. The consciousness that they were there, even as he passed through tunnels, lowered his vitality until he reached his town house or club in the centre of things. Not even the considerable income he derived from land on the outskirts of a large manufacturing town consoled him for the horror of the town's extension. In those uniform houses—in their railings, their Venetian blinds, indiarubber plants, and stained-glass panels to the doors—he beheld the coming degradation of his country.

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He saw them, like great armies of white or red ants, creeping over the land, devouring all that was beautiful in it, or ancient, or redolent of grandeur. Bit by bit, street by street, the ignoble, the tidy, the pettiness of the parlour, was gaining upon splendour and renown, and the anticipation of the change cast a foreboding sadness over the beauty of his own ancestral home. It tainted even his unuttered pride in his son, who had been at Eton without expulsion, and served two years in the Foot Guards without discredit. And now, there was his grandson.

What future could be theirs? Should a Runnymede sit in a House shorn of its prerogatives, bound to impotence, reduced to a mere echo of popular caprice, with hardly the delaying power of a chaperon at a ball? Or should a son of his trot round from door to door, seeking the suffrages of those distressing suburbs at the polls—a son whose ancestry had known the favour of princes, and withstood foes and traitors upon the field? Lord Runnymede himself had never thought of election, even before the House of Lords received him. Yet if you wanted representatives, who was more truly representative of his own estates and the interests of every soul upon it—interests identical with his own? Who was more fit to control the country than a man who had breathed the atmosphere of State from childhood, and learnt history from the breast-plates, the swords, the cloaks, the wigs, and the side-whisker portraits of men whose very blood beat in his heart?

As the carriage went down Piccadilly, he was overwhelmed with the darkness of the prospect. He saw an ancient country staggering from side to side on its road to ruin, while the hands which had directed and steadied it for centuries lay bound or idle. He saw coverts and meadows and cornfields eaten away by desirable residences, angular garden cities, and Socialist communities. He saw his own Stennynges advertised for plots, and its relics catalogued for a museum, while factories spouted smoke from its lawns and shrubberies, and if a Runnymede survived, he lived in a rough-cast villa, like an eagle in a cage at the Zoo. The soul of all his ancestors rose within him. Never should it happen while he had a sword to draw. At least he could display the courage of the fine old stock. If he submitted to the degradation, he would feel himself a coward, unfit for the position he and his fathers had occupied. Let the enemy do their worst; they should find him steady at his post. Before him lay one solemn duty still to be performed for God and country. The spirit of noble sacrifice was not dead. The populace should see how an aristocrat still could die. Come what might, he would vote against the third reading of the Bill!

Dismounting from his carriage, he approached the entrance-porch of his house with so proud and resolute a bearing that three hatless working-girls passing by, in white frocks, with arms interlaced, all cried out “Percy!” as their ironic manner is.

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XVII

CHILDREN OF THE STATE

I

Mrs. Reeve was an average widow with encumbrances. Ten years before she had married a steady-going man—a cabinet-maker during working hours, and something of a Dissenter and a Radical in the evenings and on Sundays. His wages had touched thirty shillings, and they had lived in three rooms, first floor, in a quiet neighbourhood, keeping themselves to themselves, as they boasted without undue pride. In their living-room was a flowery tablecloth; a glass shade stood on the mantelpiece; there were a few books in a cupboard. They had thoughts of buying a live indiarubber plant to stand by the window, when unexpectedly the man died.

He had followed the advice of economists. He had practised thrift. During his brief illness his society had supplied a doctor, and it provided a comfortable funeral. His widow was left with a small sum in hand to start her new life upon, and she increased it by at once pawning the superfluous furniture and the books. She lost no time hanging about the old home. Within a week she had dried her eyes, washed out her handkerchiefs, made a hatchment of her little girl's frock with quarterings of crape, piled the few necessities of existence on a barrow and settled in a single room in the poorest street of the district.

It was not much of a place, and it cost her half a crown a week, but in six months she had come to think of it as a home. She had brushed the ceiling and walls, and scrubbed the boards, the children helping. She had added the touch of art with advertisements and picture almanacs. A bed for the three children stood in one corner—a big green iron bed, once her own. On the floor was laid a mattress for herself and the baby. Round it she hung her shawl and petticoats as a screen over some lengths of cords. Right across the room ran a line for the family's bits of washing. A tiny looking-glass threw mysterious rays on to the ceiling at night. On the whole, it really was not so bad, she thought, as she looked round the room one evening. Only unfortunately her capital had been slipping away shilling by shilling, and the first notice to quit had been served that day. She was what she called "upset" about it.

"Now, Alfred," she said to her eldest boy, "it's time I got to my work, and it won't do for you to start gettin' 'ungry again after yer teas. So you put yerself and Lizzie to bed, and I'll make a race of it with Hen and the baby."

"There now," she said when the race was over, "that's what's called a dead 'eat, and that's a way of winnin' as saves the expense of givin' a prize."

With complete disregard for the theorising of science, she then stuck the poker up in front of the bars to keep the fire bright.

“Now, Alfred,” she said, “you mind out for baby cryin’, and if she should ’appen to want for anythink, just give a call to Mrs. Thomas through the next door.”

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"Right you are," said Alfred, feeling as important as a 'bus conductor.

Mrs. Reeve hurried towards the City to her work. Office cleaning was the first thing that had offered itself, and she could arrange the hours so as to look after the children between whiles. Late at night and again early in the morning she was in the offices, and she earned a fraction over twopence an hour.

"You're not seemin' exackly saloobrious to-night, my dear," said the old woman who had lately come to the same staircase, as they began to scour the stone with whitening. "I do 'ope 'e ain't been layin' 'is 'and on yer."

"My 'usband didn't 'appen to be one of them sort, thankin' yer kindly," said Mrs. Reeve.

"Oh, a widder, and beggin' yer pardon. And you'll 'ave children, of course?"

"Four," said Mrs. Reeve, and she thought of them asleep in the firelight.

The old woman—a mere bundle with a pair of eyes in it—looked at her for a moment, and pretending out of delicacy to be talking to herself, she muttered loud enough to be heard: "Oh, that's where it is, is it? There's four, same as I've buried. And a deal too many to bring up decent on ten shillin' a week. Why, I'd sooner let the Poor Law 'ave 'em, though me and the old man 'ad to go into the 'Ouse for it. And that's what I said to Mrs. Green when Mrs. Turner was left with six. And Mrs. Turner she went and done it. An uncommon sensible woman, was Mrs. Turner, not like some as don't care what comes to their children, so long as they're 'appy themselves."

In the woman's words Mrs. Reeve heard the voice of mankind condemning her. She knew it was all true. The thought had haunted her for days, and that she might not hear more, she drowned the words by sousing about the dirty water under the hiss of the scouring brush.

But when she reached home just before midnight, her mind was made up. Her husband had always insisted that the children should be well fed and healthy. He had spoken with a countryman's contempt of the meagre Cockney bodies around them. One at least should go. She lit the candle, and stood listening to their sleep. Suddenly the further question came—which of the four? Should it be Alfred, the child of her girlhood, already so like his father, though he was only just nine? She couldn't get on without him, he was so helpful, could be trusted to light the lire, sweep the room and wash up. It could not possibly be Alfred. Should it be Lizzie, her little girl of five, so pretty and nice to dress in the old days when even her father would look up from his book with a grunt of satisfaction at her bits of finery on Sundays? But a girl must always need the mother's care. It couldn't possibly be Lizzie. Or should it be little Ben, lying there with eyes sunk deep in his head, and one arm outside the counterpane? Why, Ben was only

three. A few months ago he had been the baby. It couldn't possibly be little Ben. And then there was the baby herself—well, of course, it couldn't be the baby.

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So the debate went on, in a kind of all-night sitting. At half-past five she started for the offices again, sleepless and undecided.

That afternoon she went to the relieving officer at the workhouse. Two days later she was waiting among other "cases" in a passage there, under an illuminated text: "I have not seen the righteous forsaken." In her turn she was ushered into the presence of the Board from behind a black screen. A few questions were put with all the delicacy which time and custom allowed. There was a brief discussion.

"Quite a simple case," said the chairman. "My good woman, the Guardians will undertake to relieve you of two children to prevent the whole lot of you coming on the rates. Send the two eldest to the House at once, and they will be drafted into our school in due course. Good morning to you. Next case, please."

She could do nothing but obey. Alfred and Lizzie were duly delivered at the gate. Bewildered and terrified, hoping every hour to be taken home, they hung about the workhouse, and became acquainted with the flabby pallor and desperate sameness of the pauper face. After two days they were whirled away, they knew not where, in something between a brougham and an ambulance cart.

"You lay, Liz, they're goin' to make us Lord Mayors of London, same as Whittington, and we'll all ride in a coach together," said Alfred, excited by the drive, and amazed at the two men on the box. Then they both laughed with the cheerful irony of London children.

II

It was an afternoon in early October, the day after Alfred and Lizzie had been removed from the workhouse. They were now in the probation ward of one of the great district schools. Lizzie was sitting in the girls' room, whimpering quietly to herself, and every now and then saying, "I want my mother." To which the female officer replied, "Oh, you'll soon get over that."

Alfred was standing on the outside of a little group of boys gathered in idleness round a stove in a large whitewashed room on the opposite side of the building. Nearest the warmth stood Clem Bowler, conscious of the dignity which experience gives. For Clem had a reputation to maintain. He was a redoubtable "in and out." Four times already within a year his parents had entrusted themselves and him to the care of the State, and four times, overcome by individualistic considerations, they had recalled him to their own protection. His was not an unusual case. The superintendent boasted that his "turn-over" ran to more than five hundred children a year. But there was distinction about Clem, and people remembered him.

“You ’ear, now,” he said, looking round with a veteran’s contempt upon the squad of recruits in pauperism, “if none on yer don’t break out with somethink before the week’s over, I’ll flay the lot. I’m not pertikler for what it is. Last time it was measles first, and then ringworm. Nigh on seven weeks I stopt ’ere with nothink to do only eat, and never got so much as a smell of the school. What’s them teachers got to learn *me*, I’d like to know?”

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He paused with rhetorical defiance, but as no one answered he proceeded to express the teachers and officers in terms of unmentionable quantities. Suddenly he turned upon a big, vacant-looking boy at his side.

"What's yer name, fat-'ead?" he asked.

The boy backed away a pace or two, and stood gently moving his head about, and staring with his large pale eyes, as a calf stares at a dog.

"Speak, you dyin' oyster!" said Clem, kicking his shins.

"Ernest," said the boy, with a sudden gasp, turning fiery red and twisting his fingers into knots.

"Ernest what?" said Clem. "But it don't matter, for your sort always belongs to the fine old family of Looney. You're a deal too good for the likes of us. Why, you ought to 'ave a private asylum all to yerself. Hi, Missus!" he shouted to the porter's wife who was passing through the room. "This young nobleman's name's Looney, isn't it?"

"Looks as if it 'ad ought to be," she answered, with a smile, for she avoided unnecessary difficulties. It was her duty to act as mother to the children in the probation ward, and she had already mothered about five thousand.

"Well, Looney," Clem went on as soon as she had gone, "I'll give you a fair run for your money. By next Sunday week you must 'ave a sore 'ead or sore eyes, or I'll see as you get both. But p'raps I may as well take two of the lot of yer in 'and at once."

He seized the daft creature and Alfred by the short hair at the back of their heads, and began running them up and down as a pair of ponies. The others laughed, partly for flattery, partly for change.

"That don't sound as if they was un'appy, do it, sir?" said the porter's wife, coming in again at that moment with one of the managers, who was paying a "surprise visit" to the school.

"No, indeed!" he answered heartily. "Well, boys, having a real good time, are you? That's right. Better being here than starving outside, isn't it?"

"Oh yuss, sir, a deal better!" said Clem. "Plenty to eat 'ere, sir, and nobody to be crule to yer, and nice little lessons for an hour in the afternoon!"

It was getting dark, and as the gas was lit and cast its yellow glare over the large room, Alfred thought how his mother must just then be lighting the candle to give Ben and the baby their tea.

III

So the children waited the due fortnight for the appearance of disease. But no one “broke out.” Looney, it is true, developed a very sore head, but the doctor declared there was nothing contagious about it; at which neglect of scientific precaution Clem expressed justifiable disgust. For, indeed, he could have diagnosed the case completely himself, as a sore due to compulsory friction of the epidermis against an iron bedstead. But as science remained deaf to his protests, he hastened to get first pick of the regulation suits and shoes, and when fairly

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satisfied with the fit, he bit private marks on their various parts, helped to put on Looney's waistcoat wrong way before, split Alfred's shirt down the back to test its age, and with an emphatic remark upon the perversity of mortal things, marched stoically up to the school with the rest of the little band. Little Lizzie followed with the girls about a hundred yards behind. Alfred pretended not to see her. Somehow he was now becoming rather ashamed of having a sister.

The great bell was just ringing for dinner. Alfred and the other new boys were at once arranged according to height in the phalanx of fours mustered in the yard. At the word of command the whole solid mass put itself in motion, shortest in front, and advanced towards the hall with the little workhouse shuffle. Dividing this way and that, the boys filed along the white tables. At the same moment the girls entered from another door, and the infants from a third. By a liberal concession, "the sexes" had lately been allowed to look at each other from a safe distance at meals.

A gong sounded: there was instant silence. It sounded again: all stood up and clasped their hands. Many shut their eyes and assumed an expression of intensity, as though preparing to wrestle with the Spirit. Clem, having planted both heels firmly on Looney's foot, screwed up his face, and appeared to wrestle more than any. A note was struck on the harmonium. All sang the grace. The gong sounded: all sat down. It sounded again: all talked.

"Yes, we allow them to talk at meals now," said the superintendent to a visitor who was standing with him in the middle of the room. "We find it helps to counteract the effects of over-feeding on the digestion."

"What a beautiful sight it all is!" said the visitor. "Such precision and obedience! Everything seems satisfactory."

"Yes," said the superintendent, "we do our very best to make it a happy home. Don't we, Ma?"

"We do, indeed," said the matron. "You see, sir, it has to be a home as well as a school."

The superintendent had been employed in workhouse schools for many years, and had gradually worked himself up to the highest position. On his appointment he had hoped to introduce many important changes in the system. Now, at the end of nine years, he could point to a few improvements in the steam-laundry, and the substitution of a decent little cap for the old workhouse Glengarry. At one time he had conceived the idea of allowing the boys brushes and combs instead of having their hair cropped short to the skin. But in this and other points he had found it better to let things slide rather than

throw the whole place out of gear for a trifle. Changes received little encouragement; and the public didn't really care what happened until some cruel scandal in the evening papers made their blood boil for half a minute as they went home to dinner in the suburbs.

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The gong sounded. All stood up again with clasped hands, and again Looney suffered while Clem joined in the grace. As the boys marched out at one door, Alfred looked back and caught sight of Lizzie departing flushed and torpid with the infants after her struggle to make a “clean plate” of her legal pound of flesh and solid dough. In the afternoon he was sent to enjoy the leisure of school with his “standard,” or to creep about in the howling chaos of play-time in the yard. After tea he was herded with four hundred others into a day-room quite big enough to allow them to stand without touching each other. Hot pipes ran round the sides under a little bench, and the whitewashed walls were relieved by diagrams of the component parts of a sweet pea and scenes from the life of Abraham. As usual an attempt was made at hide-and-seek under strange conditions. Some inglorious inventor had solved the problem of playing that royal game in an empty oblong room. His method was to plant out the “juniors” in clusters or copses on the floor, whilst the “seniors” lurked and ran and hunted in and out their undergrowth. To add zest to the chase, Clem now let Looney slip as a kind of bag-fox, and the half-witted creature went lumbering and blubbing about in real terror of his life, whilst his pursuers encouraged his speed with artifices in which the animated spinnies and coverts deferentially joined. Unnoticed and lonely in the crowd, Alfred was almost sorry he was not half-witted too.

At last he was marched off to his dormitory with fifty-five others, and lay for a long time listening with the fascination of innocence whilst Clem in a low voice described with much detail the scenes of “human nature” which he had recently witnessed down hopping with his people. Almost before he was well asleep, as it seemed, the strange new life began again with the bray of a bugle and the flaring of gas, and he had to hurry down to the model lavatory to wash under his special little jet of warm spray, so elaborately contrived in the hope of keeping ophthalmia in check.

So, with drills and scrubblings and breakfasts and schools, the great circles of childhood’s days and nights went by, each distinguished from another only by the dinner and the Sunday services. And from first to last the pauper child was haunted by the peculiar pauper smell, containing elements of whitewash, damp boards, soap, steam, hot pipes, the last dinner and the next, corduroys, a little chlorate of lime, and the bodies of hundreds of children. It was not unwholesome.

IV

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One thing shed a light over the days as it approached, and then left them dark till the hope of its return brought a dubious twilight. Once a month, on a Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Reeve had promised to come and see the two children. She might have come oftener, for considerable allowance was made for family affection. But it was difficult enough in four weeks to lay by the few pence which would take her down to the suburb. Punctually at two she was at the gate, and till four she might sit with the children in the lodge. Not much was said. They clung to each other in silence. Or she undid the boy's stiff waistcoat, and looked at his grey shirt, and tried to accustom herself to her Lizzie's short hair and heavy blue dress. Many others came too, and sat in the same room—eloquent drunkards appealing to heaven, exuberant relatives with apples and sweets, unsatisfied till the children howled in answer to their pathos, girls half-ashamed to be seen, and quiet working mothers. As four struck, good-bye was said, and with Lizzie's crying in her ears Mrs. Reeve walked blindly back through the lines of suburban villas to the station. Twice she came, and, counting the days and weeks, the children had made themselves ready for the third great Saturday. Carefully washed and brushed, they sat in their separate day-rooms, and waited. Two o'clock struck, but no message came. All the afternoon they waited, sick with disappointment and loneliness. At last, seeing the matron go by, Alfred said: "Please, mum, my mother ain't come to-day."

"Not come?" she answered. "Oh, that *is* a cruel mother! But they're all the same. Each time, sure as fate, there's somebody forgotten, so you're no worse off than anybody else. Look, here's a nice big sweet for you instead! Oh yes, I'll tell them about your little sister. What's your name, did you say?"

As he went out along the corridor, Alfred came upon Looney hiding behind an iron column, and crying to himself. "Why, what's the matter with you?" he asked.

"My mother ain't been to see me," whined Looney, with unrestrained sobs; "and Clem says 'e's wrote to tell 'er she'd best not come no more, 'cos I'm so bad."

His mother had been for years at the school herself, and after serving in a brief series of situations, had calculated the profit and loss, and gone on the streets.

"Mine didn't come neither," said Alfred. "Matron says they're all like that. But never you mind, 'ere's a nice sweet for you instead."

He took the sweet out of his own mouth. Looney received it cautiously, and his great watery eyes gazed at Alfred with the awe of a biologist who watches a new law of nature at work.

Next day after dinner Lizzie and Alfred met in the hall, as brothers and sisters were allowed to meet for an hour on Sundays. They sat side by side with their backs to the long tablecloths left on for tea.

“She never come,” said Alfred after the growing shyness of meeting had begun to pass off.

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"You don't know what I've got!" she answered, holding up her clenched fist.

"I s'pose she won't never come no more," said Alfred.

"Look!" she answered, opening her fingers and disclosing a damp penny, the bribe of one of the nurses.

"Matron says she's cruel, and 'as forgot about us, same as they all do," said Alfred.

Then Lizzie took up her old wail. The penny dropped and rolled in a fine curve along the boards.

"There, don't 'e cry, Liz," he said. And they sat huddled together overcome by the dull exhaustion of childish grief. The chapel bell began to ring. Alfred took a corner of her white pinafore, wetted it, and tried to wash off the marks of tears. And as they hurried away Lizzie stooped and picked up the penny.

A few minutes later they were at service in their brick and iron chapel, which suburban residents sometimes attended instead of going to church in the evening.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord," they sang, following the choir, of which the head-master was justly proud. And the chaplain preached on the text, "Thou hast clothed me in scarlet, yea, I have a goodly heritage," demonstrating that there was no peculiar advantage about scarlet, but that dark blue would serve quite as well for thankfulness, if only the children would live up to its ideal.

"This is a wonderful institution," said the chaplain's friend after service, as they sat at tea by the fire. "It is a kind of little Utopia in itself, a modern Phalanstery. How Plato would have admired it! I'm sure he'd have enjoyed this afternoon's service."

"Yes, I daresay he would," said the chaplain. "But you must excuse me for an hour or so. I make a point of running through the infirmary and ophthalmic ward on Sundays. Oh yes, we have a permanent ward for ophthalmia. Please make yourself comfortable till I come back."

His friend spent the time in jotting down heads for an essay on the advantages of communal nurture for the young. He was a lecturer on social subjects, and liked to be able to appeal to experience in his lectures.

V

Next morning came a letter written in a large and careful hand: "My dear Alfred,—I hope these few lines find you well, as they don't leave me at present. I fell down the



office stairs last night and got a twist to my inside, so can't come to-day. Kiss Liz from me, and tell her to be good. From your loving mother, Mrs. Reeve."

Day followed day, and the mother did not come. The children lived on, almost without thought of change in the daily round, the common task.

It was early in Christmas week, and the female officers were doing their best to excite merriment over the decorations. Snow was falling, but the flakes, after hesitating for a moment, thawed into sludge on the surface of the asphalt yard. Seeing Alfred shivering about under the shed, the superintendent sent him to the office for a plan of the school drainage, which had lately been reconstructed on the most sanitary principles. The boy found the plan on the table, under a little brass dog which someone had given the superintendent as a paper-weight.

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"A dog!" he said to himself, taking it up carefully. It was a setter with a front paw raised as though it sighted game. Alfred stroked its back and felt its muzzle. Then he pushed it along the polished table, and thought of all the things he could make it do, if only he had it for a bit. He put it down, patted its head again with his cold hand, and took up the plan. But somehow the dog suddenly looked at him with a friendly smile, and seemed to move its tail and silky ears. He caught it up, glanced round, slipped it up his waistcoat, and ran as hard as he could go.

"Thank you my boy," said the superintendent, taking the plan. "You've not been here long, have you?"

"Oh yes, sir, a tremenjus long time!" said Alfred, shaking all over, whilst the dog's paw kept scratching through his shirt.

"My memory isn't what it was," sighed the superintendent to himself, and he thought of the days when he had struggled to learn the name at least of every boy in his charge.

That afternoon Alfred went into school filled with mixed shame, apprehension, and importance, such as Eve might have felt if she could have gone back to a girls' school with the apple. Lessons began with a "combined recitation" from Shakespeare.

"Now," said the teacher, "go on at 'Mercy on me.'"

"Methinks nobody should be sad but I," shouted seventy mouths, opening like one in a unison of sing-song.

"Now, you there!" cried the teacher. "You with your hand up your waistcoat! You're not attending. Go on at 'Only for wantonness.'"

"By my Christendom," Alfred blurted out, almost bringing dog and all to light in his terror:

"So I were out of prison and kept sheep,
I should be merry as the day is long.
And so I should be here, but that I doubt—"

"That'll do," said the teacher, "Now attend."

The seventy joined in with "My uncle practises," and Alfred turned from red to white.

At tea the table jammed the hidden dog against his chest. When he sought relief by sitting back over the form, Clem corrected the irregular posture with a pin. At bedtime he undressed in terror lest the creature should jump out and patter on the boards as live things will. But at last the gas was turned off at the main, and he cautiously groped for his pet among his little heap of clothes under the bed. That night Clem's most

outrageous story could not attract him. He roamed Elysian fields with his dog. Like all toys, it was something better than alive. And certainly no mortal setter ever played so many parts. It hunted rats up the nightgown sleeves, and caught burglars by the throat as they stole into bed. It tracked murderers over the sheet's pathless waste. It coursed deer up and down the hills and valleys of his knees. It drove sheep along the lanes of the striped blanket. It rescued drowning sailors from the vasty deep around the bed. It dug out frozen travellers from the snowdrifts of the pillow. And at last it slept soundly, kennelled between two warm hands, and continued its adventures in dreams.

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At the first note of the bugle Alfred sprang up in bed, sure that the drill-sergeant would come to pull him out first. As he marched listlessly up and down the yard at drill, the wind blew pitilessly, and the dog gnawed at him till he was red and sore. At meals and in school he was sure that secret eyes were watching him. He searched everywhere for some hole where he might hide the thing. But the building was too irreproachable to shelter a mouse.

Next day was Christmas Eve. He had heard from the “permanents” that at Christmas each child received an apple, an orange, and twelve nuts in a paper bag. He hungered for them. Even the ordinary meals had become the chief points of interest in life, and the days were named from the dinners. He was forgetting the scanty and uncertain food of his home, now that dinner came as regularly as in a rich man’s house or the Zoo. And Christmas promised something far beyond the ordinary. There was to be pork. At Christmas, at all events, he would lay himself out for perfect enjoyment, undisturbed by terrors. He would take the dog back, and be at peace again.

Just before tea-time he saw the superintendent pass over to the infants’ side. He stole along the sounding corridors to the office, and noiselessly opened the door. There was somebody there. But it was only Looney, who, being able to count like a calculating machine because no other thoughts disturbed him, had been set to tie up in bundles of a hundred each certain pink and blue envelopes which lay in heaps on the floor. Each envelope contained a Christmas card with a text, and every child on Christmas morning found one laid ready on its plate at breakfast. A wholesale stationer supplied them, and a benevolent lady paid the bill.

“Leave me alone,” cried Looney from habit, “I ain’t doin’ nuffin.”

“All right,” said Alfred airily; “I’ve only come to fetch somethink.”

But just at that moment he heard the superintendent’s footstep coming along the passage. There was no escape and no time for thought. With the instinct of terror he put the dog down noiselessly beside Looney on the carpet, drew quickly back, and stood rigid beside the door as it opened.

“Hullo!” said the superintendent, “what are you doing here?”

“Nothink, sir, only somethink,” Alfred stammered.

“What’s the meaning of that?” said the superintendent.

“I wanted to speak to that boy very pertikler, sir,” said Alfred.

The superintendent looked at Looney. But Looney in turning round had caught sight of the dog at his side, and was gazing at it open-mouthed, as a countryman gazes at a

pigeon produced from a conjuror's hat. Suddenly he pounced upon it as though he was afraid it would fly away, and kept it close hidden under his hands.

“Oh, that's what you wanted to speak about so particular, is it?” said the superintendent. “That paperweight's been lost these two or three days, and it was you who stole it, was it?”

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"Please sir," said Alfred, beginning to cry, "we never done it, and I didn't mean no 'arm."

"Oh, enough of that," said the superintendent. "I've got other things to do besides standing here arguing with you all night. I'll send for you both at bed-time, and then I'll teach you to come stealing about here, you young thieves. Now drop that, and clear out!" he added more angrily to Looney, who was still chuckling with astonishment over his prize.

So they were both well beaten that night, and Looney never knew why, but took it as an incident in his chain of dim sensations. Next day they alone did not receive either the Christmas card or the paper bag. But after dinner Clem had them up before him, and gave them each a nutshell and a piece of orange-peel, adding the paternal advice: "Look 'ere, my sons, if you two can't pinch better than that, you'd best turn up pinchin' altogether till you see yer father do it."

On Boxing Day Mrs. Reeve at last contrived to come again. She was informed that she could not see her son because he was kept indoors for stealing.

After this the machinery of the institution had its own way with him. It was as though he were passed through each of its scientific appliances in turn—the steam washing machine, the centrifugal steam wringer, the hot-air drying horse, the patent mangle, the gas ovens, the heating pipes, the spray baths, the model bakery, and the central engine. After drifting through the fourth standard he was sent every other day to a workshop to fit him for after life. Looney joined a squad of little gardeners which shuffled about the walks, two deep, with spades shouldered like rifles. Alfred was sent to the shoemaker's, as there was a vacancy there. He did such work as he was afraid not to do, and all went well as long as nothing happened.

Only two events marked the lapse of time. Mrs. Reeve did not recover from the "twist in her inside." In answer to her appeal, a brother-in-law in the north took charge of her two remaining children, and then she died. It was about three years after Alfred had entered the school. He was sorry; but the next day came, and the next, and there was no visible change. The bell rang: breakfast, dinner, and tea succeeded each other. It was difficult to imagine that he had suffered any loss.

The other event was more startling, and it helped to obliterate the last thought of his mother's death. After a brief interval of parental guidance, Clem had returned to the school for about the tenth time. As usual he devoted his vivacious intellect chiefly to Looney, in whose progress he expressed an almost grandmotherly interest. Looney sputtered and made sport as usual, till one night an unbaptized idea was somehow wafted into the limbo of his brain. He was counting over the faggots in the great store-room under his dormitory when the thought came. Soon afterwards he went upstairs, and quietly got into bed.

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It was a model dormitory. So many cubic feet of air were allowed for each child. The temperature was regulated according to thermometers hung on the wall. Windows and ventilators opened on each side of the room to give a thorough draught across the top. The beds had spring mattresses of steel, and three striped blankets each, and spotted red and white counterpanes such as give pauper dormitories such a cheerful look. Looney and Clem slept side by side. Before midnight the dormitory was full of suffocating smoke. The alarm was raised. For a time it was thought that all the boys had escaped down an iron staircase lately erected outside the building. But when the flames had been put out in the store-room below, the bodies of Looney and Clem were found clasped together on Clem's bed. Looney's arms were twisted very tightly around Clem's neck, and people said he had perished in trying to save his friend. Next Sunday the chaplain preached on the text, "And in death they were not divided." Their names were inscribed side by side on a little monument set up to commemorate the event, and underneath was carved a passage from the Psalms: "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

EPILOGUE

At last Alfred's discharge paper came from the workhouse, and he trudged down the road to the station, carrying a wooden box with his outfit, valued at L7. He had been in charge of the State for six years, and had quite forgotten the outside world. His nurture and education had cost the ratepayers L180. He was now going to a home provided by benevolent persons as a kind of featherbed to catch the falling workhouse boy. Here the manager found him a situation with a shoemaker, since shoemaking was his trade, but after a week's trial his master called one evening at the home.

"Look 'ere, Mr. Waterton," he said to the manager. "I took on that there boy Reeve to do yer a kindness, but it ain't no manner of good. I suppose the boy 'ad parents of some sort, most likely bad, but 'e seems to me kind of machine-made, same as a Leicester boot. I can't make out whether you'd best call 'im a sucklin' duck or a dummercyle. And as for bootmakin'—I only wish 'e knowed nothing at all."

So now Alfred is pushing a truck for an oilman in the Isle of Dogs at a shilling a day. But the oilman thinks him "kind of dormant," and it is possible that he may be sent back to the school for a time. Next year he will be sixteen, and entitled to the privileges of a "pauper in his own right."

Meanwhile little Lizzie is slowly getting her outfit ready for her departure also. A society of thoughtful and energetic ladies will spend much time and money in placing her out in service at L6 a year. And, as the pious lady said to herself when she wrote out a good character for her servant, God help the poor mistress who gets her!

But in all countries there is a constant demand of one kind or another for pretty girls, even for the foster-children of the State.

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XVIII

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, was coming back from a Garden Suburb, where the conversation had turned upon Eugenics. Photographs of the most beautiful Greek statues had stood displayed along the overmantel; Walter Pater's praise of the Parthenon frieze had been read; and a discussion had arisen upon the comparative merits of masculine and feminine beauty, during which Mr. Clarkson maintained a modest silence. He did, however, support the contention of his hostess that the human form was the most beautiful of created things, and he shared her regret that it is so seldom seen in London to full advantage. He also agreed with the general conclusion that, in the continuance of the race, quality was the first thing to be considered, and that the chief aim of civilisation should be to restore Hellenic beauty by selecting parentage for the future generation.

Meditating over the course of the discussion, and regretting, as he always did, that he had not played a distinguished part in it, Mr. Clarkson became conscious of a certain dissatisfaction. "Should not one question," he asked himself, "the possibility of creating beauty by preconceived design? Conscious and deliberate endeavours to manipulate the course of Nature often frustrate their own purpose, and the action of cultivated intelligence might conduce to a delicate peculiarity rather than a beauty widely diffused. Such a sense for form as pervaded Greece must spring, unconscious as a flower, from a passion for the beautiful implanted in the heart of the populace themselves."

His motor-'bus was passing through a region unknown to him—one of those regions where raw vegetables and meat, varied with crockery and old books, exuberate into booths and stalls along the pavement, and salesmen shout to the heedless passer-by prophetic warnings of opportunities eternally lost. Contemplating the scene with a sensitive loathing against which his better nature struggled in vain, Mr. Clarkson had his gaze suddenly arrested by a flaunting placard which announced:

TO-NIGHT AT 10.30!

UNEXAMPLED ATTRACTION!!

OUR BEAUTY SHOW!!!

UNEQUALLED IN THE WORLD!

PRIZES OF UNPRECEDENTED VALUE!!

ENCOURAGE HOME LOVELINESS!!!

“The very thing!” thought Mr. Clarkson, rapidly descending from his seat. “Sometimes one is almost compelled to believe in a Divinity that shapes our criticism of life.”

“Shillin’,” said the box-office man, when Mr. Clarkson asked for a stall. “Evenin’ dress hoptional” And Mr. Clarkson entered the vast theatre.

It was crammed throughout. Every seat was taken, and excited crowds of straw-hatted youths, elderly men, and sweltering women stood thick at the back of the pit and down the sides of the stalls. “Not here, O Apollo,” quoted Mr. Clarkson sadly, as he squeezed on to the end of a seat beside a big man who had spread himself over two. “But still, even in the lower middle, beauty may have its place.”

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"Warm," said the big man conversationally.

"Unavoidably, with so fine an audience," replied Mr. Clarkson, with his grateful smile for any sign of friendliness.

"Like it warm?" asked the big man, turning upon Mr. Clarkson, as though he had said he preferred babies scoloped.

"Well, I rather enjoy the sense of common humanity," said Mr. Clarkson, apologising.

"Enjoy common humanity?" said the big man, mopping his head. "Can't say I do. 'Cos why, I was born perticler."

For a moment Mr. Clarkson was tempted to claim a certain fastidiousness himself. But he refrained, and only remarked, "What *is* a Beauty Show?"

The big man turned slowly to contemplate him again, and then, slowly turning back, regarded his empty pipe with sad attention.

"Ear that, Albert?" he whispered at last, leaning over to a smart little fellow in front, who was dressed in a sportsmanlike manner, and displayed a large brass horseshoe and hunting crop stuck sideways in his tie.

"The ignorance of the upper classes is somethink shockin'," the sportsman replied, imitating Mr. Clarkson's Oxford accent. Then turning back half an eye upon Mr. Clarkson, like a horse that watches its rider, he added, "You wait and see, old cock, same as the Honourable Asquith."

"Isn't the retort a trifle middle-aged?" suggested Mr. Clarkson, with friendly cheerfulness.

"Who's that he's callin' middle-aged?" cried a girl, sharply facing round, and removing the sportsman's arm from her waist.

"I only meant," pleaded Mr. Clarkson, "that an obsolescent jest is, like middle-age, occasionally vapid, possessing neither the interest of antiquity nor the freshness of surprise."

"Very well, then," said the girl, flouncing back and seeking Albert's arm again; "you just keep your tongue to yourself, same as me mine, or *I'll* surprise you!"

At that moment the rising curtain revealed a cinematograph scene, representing a bulldog which stole a mutton chop, was at once pursued by a policeman and the village population, rushed down streets and round corners, leapt through a lawyer's office, ran up the side of a house, followed by all his pursuers, and was finally discovered in a child's cot, where the child, with one arm round his neck, was endeavouring to make

him say grace before meat. The audience was profoundly moved. Cries of "Bless his 'eart!" and "Good old Ogden!" rang through the house.

"Great!" said the big man.

"It illustrates," replied Mr. Clarkson, "the popular sympathy with the fugitive, combined with the public's love of vicarious piety."

"Fine dog," said the sportsmanly Albert.

"It was a clever touch," Mr. Clarkson agreed, "to introduce so hideous a creature immediately before a Beauty Show. The strange thing is that the dog's ugliness only enhanced the sympathetic affection of the audience. Yet beauty leads us by a single hair."

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"You wait before you start talkin' about beauty or hair either!" said Albert.

The curtain then rose upon a long green-baize table placed at the back of the stage. Behind it were sitting eleven respectable and portly gentlemen in black coats. One in the centre, venerable for gold eye-glasses and grey side-whiskers, acted as chairman.

"Are those the beauties?" asked Mr. Clarkson ironically, recalling the Garden Suburb discussion as to the superiority of the masculine form.

"Ear that, Albert?" said the big man again. "Judges," he added, in solemn pity.

"On what qualification are they selected as critics?" Mr. Clarkson asked.

"Give prizes," said the big man.

"That qualifies them for Members of Parliament rather than judges of beauty," said Mr. Clarkson, but he was shown that on the table before each judge stood a case of plated articles, a vase, a candlestick, or something, which he had contributed as a prize.

An authoritative person in a brown suit and a heavy watch-chain festooned across his waistcoat came forward and was greeted with applause, varied by shouts of "Bluebeard!" "Crippen!" and "Father Mormon!" In the brief gasps of silence he explained the rules of the competition, remarking that the entries were already unusually numerous, the standard of beauty exceptionally high and accordingly he called upon the audience by their applause or the reverse to give the judges every assistance in allotting as desirable a set of prizes as he had ever handled.

"The first prize," he went on, "is a silver-plated coffee-set, presented by our ardent and lifelong supporter, Mr. Joseph Croke, proprietor of the celebrated grocery store, who now occupies the chair. The second prize is presented by our eminent butcher, Mr. James Collins, who considers his own stock unsuitable for the occasion, and has therefore substituted a turquoise necklace, equivalent in value to a prime sirloin. For third prize Mr. Watkins, the conspicuous hairdresser of the High Street, offers a full-sized plait of hair of the same colour as worn by the lady."

"Thoughtful!" observed the big man approvingly.

"He could hardly give black hair to a yellow-haired woman," Mr. Clarkson replied.

"I said thoughtful," the big man repeated; "always thoughtful is Watkins, more especial towards females."

"Besides these superb rewards," the showman continued, "the rest of the judges present sixteen consolation prizes, and Mr. Crawley, the eminently respected provision-

merchant round the corner, invites all competitors to supper at twelve o'clock to-night, without distinction of personal appearance."

"Jolly good blow-out!" said Albert's girl, with satisfaction.

"Rather a gross reward for beauty," Mr. Clarkson observed.

"And why shouldn't nice-lookin' people have a good blow-out, same as you?" inquired the girl, with a flash of indignation. "They deserves it more, I 'ope!"

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"I entirely agree," said Mr. Clarkson; "my remark was Victorian."

A babel of yells, screams, and howlings greeted the appearance of the two first candidates. The Master of the Ceremonies led them forward, by the right and left hand. Pointing at one, he shouted her name, and a wild outburst of mingled applause and derision rent the air. Shouting again, he pointed at the other, and exactly the same turmoil of noise arose. Then he faced the girls round to the judges, and they instantly became conscious of the backs of their dresses, and put their hands up to feel if their blouses were hooked.

But the chairman, with responsible solemnity, having contemplated the girls through his eyeglasses, holding his head slightly on one side, briefly consulted the other judges, and signalled one girl to pass behind the table on his right, the other on his left. The one on his left was recognised as winner, and the house applauded with tumult, the supporters of the defeated yielding to success.

Before the applause had died, two more girls were led forward, and the storm of shouts and yells arose again. One of the candidates was dressed in pink, with a shiny black belt round her waist, a huge pink bow in her fluffy, light hair, and white stockings very visible. When the Master shouted her name, she cocked her head on one side, giggled, and writhed her shoulders. Cries of "Saucy!" "Mabel!" "Ain't I a nice little girl?" and "There's a little bit of all right!" saluted her, and the approval was beyond question. He pointed to the other, and a rage of execration burst forth, "O Ginger!" "Ain't she got a cheek?" "Lock her up for the night!" "Oh, you giddy old thing!" were the chief cries that Mr. Clarkson could distinguish in the general howling. A band of youths behind him began singing, "Tell me the old, old story." In the gallery they sang "Sit down, sit down," to the tune of the Westminster chimes. Half the theatre joined in one song, half in the other, and the singing ended in cat-calls, whistles, and shrieks of mockery. The red-haired girl stood pale and motionless, her eyes fixed on some point of vacancy beyond the yelling crowd.

"Terribly painful position for a woman!" said Mr. Clarkson.

"Ill-advised," said the big man, shaking his head; "very ill-advised."

"Good lesson for her," remarked Albert. "These shows teach the ugly ones to know their place. Improve the breed these shows do—same as 'orse-racing." And having shouted "Ginger!" again, he added, "Bandy!"

"Ain't it wicked for a woman to have such an imperence?" cried Albert's girl, joining in the yell as the candidate was marched off to the side of the losers.

"Isn't this all a little personal?" Mr. Clarkson protested; "a trifle—what should I say?—Oriental, perhaps?"

"She don't know how hidjus she is," the big man explained. "No female don't."

"Nor no man neither, I should 'ope!" said Albert's girl, and wriggling out of the encircling arm, she suddenly sprang up, put her hat straight, and forced her way towards the stage.

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"Now the fat's on!" observed the big man, with a foreboding sigh.

"You may pull her 'ead off," Albert answered resignedly. "There ain't no 'oldin' of her."

"Dangerous, very dangerous!" whispered the big man to Mr. Clarkson. "A terror is Albert when she's beat! Bloodshed frequent outside! She's always beat—always starts, and always beat."

"Celtic, I suppose," Mr. Clarkson observed.

"Dangerous, very dangerous!" repeated the big man with a sigh.

And so, indeed, it proved. Pair after pair were led forward, and when the turn of Albert's girl came, she won the heat easily. Then the process of selection among the forty or fifty of the first set of winners began, and she won the second heat. At last the competitors were reduced to six, and she stood on the right, in line with the others, while the showman pointed to each in turn, and called for the judgment of the audience. Then, indeed, passion rose to hurricane. Tumultuous storms of admiration and fury received each girl. Again and again each was presented, and the same seething chaos of sound ensued. The whole theatre stood howling together, waving hats and handkerchiefs, blowing horns and whistles, carried beyond all limits of reason by the rage for the beautiful.

Albert gathered his friends round him, conducted them like an orchestra, and made them yell, "The one on the right! The one on the right! We want the one on the right, or well never go home to-night!"

"Shout!" he screamed to Mr. Clarkson, who was contemplating the scene with his habitual interest.

"Certainly, I will, though the lady is not a Dreadnought," Mr. Clarkson replied soothingly, and he began saying "Brava! Brava!" quite loud. Instantly, Albert's opponents caught up the word, and echoed it in mockery, imitating his correct pronunciation. Mincing syllables of "Brava! Brava!" were heard on every side.

"You just let me catch you booin' my girl!" shouted Albert, springing in frenzy upon the seat, and shaking his fist close to Mr. Clarkson's eyes. "You let me catch you! Ever since you came in, you've been layin' odds against my girl, you and your rotten talk!"

"On the contrary," replied Mr. Clarkson, smiling, "even apart from aesthetic grounds, I should be delighted to see her victorious."

"Then put up your dukes or take that on your silly jaw," cried Albert, preparing to strike.

"The beautiful is always hard," Mr. Clarkson observed, still smiling.

“Best come away with me, mister,” said the big man, pushing between them. “Avoid unpleasantness.”

“Race as good as over,” he added, as he forced Mr. Clarkson down the gangway.

“Places: pink first, ‘cos she puts her ‘ead a’ one side; factory girl second, ‘cos they likes her bein’ dressed common; blue third, ‘cos of her openwork stockin’s; Albert’s girl nowhere, ‘cos she never is.”

They mounted one of the cars that are fed on the County Council’s lightning.

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"Certainly a remarkable phase," Mr. Clarkson observed, "although I concluded that, in regard to beauty, the voice of the people is not necessarily identical with the voice of God."

"Coachman!" said the big man, calling down to the driver, and imitating the voice of a duchess. "Coachman! drive slowly twice round the Park, and then 'ome."

XIX

ABDUL'S RETREAT

"No nasty shells here, Sire! No more screaming shells, and we are both alive!" said the jester, lying on the ground at his master's feet.

It was in May 1909, and the large room was littered with bundles and various kinds of luggage. Several women, covered from head to foot in long cloaks and veils, lay about the floor or on the divans round the walls, hardly distinguishable from the bundles except that now and then they moaned or uttered some brief lamentation. From other parts of the house came sounds of hammering and the hurried swish of cleaning walls. From the long windows a deep and quiet harbour could be seen, and a few orange lights were beginning to glimmer from the quay and anchored boats. Across the purple of the water rose the blue mass of Olympus, its craggy edges sharp against the sunset sky, and over Olympus a filmy cloud was blown at intervals across the crescent moon.

"No more shells, Sire!" the jester kept repeating, and at the word "shells" the women groaned. But the man whom he addressed was silent. Since dawn he had said nothing.

"Last night no one thought we should be alive this evening, Sire," said the jester. "We have gained a day of life. Who could have given us a finer present?"

The half-moon disappeared behind Olympus, and out of the gathering darkness in the chamber a voice was at last heard: "They have killed other Sultans," it said. "They will kill me too."

At the sound of the voice the women stirred and whispered. One cried, "I am hungry;" another said, "Water, O give me water!" but no one answered her.

"Death is coming," the voice went on. "Every minute for thirty years I have escaped death, and to-night it will come. What is so terrible as death?"

"One thing is more terrible," said the jester, "it is death's brother, fear."

“When death is quick, they say you feel nothing,” said the voice, “but they lie. The shock that stops life—the crash of the bullet into the brain, the stab of the long, cold dagger piercing the heart between the ribs, the slice of the axe through the neck, the stifling of breath when someone kicks away the stool and the noose runs tight—do you not feel that? To think of life ending! One moment I am alive, I am well, I can talk and eat; next moment life is going—going—and it is no use to struggle. Thought stops, breath stops, I can see and hear no more. One second, and I am nothing for ever.”

“Your Majesty is pleased to overlook Paradise,” said the jester.

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"Let me live! Only let me live!" the voice continued. "I am not old. Many men have lived twenty or even thirty years longer than I have. They say when you are really old death comes like sleep. Nothing is so terrible as death. That is why I have shown myself merciful in my power. What other Sultan has kept his own brother alive for thirty years? Did I not give him a great palace to live in, and gardens where he could walk with few to watch his safety? Did I not send him every day delicate food from my own table? Did I not grant him such women as he desired, and books to read, and musicians to delight his soul? His were the joys of Paradise, and he was alive as well. He had life—the one thing needful, the one thing that can never be restored! And now my own brother turns against me. He will let them take my life. The shock of death will strike me down, and I shall be nothing any more."

"Truly," said the jester, "the joys of the Prophet's Paradise are nothing to be compared with the blessedness of your Majesty's happy reign. Yet men say that where there is life there is sorrow."

"Have I not watched over my people? Have I not upheld the city against the enemy? Have I not toiled? What pleasure have I given myself? When have I been drunk with wine as the Infidels are drunken? What excess of delight have I taken with the women sent me as presents year by year? They dwelt in their beautiful chambers, and I saw them no more. I have neglected no duty to God or man. Week by week I risked my life to worship God. From dawn till evening I have laboured, taking no rest and seeking no pleasure, though the right to all pleasure was mine. Whatever passed in my Empire, I knew it. Whatever was whispered in secret, I heard. The breath of treason could not escape, me, and where treachery thrust out its head to look, my sword was ready."

"Truly, Sire," said the jester, "from the days of Midhat it was ready, and there are peacemakers more silent than the sword."

"The Powers of the Infidel stood waiting. Like vultures round a dying sheep they stood waiting round the dominions of Islam. Here and there one snatched a living piece and devoured it as though it were carrion, while the others screamed with gluttonous fury and threatened with wings and claws."

"Ah, Sire," said the jester, "you have shown us how these Christians love one another!"

"One war," the voice went on, "one war I have lost, but the enemy did not receive the fruits of victory. In one war I was victorious, and the Crescent would again be flying over Athens if the Infidel Powers had not barred the way. I have not lived without glory. From east to west the moon of Islam shines brighter now. The sons of Islam are gathering side by side. They stand again for the glory of the Prophet and his Khalif. I see the brown peoples of Asia, I see the black hordes from African deserts and forests. They pass quick

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messages. They pledge their faith on the Sacred Book. They issue out again to the conquest of the world, and it is I who have gathered the might of Islam into one hand. It is I who have swept away the princes, the ministers, the governors, and the agents who divided the power of Islam and squandered its riches. It is I who have stored up wealth for the great day when the sword of Islam shall again be drawn."

"Forget not, Sire," said the jester, "the names of Fehim and Izzet, who stood beside you and also stored up the wealth of Islam against the coming of that great day. If I could find where it is stored now, Islam would be more secure, and I less hungry."

"I held the city of the world," said the voice from the darkness: "I kept the breath of life moving throughout the Empire when all said it must perish. For thirty years my one brain outmatched the diplomacy of all the Embassies. Emperors have been proud the dominions of Islam. Here and there one snatched a living piece and devoured it as though it were carrion, while the others screamed with gluttonous fury and threatened with wings and claws."

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“Ah, Sire,” said the jester, “even in your blessed reign men have died. Their life was sweet, but they managed to die, and what is so common can hardly be intolerable. People have even been murdered before, and if together with the women we should now be murdered in the dark—”

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He was interrupted by the cries of the women. "We shall be murdered—murdered in the dark," they moaned. "We knew how it would end! Death is the honour of a Sultan's wives."

A rifle-shot sounded from the street and, dark in the darkness, a form cowered back upon the divan, making the draperies shake.

"They are quick," he gasped. "They are always so quick! They do not leave time for my plans. The sword of Islam is at work in Asia now. My orders were to slay and slay. They must be dead by now—thousands of them dead—thousands of cursed men and women—as many thousands as once made the quays so red—as many thousands as in the churches and villages long ago, or on the mountains of Monastir. Europe will not endure it. The Powers will intervene. They will save my life. They will come to set me free. They will give me back my power—my power and my life. I alone can govern this people. They know it. I am the only chance of peace. I have toiled without ceasing. I have never harmed a living soul. They themselves say I am merciful. It is no pleasure to me to have people killed. The Powers will come to save me. They will not let me die. Why are those rebels so quick? They do not give me time, and all my plans were ready! Far down in Asia the killing has begun. Why does not the telegraph speak? The Powers will intervene. They will not let me die."

"Sire," said the jester, "people are lighting lamps in the street. They are firing guns. They are crying 'Long live the new Sultan!' Your Majesty's brother is proclaimed."

"I am the Sultan," cried the voice; "I am the Khalif, I am the successor of the Prophet. Tell them I am the successor of the Prophet! Tell them they dare not kill me!"

"Sire," said the jester, "greatness shares the common fate. The will of the Eternal is above all monarchs."

The firing of many rifles was heard in the street below. The door of the large chamber was flung wide, open, and a flood of yellow light revealed the piled up luggage, the muffled forms of women, and a dark little figure curled upon the divan, his head hidden in his arms.

"Oh, be merciful," he cried. "Spare my life, only spare my life! What, would you kill a ruler like me? Would you kill an old, old man?"

"Your Highness," said an officer in a quiet voice, "dinner is served."

XX

"NATIVES"

No doubt the Gods laughed when Macaulay went to India. Among the millions who breathed religion, and whose purpose in life was the contemplation of eternity, a man intruded himself who could not even meditate, and regarded all religion, outside the covers of the Bible, as a museum of superstitious relics. Into the midst of peoples of an immemorial age, which seemed to them as unworthy of reckoning as the beating wings of a parrot's flight from one temple to the next, there came a man in whose head the dates of European

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history were arranged in faultless compartments, and to whom the past presented itself as a series of Ministerial crises, diversified by oratory and political songs. To Indians the word progress meant the passage of the soul through aeons of reincarnation towards a blissful absorption into the inconceivable void of indistinctive existence, as when at last a jar is broken and the space inside it returns to space. For Macaulay the word progress called up a bustling picture of mechanical inventions, an increasing output of manufactured goods, a larger demand for improving literature, and a growth of political clubs to promulgate the blessings of Reform. The Indian supposed success in life to lie in patiently following the labour and the observances of his fathers before him, dwelling in the same simple home, suppressing all earthly desire, and saving a little off the daily rice or the annual barter in the hope that, when the last furrow was driven, or the last brazen pot hammered out, there might still be time for the glory of pilgrimage and the sanctification of a holy river. To Macaulay, success in life was the going shop, the growing trade, a seat on the Treasury Bench, the applause of listening Senates, and the eligible residence of deserving age.

Thus equipped, he was instructed by the Reform Government which he worshipped, to mark out the lines for Indian education upon a basis of the wisdom common to East and West. Though others were dubious, he never hesitated. From childhood he had never ceased to praise the goodness and the grace that made the happy English child. As far as in him lay, he would extend that gracious advantage to the teeming populations of India. In spite of accidental differences of colour, due to climatic influences, they too should grow as happy English children, lisping of the poet's mountain lamb, and hearing how Horatius kept the bridge in the brave days of old. They should advance to a knowledge of Party history from the Restoration down to the Reform Bill. The great masters of the progressive pamphlet, such as Milton and Burke, should be placed in their hands. Those who displayed scientific aptitude should be instructed in the miracle of the steam-engine, and economic minds should early acquaint themselves with the mysteries of commerce, upon which, as upon the Bible, the greatness of their conquerors was founded. Under such influence, the soul of India would be elevated from superstitious degradation, factories would supersede laborious handicrafts, artists, learning to paint like young Landseer, would perpetuate the appearance of the Viceregal party with their horses and dogs on the Calcutta racecourse, and it might be that in the course of years the estimable Whigs of India would return their own majority to a Front Bench in Government House.

It was an enviable vision—enviable in its imperturbable self-confidence. It no more occurred to Macaulay to question the benefaction of English education and the supremacy of England's commerce and Constitution than it occurred to him to question the contemptible inferiority of the race among whom he was living, and for whom he mainly legislated. In his essay on Warren Hastings he wrote:

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"A war of Bengalis against Englishmen was like a war of sheep against wolves, of men against demons.... Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable.... All those arts which are the natural defence of the weak are more familiar to this subtle race than to the Ionian of the time of Juvenal, or to the Jew of the Dark Ages. What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengali."

And yet, impenetrable as Macaulay's own ignorance of the Indian peoples remained, his Minute of 1835, "to promote English literature and science," and to decree that "all funds appropriated for education should be employed in English education alone," has marked in Indian history an era from which the present situation of the country dates.

It is true that the education has not gone far. The Government spends less than twopence per head upon it; less than a tenth of what it spends on the army. Only ten per cent. of the males in India can write or read; only seven per thousand of the females. But, thanks chiefly to Macaulay's conviction that if everyone were like himself the world would be happy and glorious, there are now about a million Indians (or one in three hundred) who can to some extent communicate with each other in English as a common tongue, and there are some thousands who have become acquainted with the history of English liberties, and the writings of a few political thinkers. Together with railways, the new common language has increased the sense of unity; the study of our political thinkers has created the sense of freedom, and the knowledge of our history has shown how stern and prolonged a struggle may be required to win that possession which our thinkers have usually regarded as priceless. "The one great contribution of the West to the Indian Nationalist movement," writes Mr. Ramsay Macdonald with emphasis, "is its theory of political liberty."

It is a contribution of which we may well be proud—we of whom Wordsworth wrote that we must be free or die. Whatever the failures of unsympathetic self-esteem, Macaulay's spirit could point to this contribution as sufficient counterbalance. From the works of such teachers as Mill, Cobbett, Bagehot, and Morley, the mind of India has for the first time derived the principles of free government. But of all its teachers, I suppose the greatest and most influential has been Burke. Since we wished to encourage the love of freedom and the knowledge of constitutional government, no choice could have been happier than that which placed the writings and speeches of Burke upon the curriculum of the five Indian universities. Fortunately for India, the value of Burke has been eloquently defined by Lord Morley, who has himself contributed more to the future constitutional freedom

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of India than any other Secretary of State. In one passage in his well-known volume on Burke, he has spoken of his “vigorous grasp of masses of compressed detail, his wide illumination from great principles of human experience, the strong and masculine feeling for the two great political ends of Justice and Freedom, his large and generous interpretation of expediency, the morality, the vision, the noble temper.” Writing of Burke’s three speeches on the American War, Lord Morley declares:

“It is no exaggeration to say that they compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of public affairs, whether for knowledge or for practice. They are an example without fault of all the qualities which the critic, whether a theorist or an actor, of great political situations should strive by night and day to possess.”

For political education, one could hardly go further than that. “The most perfect manual in any literature”—let us remember that decisive praise. Or if it be said that students require style rather than politics, let us recall what Lord Morley has written of Burke’s style:

“A magnificence and elevation of expression place him among the highest masters of literature, in one of its highest and most commanding senses.”

But it is frequently asserted that what Indian students require is, not political knowledge, or literary power, but a strengthening of character, an austerity both of language and life, such as might counteract the natural softness, effeminacy, and the tendency to deception which Macaulay and Lord Curzon so freely informed them of. For such strengthening and austerity, on Lord Morley’s showing, no teacher could be more serviceable than Burke:

“The reader is speedily conscious,” he writes, “of the precedence in Burke of the facts of morality and conduct, of the many interwoven affinities of human affection and historical relation, over the unreal necessities of mere abstract logic.... Besides thus diffusing a strong light over the awful tides of human circumstance, Burke has the sacred gift of inspiring men to use a grave diligence in caring for high things, and in making their lives at once rich and austere.”

Here are the considered judgments of a man who, by political experience, by literary power, and the study of conduct, has made himself an unquestioned judge in the affairs of State, in letters, and in morality. As examples of the justice of his eulogy let me quote a few sentences from those very speeches which Lord Morley thus extols—the speeches on the American War of Independence. Speaking on Conciliation with the Colonies in 1775, Burke said:

“Permit me to observe that the use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.... Terror is not always the effect of force, and an armament is not a victory.”

Speaking of the resistance of a subject race to the predominant power, Burke ironically suggested:

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“Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating spirit of freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of liberty might be desired more reconcilable with an arbitrary and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the colonists to be persuaded that their liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us (as their guardians during a perpetual minority) than with any part of it in their own hands.”

And, finally, speaking of self-taxation as the very basis of all our liberties, Burke exclaimed:

“They (British statesmen) took infinite pains to inculcate as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist.”

It was the second of these noble passages that I once heard declaimed on the sea-beach at Madras to an Indian crowd by an Indian speaker, who, following the precepts of Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India, had made Burke’s speeches his study by day and night. That phrase describing the ruling Power as the guardians of a subject race during a perpetual minority has stuck in my mind, and it recurred to me when I read that Burke’s writings and speeches had been removed from the University curriculum in India. Carlyle’s *Heroes* and Cowper’s *Letters* have been substituted—excellent books, the one giving the Indians in rather portentous language very dubious information about Odin, Luther, Rousseau, and other conspicuous people; the other telling them, with a slightly self-conscious simplicity, about a melancholy invalid’s neckcloths, hares, dog, and health. Such subjects are all very well, but where in them do we find the magnificence and elevation of expression, the sacred gift of inspiring men to make their lives at once rich and austere, and the other high qualities that Lord Morley found in “the most perfect manual in any literature”? Reflecting on this new decision of the Indian University Council, or whoever has taken on himself to cut Burke out of the curriculum, some of us may find two passages coming into the memory. One is a passage from those very speeches of Burke, where he said, “To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we were obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself.” The other is Biglow’s familiar verse, beginning “I du believe in Freedom’s cause, Ez fur away ez Payris is,” and ending:

“It’s wal enough agin a king
To dror resolves an’ triggers,—
But libbaty’s a kind o’ thing
Thet don’t agree with niggers.”

XXI

UNDER THE YOKE

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If ever there was a nation which ought to have a fellow-feeling with subject races it is the inhabitants of England. I have heard of no land so frequently subjected, unless, perhaps, it were northern India. Long-headed builders of long tombs were subjected by round-headed builders of round tombs; and round-headed builders of tombs were subjected by builders of Stonehenge; for five hundred years the builders of Stonehenge were a subject race to Rome; Roman-British civilisation was subjected to barbarous Jutes and heavy Saxons; Britons, Jutes and Saxons became the subjects of Danes; Britons, Jutes, Saxons and Danes lay as one subject race at the feet of the Normans. As far as subjection goes, English history is like a house that Jack built:

“This is the Norman nobly born,
Who conquered the Dane that drank from a horn.
Who harried the Saxon’s kine and corn,
Who banished the Roman all forlorn,
Who tidied the Celt so tattered and torn,”

and so on, back to the prehistoric Jack who built the long house of the dead.

Our later subjections to the French, the Scots, the Dutch and the Germans, who have in turn ruled our courts and fattened on their favours, have not been so violent or so complete; but for some centuries they depressed our people with a sense of humiliation, and they have left their mark upon our national character and language. Indeed, our language is a synopsis of conquests, a stratification of subjections. We can hardly speak a sentence without recording a certain number of the subject races from which we have sprung. The only one ever left out is the British, and that survives in the names of our most beautiful rivers and mountains. It is true that all of our conquerors have come to stay—all with the one exception of Rome. We have never formed part of a distant and foreign empire except the Roman. Even our Norman invaders soon regarded our country as the centre of their power and not as a province. Nevertheless, nearly every strand of our interwoven ancestry has at one time or other suffered as a subject race, and perhaps from that source we derive the quality that Mark Twain perceived when at the Jubilee Procession of our Empire he observed, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” Perhaps also for this reason we raise the Recessional prayer for a humble and contrite heart, lest we forget our history—lest we forget.

We pray in contrite humility to remember, but we have forgotten. In speaking of Finland’s loss of liberty, Madame Malmberg, the Finnish patriot, once said that in old days, when their liberties seemed secure, the Finns felt no sympathy with other nationalities—the Poles, the Georgians, or the Russians themselves—struggling to be free. They did not know what it was to be a subject race. They could not realise the degrading loss of nationality. They were soon to learn, and they know now. We have not learned. We have forgotten our lesson. That is why we remain so indifferent to the cry of freedom, and to the suppression of nationality all over the world.

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Let us for a moment imagine that something terrible has happened; that our statesmen have at last got their addition sums in Dreadnoughts right, and have learned by hard experience that we have less than two to one and therefore are wiped from the seas; or that our august Russian ally, using Finland as a base, has established an immense naval port in the Norwegian fiords and thence poured the Tartar and Cossack hordes over our islands. Let us imagine anything that might leave some dominant Power supreme in London and reduce us for the sixth or seventh time to the position of a subject race. Where should we feel the difference most? Let us suppose that the conqueror retained our country as part of his empire, just as we have retained Ireland, India, Egypt, and the South-African Dutch republics; or as Russia has retained Poland, Georgia, Finland, the Baltic Provinces and Siberia, and is on the point of retaining Persia; or as Germany has retained Poland and Alsace-Lorraine; or as France has retained Tonquin and an enormous empire in north-west Africa and is on the point of retaining Morocco; or as Austria has retained Bohemia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia, and many other nationalities, and is constantly plotting to retain Albania. Let us only judge of what might happen to us by observing what is actually happening in other instances at this moment.

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The dominant Power—let us call it Germany for short and merely as an illustration—would at once appoint its own subjects to all the high positions of State. England would be divided into four sections under German Governor-Generals and there would be German Governor-Generals in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Germans would be appointed as District Commissioners to collect revenue, try cases, and control the police. A Council of Germans, with a proportion of nominated British lords and squires, would legislate for each province, and perhaps, after a century or so, as a great concession a small franchise might be granted, with special advantages to Presbyterians, so as to keep religious differences alive, the German Governor-General retaining the right to reject any candidate and to veto all legislation. A German Viceroy, surrounded by a Council in which the majority was always German, and the chief offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Commander-in-Chief of the army, and so forth, were always filled by Germans, would hold a Court at Windsor or at Balmoral in summer and Buckingham Palace in winter. We should have to undertake the support of Lutheran Churches for the spiritual consolation of our rulers. We should be given a German Lord Mayor. German would be the official language of the country, though interpreters might be allowed in the law courts. Public examinations would be conducted in German, and all candidates for the highest civilian posts would have to go to Germany to be educated. The leading newspapers would be published in German

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and a strict censorship established over the *Times* and other rebellious organs. The smallest criticism of the German Government would be prosecuted as sedition. English papers would be confiscated, English editors heavily fined or imprisoned, English politicians deported to the Orkneys without trial or cause shown. Writers on liberty, such as Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, Burke, Mill, and Lord Morley would be prohibited. The works of even German authors like Schiller, Heine, and Karl Marx would be forbidden, and a pamphlet written by a German and founded on official evidence to prove the injustice and tortures to which the English people were exposed under the German system of police would be destroyed. On our railways English gentlemen and ladies would be expected to travel second or third class, or, if they travelled first, they would be exposed to the Teutonic insolence of the dominant race, and would probably be turned out by some German official. Public buildings would be erected in the German style. English manufacturers and all industries would be hampered by an elaborate system of excise which would flood our markets with German goods. Such art as England possesses would disappear. Arms would be prohibited. The common people, especially in Scotland and the North-West Provinces, would be encouraged to recruit in the native army under the command of German officers, and the Scottish regiments would maintain their proud tradition; but no British officer would be allowed to rise above the rank of sergeant-major. The Territorials would be disbanded. The Boy Scouts would be declared seditious associations. If a party of German officers went fox-shooting in Leicestershire, and the villagers resisted the slaughter of the sacred animal, some of the leading villagers would be hanged and others flogged during the execution. Our National Anthem would begin: "God save our German king! Long live our foreign king!" The singing of "Rule, Britannia," would be regarded as a seditious act.

I am not saying that so complete a subjection of England is possible. We may believe that in a powerful, wealthy, proud, and highly civilised country like ours it would not be possible. All I say is that, if we assume it possible, something like that would be our condition if we were treated by the dominant Power as we ourselves are treating other races which were powerful, wealthy, proud and, in their own estimation, highly civilised when we invaded or otherwise obtained the mastery over them. I am only trying to suggest to ourselves the mood and feelings of a subject race—the humble and contrite heart for which we pray as God's ancient sacrifice. If we wish to be done by as we do, these are some incidents in the government we should wish to lie under when we were reduced beneath a dominant Power, as India and Egypt are reduced beneath ourselves. I have not taken the worst instances of the treatment of subject races I could find. I have not spoken of the old methods of partial or

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complete extermination whether in Roman Europe or Spanish and British Americas; nor have I spoken of the partial or complete enslavement of subject races in the Dutch, British, Portuguese, Belgian, and French regions of Africa. I have not dwelt upon the hideous scenes of massacre, torture, devastation and lust which I have myself witnessed in Macedonia under the Turks, and in the Caucasus, the Baltic Provinces, and Poland under Russia when subject races attempted some poor effort to regain their freedom. I have not even mentioned the old ruin and slaughter of Ireland, or the latest murder of a nation in Finland or in Persia. I have taken my comparison from the government of subject races at what is probably its very best; at all events, at what the English people regard as its best—the administration of India and Egypt—and we have no reason to suppose that Germany would administer England better if we were a subject race under the German Empire.

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If Germany did as well she would have something to say for herself. She might lay stress on the great material advantages she would bestow on this country. Such industries as she left us she would reorganise on the Kartel system. She would much improve our railways by unifying them as a State property, so that even our South-Eastern trains might arrive in time. She would overhaul our education, ending the long wrangle between religious sects by abolishing all distinctions. She would erect an entirely new standard of knowledge, especially in natural science, chemistry, and book-keeping. She would institute special classes for prospective chauffeurs and commercial travellers. She would abolish Eton, Harrow, and the other public schools, together with the college buildings of Oxford and Cambridge, converting them all into barracks, while the students would find their own lodgings in the towns and stand on far greater equality in regard to wealth. German is not a very beautiful language, but it has a literature, and we should have the advantage of speaking German and learning something of German literature and history. Great improvements would be introduced in sanitation, town-planning, and municipal government, and we should all learn to eat black bread, which is much more wholesome than white.

In a large part of the country peasant proprietors would be established, and the peasants as a whole would be far better protected against the exactions and petty tyranny of the landlords than they are at present. Under the pressure of external rule, all the troublesome divisions and small animosities between English, Scots, Irish, and Welsh would tend to disappear, though the Germans might show special favour to the Scots and Presbyterians generally on the principle of "Divide and Rule," just as we show special favour to the Mohammedans of India. We should, of course, be compelled to contribute to the defence of the Empire, and should pay the expenses of the large German garrisons quartered in our midst and of the German cruisers that patrolled our shores. But as we should have no fleet of our own to maintain, and in case of foreign

aggression could draw upon the vast resources of the German Empire, our taxation for defence would probably be considerably reduced from its present figure of something over seventy millions a year.

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That, I think, is an impartial statement of the reasons which some dominant Power, such as Germany, might fairly advance in defence of her rule if we were included in a foreign Empire. At all events, they very closely resemble the reasons we put forward to glorify the services of our Empire to India and Egypt. I suppose also that the Fabians among ourselves would support the foreign domination, just as their leaders supported the overthrow of the Boer republics, on the ground that larger states bring the Fabian—the very Fabian—revolution nearer. And, perhaps, the Social Democrats would support it by an extension of their theory that the social millennium can best arrive out of a condition of general enslavement. The Cosmopolitans would support it as tending to obliterate the old-fashioned distinctions of nationality that impede the unity of mankind, while a host of German pedants and poets would pour out libraries in praise of the Anglo-Teutonic races united at last in irresistible brotherhood and standing ready to take up the Teuton's burden imposed upon the Blood by the special ordinance of the Lord.

The parallel is false, some may say; the conditions are not the same; in spite of all material and educational advantages, we in England would never endure such subjection; we should live in a state of perpetual rebellion; our troops would mutiny; much as we all detest assassination, the lives of our foreign Governors would hardly be secure. I agree. I hope there is implanted in all of us such a hatred of subjection that we should conspire to die rather than endure it. I only wish to suggest the mood of a subject race, under the best actual conditions of subjection—to suggest that other peoples may possibly feel an equal hatred toward foreign domination—and to supply in ourselves something of that imaginative sympathy which Madame Malmberg tells us the Finns only learned after their own freedom had been overthrown.

We feel at once that something far more valuable than all the material, or even moral, advantages which a dominant Power might give us would be involved in the overthrow of our independent nationality. That something is nationality itself. But what is nationality? Like the camel in the familiar saying, it is difficult to define, but we know it when we see it. Or, as St. Augustine said of Time, "I know what it is when you don't ask me." Nationality implies a stock or race, an inborn temperament, with certain instincts and capacities. It is the slow production of forgotten movements and obscure endeavours that cannot be repeated or restored. It is sanctified by the long struggles of growth, and by the affection that has gathered round its history. If nationality has kindled and maintained the light of freedom, it is illuminated by a glory that transforms mountain poverty into splendour. If it has endured tyranny, its people are welded together by a common suffering and a common indignation. At the lowest, the people of the same nationality

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have their customs, their religion, generally their language—that most intimate bond—and always the familiar outward scenes of earth and water, hill and plain and sky, breathing with memories. Nationality enters into the soul of each man or woman who possesses it. Mr. Chesterton has well described it as a sacrament. It is a silent oath, an invisible mark. Life receives from it a particular colour. It is felt as an influence in action and in emotion, almost in every thought. In freedom it sustains conduct with a proud assurance of community and reputation. Under oppression, it may fuse all the pleasant uses of existence into one consuming impulse of fanatical devotion. It has inspired the noblest literature and all the finest forms of art, and chiefly in countries where the flame of nationality burned strong and clear has the human mind achieved its greatest miracles of beauty, thought, and invention.

Nationality possesses that demonic and incalculable quality from which almost anything may be expected in the way of marvel, just as certain spiky plants that have not varied winter or summer for years in their habitual unattractiveness will suddenly shoot up a ten-foot spire of radiant blossom abounding in honey. Partly by nationality has the human race been preserved from the dreariness of ant-like uniformity and has retained the power of variation which appears to be essential for the highest development of life. With what pleasure, during our travels, we discover the evidences of nationality even in such things as dress, ornaments, food, songs, and dancing; still more in thought, speech, proverbs, literature, music, and the higher arts! With what regret we see those characteristics swept away by the advancing tide of dominant monotony and Imperial dullness! The loss may seem trivial compared with the loss of personal or political freedom, but it is not trivial. It is a symptom of spiritual ruin. How deep a degradation of intellect and personality is shown by the introduction of English music-hall songs among a highly poetic people like the Irish, or by the vulgar corruption of India's superb manufactures and forms of art under the blight of British commerce! You know the Persian carpets, of what magical beauty they are in design and colour. When I was on the borders of Persia in 1907 the Persian carpet merchants were selling one kind of carpet with a huge red lion being shot by a sportsman in the middle of it to please the English, and another kind decorated with a Parisian lady in a motor to please the Russians. From those carpets one may realise what the English Government's acquiescence in the subjection of Persia really involves.

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No subject race can entirely escape this degradation. No matter how good the government may be or how protective, all forms of subjection involve a certain loss of manhood. Under an alien Power the nature of the subject nationality becomes soft and dependent. Instead of working out its own salvation, it looks to the government for direction or assistance in every difficulty. Atrophy destroys its power of action. It loses the political sense and grows incapable of self-help or self-reliance. The stronger faculties, if not extinguished, become mutilated. In Ireland, even to-day, we see the result of domination in the continued belief that the British Government which has brought the country to ruin possesses the sole power of restoring it to prosperity. In India we see a people so enervated by alien and paternal government that they have hardly the courage or energy to take up such small responsibilities in local government as may be granted them. This is what a true Liberal statesman, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, meant by his wise saying that self-government is better than good government. And it might be further illustrated by the present condition of the largest subject race in the world—the race of women—to whom all the protective legislation and boasted chivalry and lap-dog petting, fondly supposed to be lavished upon them by men, are not to be compared in personal value with just the small right to a voice in the management of their own and national affairs.

Such mutilation of character is the penalty of subjection at its best. At its worst the subject race pays the penalty in tormenting rancour, undying hatred, and the savage indignation that tears the heart. It may be said that indignation is at all events better than loss of manhood, and again I agree. Where there is despotism it may well be that for this reason a cruel despotism is less harmful than a paternal despotism—less harmful, I mean, to the individual soul, which is the only thing that counts. But the soul that is choked by hatred and torn by indignation is not at its best. Its functions go wrong, its sight is distorted, its judgment perturbed, its sweetness poisoned, its laughter killed. The whole being suffers and is changed. For a time it may blaze with a fierce, a magnificent intensity. But we talk of a “consuming rage,” and the phrase is terribly true. Rage is a consuming fire, always a glorious fire, a wild beacon in the night of darkness, but it consumes to ashes the nature that is its fuel.

Loss of manhood or perpetual rancour—those are the penalties imposed on the soul of a subject race. Nor does the dominant race escape scot free. Far from it. On the whole, it suffers a deeper degradation. A dominant race, like a domineering person, is always disagreeable and always a bore, and the nearer it is to the scene of domination the more disagreeable and wearisome it becomes, just as a tyrannical man is worst at home. I have known

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English people start as quiet, pleasing, modest, and amiable passengers in a P. & O. from Marseilles, but become less endurable every twenty-four hours of the fortnight to Bombay. There are noble and conspicuous exceptions alike in the army, the Indian Civil Service, and among the officials scattered over the Empire. But, as a rule, we may say that the worst characteristics not only of our own but of all dominant races, such as the French, Germans, and Russians, are displayed among their subject peoples. If, indeed, the subjects are on a level with spaniels that can be beaten or patted alternately and retain a constant affection and respect, the English son of squires thoroughly enjoys his position and does the beating and patting well. But it is always with a certain loss of humour and common humanity: it brings a kind of stiffness and pedantry such as Charles Lamb complained of in the old-fashioned type of schoolmaster. It exaggerates a sense of Heaven-born superiority which the English squire has no need to exaggerate.

I am not one of those who set out to “crab” their countrymen. We have lately had so much criticism and contempt poured upon us by more intelligent people like the Irish, the Germans, and an ex-President of the United States that sometimes I have been driven to wonder whether we may not somewhere possess some element worthy of respect. But, keeping the lash in our own discriminating hands, we should all perhaps confess that in regard to other people’s feelings and ideas we are rather insensitive as a nation. This form of unimaginative obtuseness undoubtedly increased during the extension of our grip upon subject races between the overthrow of Gladstone’s first Home Rule Bill and the end of the Boer War. Perhaps those fifteen years were the most entirely vulgar period of our history, and vulgarity springs from an insensitive condition of mind. It will be a terrible recompense if the price of our world-wide Empire is an Imperial vulgarity upon which the sun never sets.

There is another danger, not so subtle and pervading, but more likely to escape the notice of people who are not themselves acquainted with the frontiers of Empire. It is the production and encouragement of a set of scoundrels and wasters who trade upon our country’s prestige to rob, harry, and even enslave the members of a subject race while they pose as pioneers of Empire and are held up by sentimental travellers, like Mr. Roosevelt, as examples of toughness and courage to the victims of monotonous toil who live at home at ease. There is no call either for Mr. Roosevelt’s pity or admiration. I have known those wasters well, and have studied all their tricks for turning a dirty half-crown. They enjoy more pleasure and greater ease in a day than any London shop assistant or bank clerk in a month. They take up the white man’s burden and find it light, because it is the black man who carries it. Of all the impostors that nestle under our flag, I have found none more contented with

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their lot or more harmful to our national reputation than the “toughs” who devour our subject races and stand in photographic attitudes for Mr. Kipling to slobber over. These scoundrels and wasters are a far worse evil than most people think, for they erect a false ideal which easily corrupts youth with its attraction, and they furnish ready instruments for land-grabbers and company directors, as is too often seen in their onslaughts upon Zulus, Basutos, and other half-savage peoples whom they desire to exterminate or enslave. They are a singularly poisonous by-product of Empire, all the more poisonous for their brag; and though they belong to the class whom their relations gladly contribute to emigrate, they are far worse employed in debauching and plundering our so-called fellow-subjects in Africa than they would be in the public-houses, gambling-dens, pigeon-shooting enclosures, workhouses, and jails of their native land. Of course, it is very useful to have dumping-grounds for our wasters, and it is pleasant to reflect upon the seven thousand miles of sea between one’s self and one’s worthless nephew, but a dumping-ground for nepotism can scarcely be considered the noblest aim of conquest.

Why is it, then, that one nation desires to subjugate another at all? Sometimes the object has simply been space—the pressure of population upon the extent of ground. Pastoral and nomad hordes, like the “Barbarians” and Tartars, have had that object, but, as a rule, it has ended in their own absorption. The motives of the Roman Empire were strangely mixed. Plunder certainly came in; trade came in; in later times the slave-trade and the supply of corn to Rome were great incentives. The personal advantage and ambition of prominent statesmen like Sulla or Caesar were among the aims of many conquests. The extension of religion had little to do with it, for the Romans had the decency to keep their gods to themselves and never slaughtered in the name of Jove. But they were compelled to Empire by a peculiar conviction of destiny. They did not destroy or subdue other peoples so much for glory as from a sense of duty. It was their Heaven-sent mission to rule. Their poet advised other nations to occupy themselves with wisdom, learning, statuary, the arts, or what other trivialities they pleased; it was the Roman’s task to hold the world in sway. To the Roman the object of Empire was Empire. It seemed to him the natural thing to conquer every other nation, making the world one Rome. That was, in fact, his true religion, and we can but congratulate him on the unshaken faith of his self-esteem. The Turk, on the other hand, who was the next Imperial race, boasted no city and no self-conscious superiority of laws or race. He subdued the nations only in the name of God, and to all who accepted God he nobly extended the vision of Paradise and a complete equality of earthly squalor. The motives of mediaeval and more recent conquests were the strangest of all.

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They were usually dynastic. They depended on the family claim of some family man to a title implying actual possession of another country and all its population. There was always one claimant contending against another claimant, this heir against that heir, as though the destinies of nationality could be settled by a strip of parchment or a love-affair with a princess. People grew so accustomed to this folly that even now we hardly realise its absurdity. Yet I suppose if the King of Spain left his kingdom by will to his well-beloved cousin George of England, not an English wherry would stir to take possession, and our newspapers would merely remark that there was always a strain of insanity in the Spanish branch of the Bourbons. Two hundred years ago such a will would have produced a prolonged and devastating war. Something is gained. We have eliminated royal dynasties from the motives of conquest.

In the extension and maintenance of our own Empire all previous motives have been combined. We have pleaded want of space; we have sought slaves either for export or for local labour; we have sought plunder and also trade or “markets”; we have sought dumping-grounds for our wasters, and careers for our public school-boys; like the Turks and Spaniards, we have sought to promote the knowledge of God by the slaughter and enslavement of His creatures; like the Romans, we have thought it our manifest duty to paint the world red and rule it. But within the last sixty or seventy years we have added the further motive most aptly expressed by the late King Leopold of Belgium in the document by which he obtained his rights over the Congo: I mean “the moral and material amelioration” of the subject peoples. That was a motive unknown to the ancients, though the Romans came near it when they granted equal citizenship to all provincials—a measure far in advance of any concession of ours. And it was unknown to the Middle Ages, though Turks and Spaniards came near it when they destroyed the infidels for their good and opened heaven to converted slaves and corpses. To subjugate a nationality for its own moral and material advantage is something almost new in history. It sounds the true modern note. That is not a pleasant note, but it is a sign of change, an evidence of hope. In the Boer War our real objects were to paint the country red on the maps and to exploit the gold-mines. But some people said we were fighting for equal rights; some said it was to insure good treatment for the natives; some thought we were Christianising the Boers; one man told me “the Boers wanted washing.” Those excuses may have been false and hypocritical, but, at all events, they were tributes to virtue. They were a recognition that the old motives of Empire no longer sufficed. They exposed the hypocrites themselves to the retort of serious and innocent people: “Very well, then. If these were your motives, give equal rights, protect the natives, Christianise the Boers, wash them if you

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can.” It is a retort against which hypocrisy cannot long stand out. It proves that a new standard of judgment is slowly forming in the world. But for this new standard, where would be the Congo agitation, or the movement against the Portuguese cocoa slavery, or such sympathy as exists with the Nationalists of India, Egypt, and Persia? When the doctrines of equal rights or even of moral and material amelioration are assumed, honesty will at last raise her protest and hypocrites be no longer allowed to reap the harvest of a quiet lie.

It is an advance. As history counts time it is a rapid advance. Now that Russia is reducing Finland to a state of entire subjection without even a pretext of right or the shadow of a pretence at improved civilisation, a general feeling of shame and loss pervades Europe. The governments do not move, but here and there the peoples raise a protest. Not even the most thorough-going champions of Imperialism, such as the *Times*, have ventured to defend the action. They have contented themselves with Cain’s excuse that the murder was no affair of ours. A century and a half ago they would not have needed an excuse. No protest would have been raised, for it did not matter what nationality was enslaved. There is an advance, and we have now to extend it. In regard to races already subject, we have but to act up to the pleadings of our own hypocrisy; we have to maintain among them equal justice, equal rights and equal consideration as members of one great community, instead of depriving them of their manhood and kicking them out of their own railway carriages. We have to train them on the way to self-government, instead of clapping them into prison if they mention the subject.

And in regard to nationalities that still retain their freedom, we must bring our governments up into line with the leading thought of the day. We must show them that the destruction of a free people like Finland or Persia is not a local or distant disaster only, but affects the whole community of nations and spreads like a poison, blighting the growth of freedom in every land and encouraging all the black forces of tyranny, darkness, and suppression. Rapidly growing among us, there is already a certain solidarity between free States, and the problem of the immediate future is how to make their common action effective on the side of liberty. When I saw Tolstoy during the Russian revolution of 1905 he said to me:

“The present movement in Russia is not a riot; it is not even a revolution; it is the end of an age. The age that is ending is the age of Empires—the collection of smaller States under one large State. There is no true community of heart or thought between Russia, Finland, Poland, the Caucasus and all our other States and races. And what has Hungary, Bohemia, Syria, or the Tyrol to do with Austria? No more than Canada, Australia, India, or Ireland has to do with England. People are now beginning to see the

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absurdity of these things, and in the end people are reasonable. That is why the age of Empires is passing away.”

It was a bold prophecy, but it contains the root of the whole matter. Only where there is community of heart and thought is national or personal life possible in any worthy sense. Unless that community exists between the various nationalities within an Empire, we may be sure the Empire is moribund. It is dying, as Napoleon said, of indigestion, and that other community of the world which is slowly taking shape among free and reasonable peoples will demand its dissolution. Our hope is that the other community will further proceed to demand that these disastrous experiments in the overthrow and subjection of free nationalities shall no longer be tolerated by the combined forces of liberty.

XXII

BLACK AND WHITE

One night Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, was rather late in leaving the Savile Club. He always makes a point of selecting the best articles in the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly*, and the *Contemporary* on the first Monday of every month, and, owing to a suspension of political activity in the House of Commons, he had lately spent more time than usual over the daily papers as well, since they could now afford greater space for subjects of interest. He noticed with some regret that it was half-past eleven as he came up Piccadilly and admired, as he never failed to admire, that urbane aspect of nature's charm presented by the Green Park.

It was late, but the evening was cool and dry. He wished to follow up a train of thought suggested by the question: “Should Aristotle be left out?” but, to preserve his mind from exclusiveness, he now and then considered it advantageous to plunge into what he called the full tide of humanity at Charing Cross. So that night, instead of making his way by the shortest route to his rooms in Westminster, he strolled, with a pleasurable sense of sympathetic abandonment, through the usual crowds that were hurrying home from theatres or supper-room.

But he soon perceived that all the crowds were not usual. Some were not hurrying; they were stationary. They were nearly all men, unrelieved by that subdued feminine radiance which Mr. Clarkson so much valued in the colour scheme of London. They were mainly silent. They appeared to be waiting for something.

“Is the King returning from the Opera?” he asked a policeman near King Charles's statue. But the policeman regarded him with a silent pity so profound that he suddenly remembered a King's recent death and the mourning in which the country was still

partially immersed. No, it could not be royalty, and, feeling for the first time like a stranger in the centre of existence, Mr. Clarkson hurriedly crossed the road.

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Between the top of Northumberland Avenue and Charing Cross Station he observed another crowd of the same character, but in thicker numbers still. Unwilling to eschew any emotion that thus stirred his fellow citizens, he approached the outskirts and waited, in hopes of gathering information without further inquiry. But the crowd was doggedly silent. Nearly all were reading the evening papers, and the few snatches of conversation that Mr. Clarkson caught appeared to be meaningless. At last he ventured to accost a harmless-looking, pale-faced youth in a straw hat, who was reading the latest *Star*, and asked him what he was waiting for.

The youth looked him up and down from head to foot, and then slowly uttered the words: "I don't think!"

"I'm so very sorry for that," said Mr. Clarkson, a little irritated, but, as he turned hastily away he reflected with a smile that, after all, one should be grateful to find imbecility so frankly acknowledged.

Next time he was more diplomatic. Standing quietly for a while beside a good-tempered-looking man, who was evidently an out-of-work cab-driver, he yawned two or three times, and said at last: "How long shall we have to wait, do you think?"

"Depends on cable," said the cab-driver. "Got a bit on?"

"Well, no; I haven't exactly got anything on," said Mr. Clarkson, uneasily; "but may I ask what cable you mean?"

"Don't be silly," said the cabman, and spat between his feet.

"Cheer up, long-face!" said another man, who had been listening. "He only means the cable from the States. Perhaps you've never heard of the White Man's Hope?"

Light at last broke upon Mr. Clarkson. "Of course," he said, "it's Independence Day! I've seen the American flag flying from several buildings. It has always appeared a most remarkable thing to me that we English people should thus ungrudgingly accept the celebration of our most disastrous national defeat. Such entire disappearance of racial animosity is, indeed, full of future promise. I suppose, if you liked, you might without exaggeration call it the White Man's Hope?"

"Stow it," said the cabman.

"No doubt the day is being marked in the United States by some special event," Mr. Clarkson continued, "and you are waiting for the account?"

No one answered. An American was reading aloud from a newspaper: "If the Imperturbable Colossus gets knocked out, a general assault upon all negroes throughout the States may be expected to ensue. The wail that goes up from Reno will

be re-echoed from every land where the black problem sits like a nightmare on the chest. It is not too much to say that a new chapter in the world's history will open before our astonished eyes, so adequately is the gigantic struggle between the black and white races prefigured in the persons of their chosen champions."

All listened with attention.

"That's what I call thickened truth," said the American, looking solemnly round. "If that coloured gentleman with a yellow streak worries our battle-hardened veteran and undefeated hero of all time, the negro will grow scarce."

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"They've been praying for Jeffries in all the American churches," said one, in the solemn pause that followed this announcement.

"So they have for Johnson in the negro churches," said another, "but he counts most on his mother's prayers. She lives in Chicago."

"It is peculiar in modern and Christianised countries," said Mr. Clarkson, anxious to show that he now fully understood the point at issue; "it is peculiar that the opposing parties in a war or other contest implore with equal confidence the assistance of the same deity."

"Millionaires is sleeping three in a bed at Reno. There's a thing!" said the man who was most anxious to impart information.

"The gate comes to L50,000, let alone the pictures," said another. "Each of them's going to get L500 a minute for the time they fight."

"Beats taxis," said the cabman.

"It's hardly fair to criticise the amount," Mr. Clarkson expostulated pleasantly; "the L500 represents prolonged training and practice in the art. As Whistler said, the payment is not for a day's work, but for a lifetime."

"Who are you calling the Whistler?" asked the cabman; "Jim Corbett, or John Sullivan?"

"Jeffries ate five lamb chops to his breakfast this morning," said the man of information, "and Johnson ate a chicken."

"Wish I'd eat both," said the cabman.

"What do you think of the upper-cut?" said the other, turning to Mr. Clarkson to escape the cabman's frivolity.

"Well, I suppose it's a matter of taste—upper-cut or under-cut," Mr. Clarkson answered, smiling at his seriousness. "Most people, I think, prefer under-cut."

"Johnson's right upper-cut is described as the piston of an ocean greyhound making twenty-seven knots," said the man, taking no notice of the answer, and speaking in awestruck tones. "Do you know, one paper describes Johnson as the best piece of fighting machinery the world has ever seen!"

"I thought that was the last *Dreadnought*?" said Mr. Clarkson.

"Perhaps you don't study the literature of the Ring," the other answered, with cold superiority.

“Oh, indeed I do!” cried Mr. Clarkson eagerly. “It is rather remarkable what a fascination the art of boxing has frequently exercised upon the masters of literature. Even the Greeks, in spite of their artistic reverence for the human body, practised boxing with extreme severity, and on their statues, you know, we sometimes find a recognised distortion which they called ‘the boxer’s ear.’ It seems to show that they hit round rather than straight from the shoulder. The ancient boxing-gloves were intended, not to diminish, but to increase the severity of the blow, being made of seven or eight strands of cow-hide, heavily weighted with iron and lead. There is that fine description of a prize-fight in Virgil, where the veteran—‘the imperturbable colossus’ of his time, I suppose we may call him—almost knocks the life out of the younger man, and sends him from the contest swinging his head to and fro, and spitting out teeth mingled with blood—rather a horrible picture!”

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"Ten to six on the boiler-maker," said the cabman; "I'll take ten to six."

"And then, of course," Mr. Clarkson continued, "in recent times there are splendid accounts of the fights in *Lavengro* and Meredith's *Amazing Marriage*, and Browning once refers to the Tipton Slasher, and we all know Conan Doyle."

"No, we don't," said the cabman.

"It seems rather hard to explain the attraction of prize-fighting," Mr. Clarkson went on, meditatively; "perhaps it comes simply from the dramatic element of battle. It is a war in brief, a concentrated militancy. Or perhaps it is the more barbaric delight in vicarious pain and endurance; and I think sometimes we ought to include the pleasure of our race in fair play and the just and equal rigour of the game."

What other reasons Mr. Clarkson might have found were lost in the yelling of newsboys tearing down the Strand. Too excited to speak, the crowd engulfed them. The papers were torn from their hands. Short cries, short sentences followed. Here and there Mr. Clarkson caught an intelligible word: "Revolvers taken at gate"; "Expected Johnson would be shot if victorious"; "Opening spar almost academic in its calmness"; "Old wound on Jeffries's right eye opened"; "Both cheeks gashed to the bone"; "Jack handed out some wicked lefts"; "Terrible gruelling"; "Both shutters out of working order"; "Defeat certain after eighth round"; "Johnson hooked his left"; "The Circassian remained on his knees"; "Counting went on"; "Fatal ten was reached."

The crowd gasped. Then it shouted, it swore, it broke up swearing.

"Negroes had best crawl underground to-night," said the American; "it ain't good for negroes when their heads grow through their hair."

"Another proof," sighed Mr. Clarkson, "another proof that, on Roosevelt's principle, the United States are unfit for self-government."

When he reached his rooms it was nearly one, but a door opened softly on the top floor, and the landlady's little boy looked over the banisters and asked: "Please, sir, did Jim win, sir?"

"Let me see," said Mr. Clarkson, "which was Jim?"

XXIII

PEACE AND WAR IN THE BALANCE[7]

When your Committee invited me to deliver the Moncure Conway address this year, I was even more surprised at their choice of subject than at their choice of person. For

the chosen subject was Peace, and my chief study, interest, and means of livelihood for some twenty years past has been War. It seemed to me like inviting a butcher to lecture on vegetarianism. So I wrote, with regret, to refuse. But your Committee very generously repeated the invitation, giving me free permission to take my own line upon the subject; and then I perceived that you did not ask for the mere celebration of an established doctrine, but were still prepared to join in pursuit, following the track

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of reason wherever it might lead, as became the traditions of this classic building, which I sometimes think of as reason's last lair. I perceived that what you demanded was not panegyric, or immutable commonplace, but, above all things, sincerity. And sincerity is a dog with nose to the ground, uncertain of the trail, often losing the scent, often harking back, but possessed by an honest determination to hunt down the truth, if by any means it can be caught.

It is one of my many regrets for wasted opportunity that I never heard Moncure Conway; but, with a view to this address, I have lately read a good deal of his writings. Especially I have read the *Autobiography*, an attractive record and commentary on the intellectual history of rapidly-changing years, most of which I remember. On the question of peace Moncure Conway was uncompromising—very nearly uncompromising. Many Americans feel taller when they think of Lexington and the shot that echoed round the world. Moncure Conway only saw lynchers in the champions of freedom who flung the tea-chests into the sea; and in the War of Independence he saw nothing but St. George Washington spearing a George the Third dragon.[8] He quotes with approval the saying of Quaker Mifflin to Washington: "General, the worst peace is better than the best war." [9] Many Americans regard the Civil War between North and South with admiration as a stupendous contest either for freedom and unity, or for self-government and good manners. Moncure Conway was strongly and consistently opposed to it. The question of slavery did not affect his opposition. He thought few men had wrought so much evil as John Brown of Harper's Ferry, whose soul marched with the Northern Armies.[10] "I hated violence more than slavery," he wrote, "and much as I disliked President Buchanan, I thought him right in declining to coerce the seceding States." [11] Just before the war began, he wrote in a famous pamphlet: "War is always wrong; it is because the victories of Peace require so much more courage than those of war that they are rarely won." [12] "I see in the Union War," he wrote, "a great catastrophe." "Alas! the promises of the sword are always broken—always." And in the concluding pages of his *Autobiography*, as though uttering his final message to the world, he wrote:

"There can arise no important literature, nor art, nor real freedom and happiness, among any people until they feel their uniform a livery, and see in every battlefield an inglorious arena of human degradation.... The only cause that can uplift the genius of a people as the anti-slavery cause did in America is the war against war."

For the very last words of his *Autobiography* he wrote:

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"And now, at the end of my work, I offer yet a new plan for ending war—namely, that the friends of peace and justice shall insist on a demand that every declaration of war shall be regarded as a sentence of death by one people on another; and shall be made only after a full and formal judicial inquiry and trial, at which the accused people shall be fairly represented.... The meanest prisoner cannot be executed without a trial. A declaration of war is the most terrible of sentences: it sentences a people to be slain and mutilated, their women to be widowed, their children orphaned, their cities burned, their commerce destroyed. The real motives of every declaration of war are unavowed and unavowable. Let them be dragged into the light! No war would ever occur after a fair judicial trial by a tribunal in any country open to its citizens."Implore peace, O my reader, from whom I now part. Implore peace, not of deified thunderclouds, but of every man, woman, or child thou shalt meet. Do not merely offer the prayer, 'Give peace in our time,' but do thy part to answer it! Then, at least, though the world be at strife, there shall be peace in thee."[13]

That sounds uncompromising. We cannot doubt that one of the main motives of Conway's life was "War against War." He suffered for peace; he lost friends and influence for peace; we may almost say he was exiled for peace. Those are the marks of sincerity. He, if anyone, we might suppose, was a "Peace-at-any-price man." But let us remember one passage in an address delivered only a few months before his death. In that address, on William Penn, given in April 1907 (he died in the following November), speaking of Mr. Carnegie's proposal for a compulsory Court of International Arbitration, he said:

"In order to prevent swift attacks of one nation on another without notice, or outrages on weak and helpless tribes, there shall be selected from the armaments of the world a combination armament to act as the international police.... Even if in the last resort there were needed such united force of mankind to prevent any one nation from breaking the peace in which the interests of all nations are involved, that would not be an act of war, but civilisation's self-defence. Self-defence is not war, although the phrase is often used to disguise aggression."[14]

Speaking with all respect for a distinguished man's memory, I disagree with every word of those sentences. An international police, directed by the combined Powers, would almost certainly develop into a tremendous engine of injustice and oppression. The Holy Alliance after Napoleon's overthrow aimed at an international police, and we want no more Holy Alliances. I would not trust a single government in the world to enter into such a combination. I would rather trust Satan to combine with sin. Think of the fate of Egypt from Arabi's time up to the present, or of Turkey controlled by the Powers, or of Persia

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and Morocco to-day! But the point to notice is that you cannot alter things by altering names. The united force of civilisation brought to bear upon any nation, however guilty, would be an act of war, however much you called it international police. Civilisation's self-defence would be war. Every form of self-defence by violence, whether it disguises aggression or not, is war. For many generations every war has been excused as self-defence of one kind or another. I can hardly imagine a modern war that would not be excused by both sides as defensive. By making these admissions—by maintaining that self-defence is not war—Moncure Conway gives away the whole case of the “peace-at-any-price man,” He comes down from the ideal positions of the early Quakers, the modern Tolstoyans, and the Salvation Army. They preach non-resistance to evil consistently. Like all extremists who have no reservations, but will trust to their principle though it slay them, they have gained a certain glow, a fervour of life, which shrivels up our ordinary compromises and political considerations. But by advocating civilisation's self-defence in the form of a combined international armament, Moncure Conway abandoned that vantage ground. He became sensible, arguable, uncertain, submitting himself to the balances of reason and expediency like the rest of us.

A certain glow, a fervour of life—those are signs that always distinguish extremists—men and women who are willing literally to die for their cause. I did not find those signs at the Hague Peace Conference, when I was sent there in 1907 as being a war correspondent. Such an assembly ought to have marked an immense advance in human history. It was the sort of thing that last-century poets dreamed of as the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World. It surpassed Prince Albert's vision of an eternity of International Exhibitions. One would have expected such an occasion to be heralded by Schiller's *Ode to Joy* sounding through the triumph of the Choral Symphony. Long and dubious has been the music's struggle with pain, but at last, in great simplicity, the voices of the men give out the immortal theme, and the whole universe joins in harmony with a thunder of exultation:

“Seid umschlungen, Millionen,
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!”

Surely at the Hague Conference, in the fulfilment of time, peace had come on earth and goodwill among men. Here once more would sound the song that the morning stars sang together, when all the sons of God shouted for joy.

As loaders in that celestial chorus, I found about 400 frock-coated, top-hatted gentlemen from various parts of the world—elderly diplomatists, ambassadors inured to the stifling atmosphere of courts, Foreign Ministers who had served their time of intrigue, professors who worshipped law, worthy officials primed with a stock of phrases about “the noble sentiments of justice and humanity,” but reared in the

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deadening circle of uniforms, decorations, and insincere courtesy, having no more knowledge of the people's desires than of the people's bacon, and instructed to maintain the cause of peace chiefly by safeguarding their country's military interests. An atmosphere of suspicion and secrecy surrounded them, more dense than the fog of war. For their president they elected an ambassador who had grown old in the service of three Tsars, and now represented a tyrant who refused the first principles of peace to his own people, and repressed the struggle for freedom by methods of barbarism such as no general could use against a belligerent in the stress of war without incurring the execration of mankind.

With commendable industry, those delegates at this Second Peace Conference devoted themselves to careful preparations for the next war, especially for the next naval war. They appeared to me like two farmers making arrangements to abstain from burning each other's hay-ricks. "Look here," says one, "this rick-burning's a dangerous and expensive job. Let us give up wax vestas, and stick to safety matches." "Done!" says the other. "Now mind! Only safety matches in future!" and they part with mutual satisfaction, conscious of thrift and Christian forbearance. Or, again, I thought the situation might be expressed in the form of a fable, how the Fox of the Conference said to the Rabbit of Peace, "With what sauce, Brer Rabbit, would you like to be eaten?" "Please, Mr. Fox, I don't want to be eaten at all," said the Rabbit "Now," answered the Fox, "you are gettin' away from the pint."

Something, no doubt, has been gained. Even the jealous diplomatists and cautious lawyers at The Hague have secured something. Mankind had gradually learnt that certain forms of horror were too horrible for average civilisation, and The Hague confirmed man's veto, in some particulars. Laying mines at sea and the destruction of private property at sea were not forbidden, nor were the rights of belligerents extended to subject races or rebels. Men and women are still exposed to every kind of torture and brutality, provided the brutalities are practised by their own superior government. But it is something, certainly, to have gained a permanent Court of Arbitration for the trial of disputed points between nations. The points are at present minor, it is true. Questions affecting honour, vital interests, and independence are expressly excluded. But the habit of referring any question at all to arbitration is a gain, if only we could trust the members of the Court. So long as those members are appointed by the present governments of Europe, there is danger of the Court becoming merely another engine in the hands of despotism, as was proved by the conduct of the Savarkar case at The Hague in February 1911. But the field of reference will grow imperceptibly, and we have had President Taft protesting that he desires an Arbitration Treaty with England from which even questions of honour, vital

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interests, and independence shall not be excluded.[15] Out of the eater cometh forth meat. Even a blood-stained Tsar's proposals for peace have not been entirely without effect. But in the midst of the warring diplomatists at The Hague one could discover none of that glow, that fervour of devotion to peace, which distinguished the early Quakers and is still felt among a few fine enthusiasts. The first duty imposed upon every representative at The Hague was to get everyone to do as much as possible for peace, except himself. It is not so that the world is moved.

Neither in the representatives nor in their governments can we find any principle or passionate desire for peace. The emperors, kings, and men of wealth, birth, and leisure who impudently claim the right of deciding questions of peace and war in all nations, display no objection to war, provided it looks profitable. Provided it looks profitable—what a vista of devilry those words call up! What a theme for satire! But also, to some extent, and in the present day, what ground for hope!

They bring us suddenly face to face with a little book which will leave its mark, not only on the mind, but, perhaps, on the actual and external history of man. In my opinion, the next Nobel prize should be shared equally between Mr. J.A. Hobson and Mr. Lane, the younger writer who calls himself Norman Angell. Between them they have completely analysed the motives, the pretexts, the hypocrisies, the deceptions, the corruptions, and the fallacies of modern war.[16] When we say that the men who impudently claim the control of foreign politics among the nations display no objection to war, provided it looks profitable, we enter at once the sphere of that "Great Illusion" which is the distinguishing theme of Norman Angell's pamphlet.

His main contention is that in modern times, owing to the interdependence of nations, especially in trade, the readiness of communication, the conduct of commerce and finance almost entirely by the exchange of bills and cheques, the complicated banking relations, and the solidarity of credit in all great capitals, so that if London credit is shaken the finance of Berlin, Paris, St. Petersburg, and New York feels the shock almost equally—for all these reasons modern war cannot be profitable even to the victorious Power.

To advocates of peace, here comes a gleam of hope at last—perhaps the strongest gleam that has reached us yet. Upon the kings of the earth, sitting, as Milton said, with awful eye; upon diplomatists, ambassadors, Foreign Office officials, courtiers, clergy, and the governing class in general, appeals to pity, mercy, humanity, religion, or reason have had no effect whatever. If you think I speak too strongly, look around you. Name within the last century any ruler or minister who has been guided by humanity or religion in the question of peace or war. Name any ruler who has abstained from war because force is no argument. With the possible

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exception of Mr. Gladstone in the cases of the *Alabama* and Majuba Hill, I can think of none. Against that one possible exception place all the wars of a century past, including three that were among the most terrible in human history—the Napoleonic war, the Franco-German, and the Russo-Japanese. And as to the sweet influences of Christianity, remember the Russian Archbishops, how they blessed the sacred Icons that were to lead the Russian peasants to the slaughter of Japanese peasants. Remember our Archbishop of Canterbury in February 1911 deeply regretting that a previous engagement prevented him from passing on the blessing of the Apostles to the battleship *Thunderer*. Remember how he sent his wife as a substitute to occupy the Apostolic position in the hope that the hand which rocks the cradle might prove equally efficacious.

Against the pugnacity and courage which urge our rulers to send other people to die for them, the claims of humanity, reason, and religion have no effect. The new hope is that self-interest may succeed where the motives that act upon most decent people almost invariably fail. Norman Angell's appeal goes straight to the pocket, and his choice of that objective inspires hope. If rulers can no longer plead that by war they are advancing the material interests of their State, if it is recognised that even a victorious war involves as great disaster as defeat, or even greater (and it is remarkable that, in one of his latest speeches, Moltke maintained that, next to defeat, the greatest disaster which could befall any State was victory)—if it can be shown that, in a war between great nations, trade does not follow the flag, but moves rapidly in the other direction, then one of the pretexts of our rulers will be removed, one veil of hypocrisy will be stripped off. To that extent the hope of peace will have grown brighter, and that extent is large.

On the whole, it is the brightest hope that has lately risen—or the brightest but one which we will speak of later on. I would only hint at two considerations which may obscure it. Granted that in modern times war-power or victory does not give prosperity; that the invader cannot destroy or capture the enemy's trade; that his own finance is equally disturbed; and that the most enormous indemnity can add nothing to the victorious nation's actual wealth—granted all this, nevertheless, the warlike, though vicarious, heroism of our rulers might not on this account be restrained. In many, if not most, recent wars the object has not been national aggrandisement, or even national commerce, but private gain. We have but to think of the South African War, so cleverly engineered in the gold-mining interest, or of the Russo-Japanese war, where so many thousands died for the Russian aristocracy's timber concessions on the Yalu. Or, as permanent incitements to warfare, we may think of all the manufacturers of armaments, the enormous companies that fatten on blood and iron,

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the contractors, purveyors, horse-breeders, tailors, advertisers, army-coaches, landowners, and well-to-do families whose wealth, livelihood, or position depends mainly upon the continuance of warlike preparations, and whose personal interests are enormously increased by actual war. When a nation is pouring out its wealth at the rate of £2,000,000 or even £10,000,000 a week, as in the future it may well do, much of it will run away to waste, but most of it will stick to one finger or another; and the dirtier the finger the more will stick. It seems silly, it seems almost incredible, that, only a few generations ago, the peoples of Europe were engaged in killing each other as fast as possible over a question of dynasty—whether this or that poor forked radish of a mortal should be called King of Spain or King of France. But in our own days men kill each other for dynasties of cash—for wealthy firms and intermarried families. Nations fight that private companies may show a higher percentage on dividends. It is silly; it is almost incredible. But to shareholders and speculators instigated by these motives Norman Angell's appeal is futile. Even a victorious war may spell disaster to the nation; but even defeat spells cash for them.

Holland was in February 1911 compelled to buy twenty-four inferior big guns from Krupp, without contract or competition, for the defence of her Javanese possessions, which no one thinks of attacking. Do you suppose that Krupp's Company regards war as disadvantageous, or circulates Norman Angell's book for a new gospel? "What plunder!" cried Bluecher, looking over London from St. Paul's. Nowadays he would not wait to plunder a foreign nation; he would invest in a Dreadnought company, and plunder his own. Our naval expenditure in 1911-12 amounted to £46,000,000; our army expenditure to nearly £28,000,000—a total of £73,650,000 for what is called defence! Ten years ago we were in the midst of a most expensive war. Nevertheless, in ten years the annual expenditure upon armaments has increased by £14,000,000—far more than enough to double our Old Age Pensions. Within thirty years the naval estimates have more than quadrupled. Are we to suppose that no one grows fat on the people's money? *Quidquid delirant reges*. The kings of the earth stood up and violently raged together; their subjects died. But now the kings of the earth are raging financiers with a shrewd eye to business, and their subjects starve to pay them. We used to be told that the man who paid the piper called the tune. Do the people call the tune of peace or war? Not at all. The ruling classes both call the tune and pocket the pay.

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There is one other point that may obscure the hope arising from Norman Angell's book. His main contention concerns wars between great Powers, nearly equally matched—Powers of high civilisation, with elaborate systems of credit and complicated interdependence of trade. But most recent wars have been attacks—defensive attacks, of course—upon small, powerless, and semi-civilised nations by the great Powers. Under the pretext of extending law and order, justice, peace, good government, and the blessings of the Christian faith, a great Power attacks a small and half-organised people with the object of taking up the White Man's Burden, capturing markets, contracting for railways, and extending territory. To wars of this kind, I think, Norman Angell's comforting theory does not apply—the great illusion does not come in. A strong Power may conquer Morocco, or Persia, or seize Bosnia, or enslave Finland, or penetrate Tibet, or maintain its hold on India, or occupy Egypt, or even destroy the Dutch Republics of South Africa, without disorganising its own commerce or raising a panic on its own credit. Most actual fighting has lately been of this character. It aims at the suppression of freedom in small or unarmed nationalities, the absorption of independent countries into great empires. It is the modern counterpart of the slave-trade. It is supported by similar arguments, and may be quite lucrative, as the slave-trade was.

Actual warfare generally takes this form now, but behind it one may always feel the latent or diplomatic warfare that consists in the calculation of armaments. A great Power says: "How much of Persia, Turkey, China, or Morocco do I dare to swallow? Germany, Russia, France, Japan, England, or Spain (as the case may be) will not like it if I swallow much. But what force could she bring against me, if it came to extremities, and what force could I set against hers?" Then the Powers set to counting up army corps and Dreadnoughts. In Dreadnoughts they seldom get their addition-sums right, but they do their poor best, strike a balance, and declare that a satisfactory agreement has been come to. This latent war is expensive, but cheaper than real war—and it is not bloody; it does not shock credit, though it weakens it; it does not ruin commerce, though it hampers it. The drain upon the nations is exhausting, but it does not kill men so horribly, and our rulers do not feel it; for the people pay, and the concession-hunters, the contractors, the company directors, and suchlike people with whom our rulers chiefly associate, grow very fat.

If, then, Norman Angell's hopeful theory applies only partially to these common wars of Imperial aggrandisement and the perpetual diplomatic war by comparison of armaments, to what may we look for hope? Lord Rosebery would be the last person to whom one would look for hope in general. His hope is too like despair for prudence to smother. Yet, in his speech at the Press banquet during the Imperial Conference

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of 1909, when he spoke of our modern civilisation “rattling into barbarism,” he gave a hint of the movement to which alone I am inclined to trust. “I can only foresee,” he exclaimed, “the working-classes of Europe uniting in a great federation to cry: ‘We will have no more of this madness and foolery, which is grinding us to powder!’” The words may not have been entirely sincere—something had to be said for the Liberal Press tables, which cheered while the Imperialists sat glum; but there, I believe, lies the ultimate and only possible chance of hope. We must revolutionise our Governments; we must recognise the abject folly of allowing these vital questions of peace, war, and armaments to be decided according to the caprice or advantage of a single man, a clique of courtiers, a gang of adventurers, or the Cabal of a Cabinet formed from the very classes which have most to gain and least to lose, whether from actual war or the competition in armaments. Over this Executive, whether it is called Emperor, King, Court, or Cabinet, the people of the nation has no control—or nothing like adequate control—in foreign affairs and questions of war. In England in the year 1910 not a single hour was allowed for Foreign Office debate in the Commons. In no country of Europe have the men and women of the State a real voice in a matter which touches every man and every woman so closely as war touches them—even distant war, but far more the kind of war that devastates the larder, sweeps out the drawing-room, encamps in the back garden, and at any moment may reduce the family by half.[17] One remembers that picture in Carlyle, how thirty souls from the British village of Dumdrudge are brought face to face with thirty souls from a French Dumdrudge, after infinite effort. The word “Fire!” is given, and they blow the souls out of one another: “Had these men any quarrel?” asks the Sartor. “Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart—were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe there was even, unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen out; and, instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot.”

Slowly and dimly the Dumdrudges of the world—the peasants and artisans, the working people, the people who have most right to count—are beginning to recognise the absurdity of paying and dying for wars of which they know nothing, and in the quarrels of kings and ministers for whom they have neither reverence nor love. “What is the British Empire to me,” I heard a Whitechapel man say, “when I have to open the window before I get room to put on my trousers?” A section of the country was opposed to the Crimean War; a far larger section was opposed to the Boer War. Both were ridiculed, persecuted, and maltreated; but nearly everyone now admits that both were right. In the next unjust or unreasonable war the peace party will

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be stronger still. Something has thus been gained; but the greatest gain ever yet won for the cause of peace was the refusal of the Catalonian reservists to serve in the war against the Riff mountaineers of Morocco in July 1909. "Risk our lives and the subsistence of our little families to secure dividends for shareholders in mining concessions illegally inveigled from a semi-savage chieftain? Never! We will raise hell rather, and die in revolution upon our native streets." So Barcelona flared to heaven, and for nearly a week the people held the vast city. I have seen many noble, as well as many terrible, events, but none more noble or of finer promise for mankind than the sudden uprising of the Catalan working people against a dastardly and inglorious war, waged for the benefit of a few speculators in Paris and Madrid. Ferrer had no direct part in that rising; his only part lay in sowing the seed of freedom by his writings. It was a pity he had no other part. He lost an opportunity such as comes in few men's lives—and he was executed just the same.[18]

The event was small and brief, but it was one of the most significant in modern times. If the working classes refuse to fight, what will the kings, ministers, speculators, and contractors do? Will they go out to fight each other? Then, indeed, warfare would become a blessing undisguised, and we could freely join the poet in calling carnage God's daughter. When I was a child I drew up a scheme for a vast British army recruited from our lunatic asylums. With lunatic soldiers, as I explained to my mother, the heavier our losses, the greater would be our gain. It seems to me still a promising idea. But an army recruited from kings, lords, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, speculators, contractors, and officials—the people who are the primary originators of our wars—would have even greater advantages, and the losses in battle would be balanced by still greater compensations.

The Barcelona rising was, indeed, full of promise. It marked the gradual approach of a time when the working-people, who always supply most of the men to be killed in war, will refuse to fight for the ruling classes, as they would now refuse to fight for dynasties. If they refuse to fight in the ordinary Government wars, either war will cease, or it will rise to the higher stage of war between class and class. It will become either civil war—the most terrible and difficult, but the finest kind of war, because some principle of the highest value must be at stake before civil war can arise; or it will become a combined war of the classes in various countries between whom there is a feeling of sympathy and common interest. That would take the form of a civil war extended throughout Europe, and perhaps America and the highly-developed parts of Asia. The allied forces in the various countries would then strike where the need was greatest, the French or English army corps of working-men going

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to the assistance of Russian or German working-men against the forces of despotism or capital. But a social war on that scale, however desirable, is like the Spanish fleet in the *Critic*—it is not yet in sight. The growing perfection of modern arms gives too enormous an advantage to established forces. The movement is much more likely to take the Barcelona form of refusal to fight; and if the peoples of Europe could combine in that determination, the effect would be irresistible. This international movement is, in fact, very slowly, growing. The telegraph, the railway, cheap tickets, Cook's tours, the power of reading, and even the peculiar language taught as French in our schools, combine to wear away the hostility of peoples. The "beastly foreigner" is almost extinct. The man who has been for a week in Germany, or for a trip to lovely Lucerne, feels a reflected glory in saying those foreigners are not so bad. There was a fine old song with a refrain, "He's a good 'un when you know him, but you've got to know him first." Well, we are getting to know the foreigner whom we once called "beastly."

Ultimately the best, the only hope for peace lies in the determination of the peoples not to do anything so silly as to settle the quarrels of their rulers by killing each other. But then come the deeper questions: Do people love peace? Do they hate war? Would the total abolition of war be a good thing for the world? After a lengthy period of peace there usually arises a craving for battle. Nearly fifty years of peace followed the defeat of the Persians in Greece, and at the end of that time, just before the Peloponnesian War, which was to bring ruin on the country, Thucydides tells us that all Greece, being ignorant of the realities of war, stood a-tiptoe with excitement. It was the same in England just before our disastrous South African War, when readers of Kipling glutted themselves with imaginary slaughter, and Henley cried to our country that her whelps wanted blood. In England this martial spirit was more violent than in Greece, because, when war actually came, the Greeks were themselves exposed to all its horrors and sufferings, but in England the bloodthirsty mind could enjoy the conflict in a suburban train with a half-penny paper. As in bull-fights or gladiatorial shows, the spectators watched the expensive but entertaining scene of blood and death from a safe and comfortable distance. They gave the cash and let the credit go; they thoroughly appreciated the rumble of a distant drum. "Blood! blood!" they cried. "Give us more blood to make our own blood circulate more agreeably under our unbroken skins!" Christianity joined in the cry through the mouths of its best accredited representatives. As at the Crucifixion it is written, "On that day Herod and Pilate were friends," so on the outbreak of a singularly unjust, avaricious, and cruel war, the Christian Churches of England displayed for the first and last time some signs of unity. Canterbury and Armagh kissed each other, and the City Temple applauded the embraces of unrighteousness and war. Dean Farrar of Canterbury, concluding his glorification of the hell which I then saw enacted in South Africa, quoted with heartfelt approval the Archbishop of Armagh's poem:—

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"And, as I note how nobly natures form
Under the war's red rain, I deem it true
That He who made the earthquake and the storm
Perhaps makes battles too.

Thus as the heaven's many-coloured flames
At sunset are but dust in rich disguise,
The ascending earthquake-dust of battle frames
God's picture in the skies." [19]

We are no longer compelled to regard the dogmas of Christianity or the opinions of eminent Christians as authoritative. The appeal to Christianity, which used to be regarded as decisive in favour of peace, is no longer decisive one way or other. Christ's own teaching is submitted to critical examination like any other teacher's, and I should be the last to decry the representatives of the Prince of Peace for acclaiming the virtues of war, if they think their Master was mistaken. When bishops and deans and leading Nonconformists thirst for war's red rain, we must take account of their craving as part of man's nature. We must remember also that war has popular elements sometimes overlooked in its general horror. It is believed that in the American Civil War nearly a million men lost their lives; but against this loss we must set the peculiar longevity with which the survivors have been endowed, and the increasing number of heroes who enjoyed the State's reward for their services of fifty years before. Even during the South African War certain compensations were found. A charitable lady went on a visit of condolence to a poor woman whose husband's name had just appeared in the list of the killed at Spion Kop. "Ah, Mum," exclaimed the widow with feeling, "you don't know how many happy homes this war has made!"

Before we absolutely condemn war we must take account of these religious, medicinal, and domestic considerations. On the side of peace I think it is of little avail to plead the horrors and unreason of war. We all know how horrible and silly it is for two countries to pretend to settle a dispute by ordering large numbers of innocent men to kill each other. If horrors would stop it, anyone who has known war could a tale unfold surpassing all that the ghost of Hamlet's father had seen in hell. There are sights on a battlefield under shell-fire, and in a country devastated by troops, so horrible that even war correspondents have silently agreed to leave them undescribed. But the truth is that people who are not present in war enjoy the horror. That is what they like reading about in their back-gardens, clubs, and city offices. The more you talk of the horrors of war the more warlike they become, and I have met no one quite so bloodthirsty as the warrior of peace. Nor is it any good pleading for reason when about ninety-nine per cent. of every man's motives are not reasonable, but spring from passion, taste, or interest. The appeal even to expense falls flat in a country like ours, where about 200,000 horses, valued at £12,000,000, and maintained at a charge of £8,000,000 a year, are kept entirely for the pursuit of foxes, which are preserved alive at great cost in

order that they may be pursued to death.[20] Protests against the horrors, the unreason, and even the expense of war have hitherto had very small effect.

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The real argument in favour of war welcomes horror, defies reason, and disregards expense. There are certain military qualities and aspects of life, it says, that are worth preserving at the cost of all the horror, unreason, and waste of war. The stern military character, brave but tender, is a type of human nature for which we cannot pay too much. Consider physical courage alone, how valuable it is, and how rare. With what speed the citizen runs at the first glimpse of danger! With what pleasure or shamefaced cowardice citizens look on while women are being violently and indecently assaulted when attempting to vindicate their political rights! How gladly everyone shouts with the largest crowd! Consider how many noble actions men leave undone through fear of being hurt or killed. “Dogs! would you live for ever?” cried Frederick the Great to his soldiers, in defeat; and most of us would certainly answer: “Yes, we would, if you please!” Only through war, or the training for war, says the argument, can this loathly cowardice be kept in check. Only by war can the spirit be maintained that redeems the world from sinking into a Pigs’ Paradise. Only in the expectation or reality of war can life be kept sweet, strong, and at its height. War is life in extremes; it is worth preserving even for its discipline and training.

“Manhood training [said Mr. Garvin, editor of the *Observer*, in the issue of January 22, 1911]—manhood training has become the basis of public life, not only in every great European State, but in young democratic countries, like Australia and South Africa. ‘One vote, one rifle,’ says ex-President Steyn.... As a means of developing the physical efficiency of whole nations, of increasing their patriotic cohesion, of implanting in individuals the sense of political reality and responsibility, no substitute for manhood training has yet been discovered.”

This kind of argument implies despair of perpetual, or even of long-continued, peace. It is true that those who advocate a national training of all our manhood for war generally urge upon us that it is the best security for peace. In the same way, peaceful Anarchists might plead that they maintained several enormous bomb-factories in order to impress upon rulers the advantages of freedom. But if peace were the real and only object of Conscription, and if Conscription precluded the probability of war, military training, after some years, would almost certainly decline, and its supposed advantages would be lost. When you breed game-cocks, they will fight; but if you forbid cock-fighting, the breed will decline. You cannot have training for war without the expectation of war. For many years I was a strong advocate of national service, even though I knew it would never be adopted in this country until we had seen the realities of war in our very midst, and had sat in morning trains to the City stopped by the enemy’s batteries outside Liverpool Street

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and London Bridge. I also foresaw the extreme difficulty of enforcing military training upon Quakers, the Salvation Army, the Peace Society, and many Nonconformists and Rationalists. Nevertheless, twenty-five years ago I advocated Conscription in a carefully-reasoned article that appeared in Mr. Stead's *Pall Mall Gazette*. It was received with a howl of rage and derision by both parties in the State, and by all newspapers that noticed it at all. It is significant—perhaps terribly significant—that it would not be received with derision now, but that nearly the whole of one party and the great majority of newspapers would welcome it only too gladly.

It seemed to me at that time—and it seems to me still—one of the most horrible things in modern British life that we bribe the unemployed, that we compel them by fear of starvation, to do our killing and dying for us. I have passed more men into the army, probably, than any recruiting sergeant, and I have never known a man who wished to recruit unless he was unemployed. The Recruiting Report issued by the War Office for 1911 shows ninety per cent. of the recruits “out of work.” I should have put the percentage still higher. But when you next see a full company of a hundred soldiers, and reflect that ninety of them have been persuaded to kill and die for you simply through fear of starvation under our country's social system—I say, whether you seek peace or admire war, the thought is horrible; it is hardly to be endured.

To wipe out this hideous shame, to put ourselves all in one boat, and, if war is licensed murder, at all events to share the murder that we license, and not to starve the poor into criminals for our own relief, perhaps Conscription would not be too high a price to pay. Other advantages are more obvious—the physical advantage of two years' regular food and healthy air and exercise for rich and poor alike, the social advantage of the mixture of all classes in the ranks, the moral advantage of giving the effeminate sons of luxury a stern and bitter time. For all this we would willingly pay a very heavy price. I would pay almost any price.

But should we pay the price of compulsion? That is the only price that makes me hesitate. I used to cherish a frail belief in discipline and obedience to authority and the State. My belief in discipline is still alive—discipline in the sense of entire mutual confidence between comrades fighting for the same cause; but I have come to regard obedience to external authority as one of the most dangerous virtues. I doubt if any possible advantage could balance an increase of that danger; and every form of military life is almost certain to increase it. To me the chief peril of our time is the growing power of the State, its growing interference in personal opinion and personal life, the intrusion of an inhuman being called an expert or official into the most intimate, inexplicable, and changing affairs of our lives and

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souls, and the arrogant social legislation of a secret and self-appointed Cabal or Cabinet, which refuses even to consult the wishes of that half of the population which social restrictions touch most nearly. If general military service would tend to increase respect and obedience to external authority of this kind, it might be too big a price to pay for all its other advantages. And I do think it would tend to increase that abhorrent virtue of indiscriminate obedience. Put a man in uniform, and ten to one he will shoot his mother, if you order him. Yet the shame of our present enlistment by hunger is so overwhelming that I confess I still hesitate between the two systems, if we must assume that the continuance of war is inevitable, or to be desired.

Is it inevitable? Is it to be desired? If it were dying out in the world, should we make efforts to preserve war artificially, as we preserve sport, which would die out unless we maintained it at great expense? The sportsman is an amateur butcher—a butcher for love. Ought we to maintain soldiers for love—for fear of losing the advantages of war? Those advantages are thought considerable. War has inspired much art and much literature. It is the background or foreground in nearly all history; it sheds a gleam of uniforms and romance upon a drab world; it delivers us from the horrors of peace—the softness, the monotony, the sensual corruption, the enfeebling relaxation. No one desires a population slack of nerve, soft of body, cruel through fear of pain, and incapable of endurance or high endeavour.

“It is a calumny on men,” said Carlyle, “to say they are roused to heroic action by ease, hope of pleasure, recompense in this world or the next. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the allurements that act on the heart of man.”[21]

At times war appears as a kind of Last Judgment, sentencing folly and sensuality to hell. The shame of France was consumed by the fire of 1870, and her true genius was restored. Abominable as the Boer War was, the mind of England was less pestilential after it than before. Passion purifies, and surely there can be no passion stronger than one which drives you to kill or die.

The trouble is that, in modern wars, passion does not drive *you*, but you drive someone else, who probably feels no passion at all. It is thought a reproach against an unwarlike soldier that “he has never seen a shot fired in anger.” But in these days he might have been through many battles without seeing a shot fired in anger. Except in the Balkans, few fire in anger now. What passion can an unemployed workman feel when he is firing at an invisible unemployed workman or semi-savage in the interest of a mining concession? Nor is it true that war in these days encourages eugenics by promoting the survival of the fittest. On the contrary, the fittest, the bravest, and the biggest are the most likely to be killed. The smallest,

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the cowards, the men who get behind stones and stick there, will probably survive. And as to the dangers of effeminate peace, it is only the very small circle of the rich, the overfed, the over-educated, and the over-sensitive who are exposed to them. There is no present fear of the working classes becoming too soft. The molten iron, the flaming mine, the whirling machine, the engulfing sea, and hunger always at the door take care of that. Every working man lives in perpetual danger. Compared to him, and compared to any woman in childbirth, a soldier is secure, even under fire. The daily peril, the daily toil, the fear for the daily bread harden most working men and women enough, and for that very reason we should welcome the fine suggestion of Professor William James—his last great service—that the rich and highly educated should pass through a conscription of labour side by side with the working classes, who would heartily enjoy the sight of young dukes, capitalists, barristers, and curates toiling in the stokeholes, coal-mines, factories, and fishing-fleets, to the incalculable advantage of their souls and bodies.

So the balance swings this way and that, and neither scale will definitely settle down. It is very likely that the bias of temperament makes us incapable of decision. What is called the personal equation holds the two scales of our minds painfully equal, and while we meditate perpetual peace we suddenly hear the trumpet blowing. In many of us a primitive instinct survives which blinds and warps the reason, and calls us like a bugle to the silly and atrocious field. For the immediate future, I can only hope, as I confidently believe, that the present age of capitalist war will pass, as the age of dynastic war has passed, for ever into the inferno where slavery and religious persecution now lie burning, though they seemed so natural and strong. I think it will not much longer be possible to fool the working classes into wars for concessions or the extension of empires. I believe that already the peoples of the greatest countries are awakening to the folly of entrusting their foreign politics, involving questions of peace and war, to the guidance of rulers, Ministers, and diplomatists who serve the interests of their own class, and have no knowledge or care for the desires or interests of the vast populations beneath them. I look forward to the time when the extreme arbitrament of war will be resorted to mainly in the form of civil or class contentions, involving one or other of the noblest and most profound principles of human existence. Or if war is to be international, we may hope that the finest peoples of the world will resolve only to declare it in defence of the threatened independence of some small but gallant race, or for the assistance of rebel peoples in revolt for freedom against an intolerable tyranny.

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I suppose a man's truest happiness lies in the keenest energy, the conquest of difficulties, the highest fulfilment of his own nature; and I think it possible that, under the conditions of our existence as men, the finest happiness—the happiness of ecstasy—can only exist against a very dark background, or in quick succession after extreme toil and danger. It can only blaze like lightning against the thunder-cloud, or like the sun's radiance after storm. For most of us other perils or disasters or calls for energy supply that terrific background to joy; but it is none the less significant that most people who have shared in perilous and violent contests would, in retrospect, choose to omit any part of active and happy lives rather than the wars and revolutions in which they have been present, no matter how terrible the misery, the sickness, the hunger and thirst, the fear and danger, the loss of friends, the overwhelming horror, and even the defeat.

We must not take as argument a personal note that may sound only from a primitive and unregenerate mind. But when I look back upon the long travail of our race, it appears to me still impossible to adopt the peace position of non-resistance. As a matter of bare fact, in reviewing history would not all of us most desire to have chased the enslaving Persian host into the sea at Marathon, to have driven the Austrians back from the Swiss mountains, to have charged with Joan of Arc at Orleans, to have gone with Garibaldi and his Thousand to the wild redemption of Sicily's freedom, to have severed the invader's sinews with De Wet, to have shaken an ancient tyranny with the Russian revolutionists, or to have cleaned up the Sultan's shambles with the Young Turks? Probably there is no man or woman who would not choose scenes and actions like those, if the choice were offered. To very few do such opportunities come; but we must hold ourselves in daily readiness. We do well to extol peace, to confront the dangers, labour, and temptations of peace, and to hope for the general happiness of man in her continuance. But from time to time there come awful moments to which Heaven has joined great issues, when the fire kindles, the savage indignation tears the heart, and the soul, arising against some incarnate symbol of iniquity, exclaims, "By God, you shall not do that. I will kill you rather. I will rather die!"

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 7: An address delivered at South Place Institute in London on Moncure Conway's birthday, March 17, 1911.]

[Footnote 8: Address on William Penn at Dickinson College, April 1907 (*Addresses and Reprints*, p. 415).]

[Footnote 9: *Ibid.*, p. 411.]

[Footnote 10: *Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 239.]

[Footnote 11: *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 320.]

[Footnote 12: *Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 341 (from “The Rejected Stone”).]

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[Footnote 13: *Autobiography*, vol. ii. pp. 453, 454.]

[Footnote 14: *Addresses and Reprints*, p. 432.]

[Footnote 15: Speech before the American International Arbitration Society, January 1911.]

[Footnote 16: See Mr. Hobson's *Imperialism* and *The Psychology of Jingoism*; Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion*.]

[Footnote 17: "It is especially in the domain of war that we, the bearers of men's bodies, who supply its most valuable munition, who, not amid the clamour and ardour of battle, but singly and alone, with a three-in-the-morning courage, shed our blood and face death that the battlefield may have its food—a food more precious to us than our heart's blood; it is we especially who, in the domain of war, have our word to say—a word no man can say for us. It is our intention to enter into the domain of war, and to labour there till, in the course of generations, we have extinguished it"—Olive Schreiner's *Woman and Labour*, p. 178.]

[Footnote 18: Of course, other causes combined for the Barcelona outbreak—hatred of the religious orders, chiefly economic, and the Catalanian hatred of Castile; but the refusal of reservists to embark for Melilla was the occasion and the main cause.]

[Footnote 19: Quoted in J.A. Hobson's *Psychology of Jingoism*, p. 52.]

[Footnote 20: Figures from an article by Mr. Leonard Willoughby in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for November 1910.]

[Footnote 21: *The Hero as Prophet*, p. 65.]

XXIV

THE MAID

From the early morning of Sunday, August 18, 1909, till evening came, the Square of St. Peter's in Rome and the interior of the great basilica itself were thronged from end to end with worshippers and pilgrims. The scene was brilliant with innumerable lamps, with the robes of many cardinals and the vestments of bishops, archbishops, and all the ranks of priesthood. The ceremony of adding one more to the calendar of the Blessed was performed, a solemn "Te Deum" was sung in praise of God's eternal greatness, and Pontifical Mass was celebrated, with all the splendour of ancient ritual and music of the grandest harmony. In the afternoon Christ's Vicar himself entered from his palace, attended by fifteen cardinals, seventy of the archbishops and bishops of France, with an equal number of their rank from elsewhere, and, amid the gleaming lights of scarlet and

gold, of green and violet, of jewels and holy flames, he prostrated himself before the figure of the Blessed One, to whom effectual prayer might now be offered even by the Head of the Church militant here on earth. Till late at night the vast cathedral was crowded with increasing multitudes assembled for the honour of one whom the Church which judges securely as the world, commanded them to revere.

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It was a simple peasant girl—"just the simplest peasant you could ever see"—whom the Head of the Church thus worshipped and crowds delighted to honour. Short and deep-chested she was, capable of a man's endurance, and with black hair cut like a boy's. She could not write or read, was so ignorant as to astonish ladies, and had only the peasant arts. The earliest description tells of her "common red frock carefully patched." "I could beat any woman in Rouen at spinning and stitching," she said to her judges, who, to be sure, had no special knowledge of anything beyond theology. "I'm only a poor girl, and can't ride or fight," she said when first she conceived her mission, and she had just the common instincts of the working woman. We may suppose her fond of children, for wherever she went she held the newborn babies at the font. She hated death and cruelty. "The sight of French blood," she said, "always makes my hair stand on end," and even to the enemy she always offered peace. "Or, if you want to fight," she sent a message to the Duke of Burgundy, "you might go and fight the Saracens." She never killed anyone, she said at her trial. Just an ordinary peasant girl she seemed—"la plus simple bergerette qu'on voit onques"—with no apparent distinction but a sweet and attractive voice. To be sure, she could put that sweet voice to shrewd use when she pleased. "What tongue do your Visions speak?" a theologian kept asking her. "A better tongue than yours!" she answered with the retort of an open-air meeting. But in those days there were theologians who would try the patience of a saint, and Joan of Arc is not a saint even yet, having been only Beatified on that Sunday, nearly five centuries after her death.

And she was only nineteen when they burnt her. At least, she thought she was about nineteen, but was not quite sure. Few years had passed since she was a child dancing under the big trees which fairies haunted still. Her days of glory had lasted only a few months, and now she had lain week after week in prison, weighed down with chains and balls of iron, watched day and night by men in the cell, because she always claimed a prisoner's right to escape if she could. Her trial before the Bishop of Beauvais and all the learning and theology of Paris University lasted nearly three months. Sometimes forty men were present, sometimes over sixty, for it was a remarkable case, and gave fine opportunity for the display of the superhuman knowledge and wisdom upon which divines exist. Human compassion they displayed also, hurrying away just before the burning began one May morning, and shedding tears of pity over the sins of one so young. Indeed, their preachings and exhortations to her whilst the stake and fire were being arranged continued so long that the rude English soldiers, so often deaf to the beauty of theology, asked whether they were going to be kept waiting there past dinner-time.

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However, the verdict of divine and human law could never be really doubtful from the first, for the charges on which she was found guilty comprehended many grievous sins. The inscription placed over her head as she stood while the flames were being kindled declared this Joan, who called herself the Maid, to be a liar, a plague, a deceiver of the people, a sorceress, superstitious, a blasphemer of God, presumptuous, a misbeliever in the faith of Christ, a boaster, idolatress, cruel, dissolute, a witch of devils, apostate, schismatic, and heretic. It was a heavy crime-sheet for a mere girl, and there was no knowing into what a monster she might grow up. So the Bishop of Beauvais could not well hesitate in pronouncing the final sentence whereby, to avoid further infection to its members, this rotten limb, Joan, was cast out from the unity of the Church, torn from its body, and delivered to the secular power, with a request for moderation in the execution of the sentence. Accordingly she was burnt alive, and the Voices and Visions to which she had trusted did not save her from the agony of flames.

At first sight the contrast between these two scenes, enacted by the authority of the same Church, may appear a little bewildering. It might tempt us to criticise the consistency of ecclesiastic judgment, did we not know that in theology, as in metaphysics, extreme contradictions are capable of ultimate reconciliation. The Church's attitude was, in fact, definitely fixed in January 1909 by the Papal proclamation declaring that the girl's virtues were heroic and her miracles authentic. One can only regret that the discovery was not made sooner, in time to save her from the fire, when her clerical judges came to the very opposite conclusion. Yet we must not hastily condemn them for an error which, even apart from theological guidance, most of us laymen would probably have committed.

Let us for a moment imagine Joan herself appearing in the England of to-day on much the same mission. It is not difficult to picture the contempt, the derision, the ribaldry, with which she would be greeted. In nearly every point her reception would be the same as it was, except that fewer people would believe in her inspiration. We have only to read her trial, or even the account given in *Henry VI*, to know what we should say of her now. There would be the same reproaches of unwomanliness, the same reminders that a woman's sphere is the home, the same plea that she should leave serious affairs to men, who, indeed, had carried them on so well that the whole country was tormented with perpetual panic of an enemy over sea. There would be the same taunts of immodesty, the same filthy songs. Since science has presumed to take the place of theology, we should talk about hysteria instead of witchcraft, and hallucination instead of demoniacal possession. Physiologists would expound her enthusiasm as functional disorder of the thyroid gland. Historians would

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draw parallels between her recurring Voices and the “tarantism” of the Middle Ages. Superior people would smile with polite curiosity. The vulgar would yell in crowds and throw filth in her face. The scenes of the fifteenth century in France would be exactly repeated, except that we should not actually burn her in Trafalgar Square. If she escaped the madhouse, the gaol and forcible feeding would be always ready.

So that we must not be hard on that theological conclave which made the mistake of burning a Blessed One alive. They were inspired by the highest motives, political and divine, and they made the fullest use of their knowledge of spiritual things. Being under divine direction, they could not allow any weak sentiment of pity or human consideration to influence their judgment. Their only error was in their failure to discern the authenticity of the girl’s miracles, and we must call that a venial error, since it has taken the Church nearly five centuries to give a final decision on the point. The authenticity of miracles! Of all questions that is the most difficult for a contemporary to decide. In the case of Joan’s judges, indeed, the solution of this mystery must have been almost impossible, unless they were gifted with prophecy; for most of her miracles were performed only after her death, or at least only then became known. And as to the bare facts they knew of her life—the realities that everyone might have seen or heard, and many thousands had shared in—there was nothing miraculous about them, nothing to detain the attention of theologians. They were natural events.

For a hundred years the country had been rent and devastated by foreign war. The enemy still clutched its very centre. The south-west quarter of the kingdom was his beyond question. By treaty his young king was heir to the whole. The land was depopulated by plague and impoverished by vain revolution. Continuous civil strife tore the people asunder, and the most powerful of the factions fought for the invader’s claim. Armies ate up the years like locusts, and there was no refuge for the poor, no preservation of wealth for men or honour for women. Even religion was distracted by schism, divided against herself into two, perhaps into three, conflicting churches. In the midst of the misery and tumult this girl appears, possessed by one thought only—the pity for her country. Modest beyond all common decency; most sensitive to pain, for it always made her cry; conscious, as she said, that in battle she ran as much risk of being killed as anyone else, she rode among men as one of themselves, bareheaded, swinging her axe, charging with her standard which all must follow, heartening her countrymen for the cause of France, striking the invading enemy with the terrors of a spirit. Just a clear-witted, womanly girl, except that her cause had driven fear from her heart, and occupied all her soul, to the exclusion of lesser things. “Pity she isn’t an Englishwoman!”

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said one of the enemy who was near her after a battle, and he meant it for the most delicate praise. In a few months she changed the face of her country, revived the hope, inspired the courage, rekindled the belief, re-established the unity, staggered the invader with a blow in the heart, and crowned her king as the symbol of national glory. Within a few months she had set France upon the assured road to future greatness. Little over twenty years after they burnt her there was hardly a trace of foreign foot upon French soil.

It was all quite natural, of course. The theologians who condemned her to death, and those who have now raised her to Beatitude, were concerned with the authenticity of her miracles, and there is nothing miraculous in thus raising a nation from the dead. Considering the difficulty of their task, we may forgive the clergy some apparent inconsistency in their treatment. But for myself, as a mere layman, I should be content to call any human being Blessed for the natural magic of such a history; and compared with that deed of hers, I would not turn my head to witness the most astonishing miracle ever performed in all the records of the saints.

XXV

THE HEROINE

It is strange to think that up to August of 1910, a woman was alive who had won the highest fame many years before most people now living were born. To remember her is like turning the pages of an illustrated newspaper half-a-century old. Again we see the men with long and pointed whiskers, the women with ballooning skirts, bag nets for the hair, and little bonnets or porkpie hats, a feather raking fore and aft. Those were the years when Gladstone was still a subordinate statesman, earning credit for finance, Dickens was writing *Hard Times*, Carlyle was beginning his *Frederick*, Ruskin was at work on *Modern Painters*, Browning composing his *Men and Women*, Thackeray publishing *The Newcomes*, George Eliot wondering whether she was capable of imagination. It all seems very long ago since that October night when that woman sailed for Boulogne with her thirty-eight chosen nurses on the way to Scutari. I suppose that never in the world's history has the change in thought and manners been so rapid and far-reaching as in the two generations that have arisen in our country since that night. And it is certain that Florence Nightingale, when she embarked without fuss in the packet, was quite unconscious how much she was contributing to so vast a transformation.

One memory almost alone still keeps a familiar air, suggesting something that lies perhaps permanently at the basis of man's nature. The present-day detractors of all things new, of every step in advance, every breach in routine, every promise of

emancipation, and every departure from the commonplace, would feel themselves quite at home among the evil tongues that spewed their venom upon a courageous and noble-hearted

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woman. They would recognise as akin to themselves the calumny, scandal, ridicule, and malignity with which their natural predecessors pursued her from the moment that she took up her heroic task to the time when her glory stilled their filthy breath. She went under Government direction; the Queen mentioned her with interest in a letter; even the *Times* supported her, for in those days the *Times* frequently stood as champion for some noble cause, and its own correspondent, William Russell, had himself first made the suggestion that led to her departure. But neither the Queen, the Government, nor the *Times* could silence the born backbiters of greatness. Cowards, startled at the sight of courage, were alert with jealousy. Pleasure-seekers, stung in the midst of comfort, sniffed with depreciation. Culture, in pursuit of prettiness, passed by with artistic indifference. The narrow mind attributed motives and designs. The snake of disguised concupiscence sounded its rattle. That refined and respectable women should go on such an errand—how could propriety endure it? No lady could thus expose herself without the loss of feminine bloom. If decent women took to this kind of service, where would the charm of womanhood be fled? “They are impelled by vanity, and seek the notoriety of scandal,” said the envious. “None of them will stand the mere labour of it for a month, if we know anything,” said the physiologists. “They will run at the first rat,” said masculine wit. “Let them stay at home and nurse babies,” cried the suburbs. “These Nightingales will in due time become ringdoves,” sneered *Punch*.

With all that sort of thing we are familiar, and every age has known it. The shifts to which the *Times* was driven in defence show the nature of the assaults:

“Young,” it wrote of Florence Nightingale, “young (about the age of our Queen), graceful, feminine, rich, popular, she holds a singularly gentle and persuasive influence over all with whom she comes in contact. Her friends and acquaintance are of all classes and persuasions, but her happiest place is at home, in the centre of a very large band of accomplished relatives, and in simplest obedience to her admiring parents.”

“About the age of our Queen,” “rich,” “feminine,” “happiest at home,” “with accomplished relatives,” and “simply obedient to her parents,” she being then thirty-five—those were the points that the *Times* knew would weigh most in answer to her accusers. With all that sort of thing, as I said, we are familiar still; but there was one additional line of abuse that has at last become obsolete. For weeks after her arrival at Scutari, the papers rang with controversy over her religious beliefs. She had taken Romish Sisters with her; she had been partly trained in a convent. She was a Papist in disguise, they cried; her purpose was to clutch the dying soldier’s spirit and send it to a non-existent Purgatory, instead of to

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the Hell it probably deserved. She was the incarnation of the Scarlet Woman; she was worse, she was a Puseyite, a traitor in the camp of England's decent Church. "No," cried the others, "she is worse even than a Puseyite. She is a Unitarian; it is doubtful whether her father's belief in the Athanasian Creed is intelligent and sincere." Finally, the climax in her iniquities of mind and conduct reached its height and she was publicly denounced as a Supralapsarian. I doubt whether, at the present day, the coward's horror at the sight of courage, the politician's alarm at the sound of principle, or envy's utmost malignity would go so far as to call a woman that.

I dwell on the opposition and abuse that beset Florence Nightingale's undertaking, because they are pleasanter and more instructive than the sentimentality into which her detractors converted their abuse when her achievement was publicly glorified. It is significant that, in its minute account of the Crimean War, the *Annual Register* of the time appears to have made no mention of her till the war was over and she had received a jewel from the Queen. Then it uttered its little complaint that "the gentler sex seems altogether excluded from public reward." Well, it is matter for small regret that a great woman should not be offered such titles as are bestowed upon the failures in Cabinets, the contributors to party funds, and the party traitors whom it is hoped to restrain from treachery. But whether a peerage would have honoured her or not, there is no question of the disservice done to the truth of her character by those whose sentimental titles of "Lady with the Lamp," "Leader of the Angel Band," "Queen of the Gracious Dynasty," "Ministering angel, thou!" and all the rest of it have created an ideal as false as it is mawkish. Did the sentimentalists, at first so horrified at her action, really suppose that the service which in the end they were compelled to admire could ever have been accomplished by a soft and maudlin being such as their imagination created, all brimming eyes and heartfelt sighs, angelic draperies and white-winged shadows that hairy soldiers turned to kiss?

To those who have read her books and the letters written to her by one of the sanest and least ecstatic men of her day, or have conversed with people who knew her well, it is evident that Florence Nightingale was at no point like that. Her temptations led to love of mastery and impatience with fools. Like all great organisers, quick and practical in determination, she found extreme difficulty in suffering fools gladly. To relieve her irritation at their folly, she used to write her private opinions of their value on the blotting-paper while they chattered. It was not for angelic sympathy or enthusiasm that Sidney Herbert chose her in his famous invitation, but for "administrative capacity and experience." Those were the real secrets of her great accomplishment, and one remembers her own scorn of "the commonly received

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idea that it requires nothing but a disappointment in love, or incapacity for other things, to turn a woman into a good nurse.” It was a practical and organising power for getting things done that distinguished the remarkable women of the last century, and perhaps of all ages, far more than the soft and sugary qualities which sentimentality has delighted to plaster on its ideal of womanhood, while it talks its pretty nonsense about chivalry and the weakness of woman being her strength. As instances, one could recall Elizabeth Fry, Sister Dora, Josephine Butler, Mary Kingsley, Octavia Hill, Dr. Garrett Anderson, Mrs. F.G. Hogg (whose labour secured the Employment of Children Act and the Children’s Courts), and a crowd more in education, medicine, natural science, and political life. But, indeed, we need only point to Queen Victoria herself, her strong but narrow nature torn by the false ideal which made her protest that no good woman was fit to reign, while all the time she was reigning with a persistent industry, a mastery of detail, and a truthfulness of dealing rare among any rulers, and at intervals illuminated by sudden glory.

“Woman is the practical sex,” said George Meredith, almost with over-emphasis, and certainly the saying was true of Florence Nightingale. In far the best appreciation of her that has appeared—an appreciation written by Harriet Martineau, who herself died about forty years ago—that distinguished woman says: “She effected two great things—a mighty reform in the cure of the sick, and an opening for her sex into the region of serious business.” The reform of hospital life and sick nursing, whether military or civil, is near fulfilment now, and it is hard to imagine such a scene as those Scutari wards where, in William Russell’s words, the sick were tended by the sick and the dying by the dying, while rats fed upon the corpses and the filth could not be described. But though her other and much greater service is, owing to its very magnitude, still far from fulfilment, it is perhaps even harder for us to imagine the network of custom, prejudice, and sentiment through which she forced the opening of which Harriet Martineau speaks.

XXVI

THE PENALTY OF VIRTUE

His crime was that he actually married the girl. It had always been the fashion for an Austrian Archduke to keep an opera-dancer, whether he liked it or not, just as he always kept a racehorse, even though he cared nothing about racing. For any scion of the Imperial House she was a necessary part of the surroundings, an item in the entourage of Court. He maintained her just as our Royal Family pay subscriptions to charities, or lay the foundation-stone of a church. It was expected of him. *Noblesse oblige*. Descent from the House of Hapsburg involves its duties as well as its rights. The opera-dancer was as essential to Archducal existence as the seventy-seventh quartering on the Hapsburg arms. She was the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual

Imperialness. She justified the title of “Transparency.” She was the mark of true heredity, like the Hapsburg lip. As the advertisements say, no Archduke should be without one.

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But really to love an opera-dancer was a scandal for derision, moving all the Courts of the Empire to scorn. Actually to marry her was a crime beyond forgiveness. It shook the Throne. It came very near the sin of treason, for which the penalties prescribed may hardly be whispered in polite ears. To mingle the Imperial blood with a creature born without a title, and to demand human and divine sanction for the deed! It brought a blush to the cheek of heraldry. What of the possible results of a union with a being from the stage? Only if illegitimate, could such results legitimately be recognised; only if ignoble in the eyes of morality, could they be received without censure among the nobility. It was not fair to put all one's Imperial relations, to say nothing of the Court officials, the Lord High Chamberlain, the Keepers of the Pedigree, the Diamond Sticks in Waiting, the Grooms of the Bedchamber, and the Valets Extraordinary—it was not fair to put their poor brains into such a quandary of contradiction and perplexity. And who shall tell the divine wrath of that august figure, obscurely visible in the recesses of ancestral homes, upon whose brow had descended the diadem of Roman Emperors, the crown of Christ's Vicar in things terrestrial, and who, when he was not actually wearing the symbol of Imperial supremacy, enjoyed the absolute right to assume the regalia of eight kingdoms in turn, including the sacred kingdom of Jerusalem, and possessed forty-three other titles to pre-eminent nobility, not counting the etceteras with which each separate string of titles was concluded? Who, without profanity, shall tell his wrath?

It was the Archduke Johann Salvator of Austria, head of the Tuscan branch of the House of Hapsburg, who confronted in his own person that Imperial wrath, and committed the inextinguishable crime of marriage. It is true that he was not entirely to blame. He did not succumb without a struggle, and his efforts to resist the temptation to legality appear to have been sincere. Indeed, as has so often happened since the days of Eve, it was chiefly the woman's fault. He honestly endeavoured to make her his mistress, in accordance with all Archducal precedent, but she persistently, nay, obstinately, refused the honour of Imperial shame. With a rigidity that in other circumstances might, perhaps, have been commended, but, in relation to an Archduke, can only be described as designing, she insisted upon marriage. She was but Fraulein Milli Stubel, light-skirted dancer at the Court Opera-House, but, with unexampled hardihood, she maintained her headlong course along the criminal path of virtue. What could a man do when exposed to temptation so severe?

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The Archduke was in love, and love is an incalculable force, driving all of us at times irresistibly to deeds of civil and ecclesiastical wedlock. He was a soldier, a good soldier, in itself an unusual and suspicious characteristic in one of the Hapsburg blood. He was a musician and a man of culture—qualities that, in a prince, must be taken as dangerous indications of an unbalanced mind. He was an intimate friend of the Crown Prince Rudolph, that bewildering personality, whose own fate was so unhappy, so obscure. Skill in war, intelligence, knowledge, friendship all marked him out as a man only too likely to bring discredit on Archducal tradition. His peers in birth shook their heads, and muttered the German synonym for “crank.” Worse than all, he was in love—in love with a woman of dangerous virtue. What could such a man do against temptation? Struggle as he might, he could not long repel the seductive advances of honourable action. He loved, he fell, he married.

In London, of all places, this crime against all the natural dictates of Society was ultimately perpetrated. We do not know what church lent itself to the deed, or what hotel gave shelter to the culprits' shame. By hunting up the marriage register of Johann Orth (to such shifts may an Archduke be reduced in the pursuit of virtue), one might, perhaps, discover the name of the officiating clergyman, and we can confidently assume he will not be found upon the bench of Bishops. But it is all many years ago now, and directly after the marriage, as though in the vain hope of concealing every trace of his offence, Johann Orth purchased a little German ship, which he called by the symbolic name of *Santa Margherita*—for St. Margaret suffered martyrdom for the sin of rejecting a ruler's dishonourable proposals—and so they sailed for South America. By what means the wedded fugitives purposed there to support their guiltless passion, is uncertain. But we know that they arrived, that the captain gave himself out as ill, and left the ship, together with most of the crew, no doubt in apprehension of divine vengeance, if they should seem any longer to participate in the breach of royal etiquette. We further know that, in July 1890, the legal lovers sailed from Buenos Ayres, with a fresh crew, the Archduke himself in command, and were never heard of more.

An Austrian cruiser was sent to search the coasts, in vain. No letters came; no ship has ever hailed the vessel of their iniquity. The insurance companies have long paid the claims upon the Archduke's premiums for his life, and that fact alone is almost as desirable an evidence as a death-certificate to his heir. But one Sunday in July 1910, the Imperial Court of Austria also issued an edict to appear simultaneously in the chief official gazettes of the habitable globe, declaring that, unless within six months further particulars were supplied concerning one, namely, the Archduke Johann Salvator, of the House of Austria and Tuscany,

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otherwise and hereinafter known as Johann Orth, master mariner, and concerning his alleged decease, together with that of one Milli Orth, *nee* Stubel, his reputed accomplice in matrimony, the property, estates, effects, titles, jewels, family vaults, and other goods of the aforesaid Johann Orth, should forthwith and therewithal pass into the possession of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, nephew and presumptive heir of the aforesaid Johann Orth, to the estimated value of L150,000 sterling, in excess or defect thereof as the case might be, it being thereafter presumed that the aforesaid Johann Orth, together with the aforesaid Milli Orth, his reputed accomplice in matrimony, did meet or encounter their death upon the high seas by the act or other intervention of God.

Oh, never believe it! There is an unsuspected island in untravelled seas. Like the island of Tirnanog, which is the Irish land of eternal youth, it lies below the sunset, brighter than the island-valley of Avilion:

“Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow’d, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown’d with summer sea.”

To that island have those star-like lovers fared, since they gave the world and all its Imperial Courts the slip. There they have discovered an innocent and lovely race, adorned only with shells and the flowers of hibiscus; and, intermingled with that race, in accordance with indigenous marriage ceremonies, the crew of the *Santa Margherita* now rear a dusky brood. In her last extant letter, addressed to the leader of the *corps de ballet* at the Ring Theatre in Vienna, Madame Milli Orth herself hinted at a No-Man’s Land, which they were seeking as the home of their future happiness. They have found it now, having trodden the golden path of rays. There palls not wealth, or state, or any rank, nor ever Court snores loudly, but men and women meet each evening to discuss the next day’s occupation, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer collects the unearned increment in the form of the shell called Venus’ ear. For a time, indeed, Johann Orth attempted to maintain a kind of kingship, on the strength of his superior pedigree. But when a democratic cabin-boy one day turned and told him to stow his Hapsburg lip, the beautiful ex-opera-dancer burst out laughing, and Johann agreed in future to be called Archduke only on Sundays. With their eldest son, now a fine young man coming to maturity, the title is expected to expire.

XXVII

“THE DAILY ROUND, THE COMMON TASK”

Mr. Clarkson, of the Education Office, was enjoying his breakfast with his accustomed equanimity and leisure. Having skimmed the Literary Supplement of the *Times*, and recalled a phrase from a symphony on his piano, he began opening his letters. But at the third he paused in sudden perplexity, holding his coffee-cup half raised. After a while the brightness of adventurous decision came into his eyes, and he set the cup down, almost too violently, on the saucer.

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"I'll do it!" he cried, with the resolute air of an explorer contemplating the Antarctic. "The world is too much with me. I will recover my true personality in the wilderness. I will commune with my own heart and be still!"

He rang the bell hurriedly, lest his purpose should weaken.

"Oh, Mrs. Wilson," he said carelessly, "I am going away for a few days."

"Visiting at some gentleman's seat to shoot the gamebirds, I make no doubt," answered the landlady.

"Why, no; not precisely that," said Mr. Clarkson. "The fact is, Mr. Davies, a literary friend of mine—quite the best authority on Jacobean verse—offers me his house, just by way of a joke. The house will be empty, and he says he only wants me to defend his notes on the *History of the Masque* from burglary. I shall take him at his word."

"You alone in a house, sir? There's a thing!" exclaimed the landlady.

"A thing to be thankful for," Mr. Clarkson replied. "George Sand always longed to inhabit an empty house."

"Mr. Sand's neither here nor there," answered the landlady firmly. "But you're not fit, sir, begging your pardon. Unless a person comes in the morning to do for you."

"I shall prefer complete solitude," said Mr. Clarkson. "The calm of the uninterrupted morning has for me the greatest attraction."

"You'll excuse me mentioning such things," she continued, "but there's the washing-up and bed-making."

"Excellent athletic exercises!" cried Mr. Clarkson. "In Xenophon's charming picture of married life we see the model husband instructing the young wife to leave off painting and adorning herself, and to seek the true beauty of health and strength by housework and turning beds."

"There's many on us had ought to be beauties, then, without paint nor yet powder," said the landlady, turning away with a little sigh. And when Mr. Clarkson drove off that evening with his bag, she stood by the railings and said to the lady next door: "There goes my gentleman, and him no more fit to do for hisself than a babe unborn, and no more idea of cooking than a crocodile!"

The question of cooking did not occur to Mr. Clarkson till he had entered the semi-detached suburban residence with his friend's latchkey, groped about for the electric lights, and discovered there was nothing to eat in the house, whereas he was accustomed to a biscuit or two and a little whisky and soda before going to bed.

“Never mind,” he thought. “Enterprise implies sacrifice, and hunger will be a new experience. I can buy something for breakfast in the morning.”

So he spent a placid hour in reading the titles of his friend’s books, and then retired to the bedroom prepared for him.

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He woke in the morning with a sense of profound tranquillity, and thought with admiration of the Dean of his College, whose one rule of life was never to allow anyone to call him. "This is worth a little subsequent trouble, if, indeed, trouble is involved," he murmured to himself, as he turned over and settled down to sleep again. But hardly had he dozed off when he was startled by an aggressive double-knock at the front door. He hoped it would not recur; but it did recur, and was accompanied by prolonged ringing of an electric bell. Feeling that his peace was broken, he put on his slippers and crept downstairs.

"What do you want?" he said at the door.

"Post," came a voice. Undoing the bolts, he put out a naked arm. "Even if you are the post," he remarked, "you need not sound the Last Trumpet!"

"Davies," said the postman, crammed a bundle of proofs into the expectant hand, and departed.

Mr. Clarkson turned into the kitchen. It presented a rather dreary aspect. The range and fire-irons looked as though they had been out all night. The grate was piled with ashes, like a crater.

"No wonder," said Mr. Clarkson, "that ashes are the popular comparison for a heart of extinguished affections. Could anything be more desolate, more hopeless, or, I may say, more disagreeable? To how many a disappointed cook that simile must come home when first she gets down in the morning!"

He took the poker and began raking gently between the bars. But no matter how tenderly he raked, his hands appeared to grow black of themselves, and great clouds of dust floated about the room and covered him.

"This *must* be the way to do it," he said, pausing in perplexity; "I suppose a certain amount of dirt is inevitable when you are grappling with reality. But my pyjamas will be in a filthy state."

Taking them off, he hung them on the banisters, and, with a passing thought of Lady Godiva, closed the kitchen door and advanced again towards the grate, still grasping the poker in his hand. Then he set himself to grapple with reality in earnest. The ashes crashed together, dust rose in columns, iron rang on iron, as in war's smithy. But little by little the victory was achieved, and lines of paper, wood, and coal gave promise of brighter things. He wiped his sweating brow, tingeing it with a still deeper black, and, catching sight of himself in a servant's looking-glass over the mantelpiece, he said, "There is no doubt man was intended by nature to be a coloured race."

But while he was thinking what wisdom the Vestal Virgins showed in never letting their fire go out, another crash came at the door, followed by the war-whoop of a scalp-hunter. "I seem to recognise that noise," he thought, "but I can't possibly open the door in this condition."

Creeping down the passage, he said "Who's there?" through the letter-box.

"Milko!" came the repeated yell.

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"Would there be any objection to your depositing the milk upon the doorstep?" asked Mr. Clarkson.

"Righto!" came the answer, and steps retreated with a clang of pails.

"Why do the common people love to add 'o' to their words?" Mr. Clarkson reflected. "Is it that they unconsciously appreciate 'o' as the most beautiful of vowel sounds? But I wonder whether I ought to have blacked that range before I lighted the fire? The ironwork certainly looks rather pre-Dreadnought! What I require most just now is a hot bath, and I'd soon have one if I only knew which of these little slides to pull out. But if I pulled out the wrong one, there might be an explosion, and then what would become of the *History of the Masque*?"

So he put on a kettle, and waited uneasily for it to sing as a kettle should. "Now I'll shave," he said; "and when I am less like that too conscientious Othello, I'll go out and buy something for breakfast."

The bath was distinctly cool, but when he got out there was a satisfaction in the water's hue, and, though chilled to the bone, he carried his pyjamas upstairs with a feeling of something accomplished. On entering his bedroom, he was confronted by his disordered pillow, and a bed like a map of Switzerland in high relief. "Courage!" he cried, "I will make it at once. The secret of labour-saving is organisation."

So, with a certain asperity, he dragged off the clothes, and flung the mattress over, while the bedstead rolled about under the unaccustomed violence. "Rightly does the Scot talk about sorting a bed!" he thought, as he wrenched the blankets asunder, and stood wondering whether the black border should be tucked in at the sides or the feet. At last he pulled the counterpane fairly smooth, but in an evil moment, looking under the bed, he perceived large quantities of fluffy and coagulated dust.

"I know what that is," he said. "That's called flue, and it must be removed. Swift advised the chambermaid, if she was in haste, to sweep the dust into a corner of the room, but leave her brush upon it, that it might not be seen, for that would disgrace her. Well, there is no one to see me, so I must do it as I can."

He crawled under the bed, and gathering the flue together in his two hands, began throwing it out of the window. "Pity it isn't nesting season for the birds," he said, as he watched it float away. But this process was too slow; so taking his towel, he dusted the drawers, the washing-stand, and the greater part of the floor, shaking the towel out of the window, until, in his eagerness, he dropped it into the back garden, and it lay extended upon the wash-house roof.

Tranquillity had now vanished, and solitude was losing some of its charm. It was quite time he started for the office, but he had not begun to dress, and, except for the kettle,

which he could hear boiling over downstairs, there was not a gleam of breakfast. After washing again, he put on his clothes hurriedly, and determined to postpone the remainder of his physical exercise till his return in the evening.

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Running downstairs, he saw his dirty boots staring him in the face. "Is there any peace in ever climbing up the climbing wave?" he quoted, with a sinking heart. There was no help for it. The things had to be cleaned, or people would wonder where he had been. Searching in a cupboard full of oily rags, grimy leathers, and other filthy instruments, he found the blacking and the brushes, and presently the boots began to shine in patches here and there. Then he washed again, and as he flung open the front door, he kicked the milk all down the steps. It ran in a broad, white stream along the tiled pavement to the gate.

"There goes breakfast!" he thought, but the disaster reached further. Hastily fetching a pail of water, he soused it over the steps, with the result that all the whitening came off and mingled with the milk upon the tiles. A second pail only heightened the deplorable aspect, and he splashed large quantities of the water over his trousers and boots. He felt it running through his socks. It was impossible to go to the office like that, or to leave his friend's house in such a state.

He took off his coat and began pushing the milky water to and fro with a broom. Seeing the maid next door making great wet curves on her steps with a sort of stone, he called to her to ask how she did it.

"Same as other people, saucy," she retorted at once.

"Is that a bath-brick you are manipulating?" Mr. Clarkson asked.

"Bath-brick, indeed! What do you take me for?" she replied, and continued swirling the stuff round and round.

After a further search in the cupboard, Mr. Clarkson discovered a similar piece of stone, and stooping down, began to swirl it about in the same manner. The stuff was deposited in yellowish curves, which he believed would turn white. But it showed the marks so obviously that, to break up the outlines, he carefully dabbed the steps all over with the flat of his hands. "The effect will be like an Academician's stippling," he thought, but when he had swept the surface of the garden path into the road, he scrutinised his handiwork with some satisfaction.

Hardly had he cleaned his boots again, washed again, and changed his socks, when there came another knocking at the door, polite and important this time. He found a well-dressed man, with tall hat, frock-coat, and umbrella, who inquired if he could speak to the proprietor.

"Mr. Davies is away," said Mr. Clarkson, fixing his eyes on the stranger's boots. "I beg your pardon, but may I remind you that you are standing on my steps? I'm afraid you will whiten the soles of your boots, I mean."



"Thank you, that's of no consequence," said the stranger, entering, and leaving two great brown footprints on the step and several white ones on the passage. "But I thought I might venture to submit to your consideration a pound of our unsurpassable tea."

"Tea?" cried Mr. Clarkson, with joyous eagerness. "I suppose you don't happen to have milk, sugar, bread and butter, and an egg or two concealed about your person, do you?"

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"I am not a conjuror," said the stranger, resuming his hat with some *hauteur*.

An hour later, Mr. Clarkson was enjoying at his Club a meal that he endeavoured to regard as lunch, and on reaching the office in the afternoon he apologised for having been unavoidably detained at home.

"There's no place like home," replied his elderly colleague, with his usual inanity.

"Perhaps fortunately, there is not," said Mr. Clarkson, and attempting to straighten his aching back and ease his suffering limbs, he added, "I am coming to the conclusion that woman's place is the home."

XXVIII

THE CHARM OF COMMONPLACE

George Eliot warned us somewhere not to expect Isaiah and Plato in every country house, and the warning was characteristic of the time when one really might have met Ruskin or Herbert Spencer. How uncalled for it would be now! If Isaiah or Plato were to appear at any country house, what a shock it would give the company, even if no one present had heard of their names and death before! We do not know how prophets and philosophers would behave in a country house, but, to judge from their books, their conversation could not fail to embarrass. What would they say when the daughter of the house inquired if her Toy-Pom was not really rather a darling, or the host proclaimed to the world that he never took potatoes with fish? What would the host and daughter say if their guest began to prophesy or discuss the nature of justice? There is something irreligious in the incongruity of the scene.

The age of the wise, in those astonishing eighteen-seventies, was succeeded by the age of the epigram, when someone was always expected to say something witty, and it was passed on, like a sporting tip, through widening circles. Such sayings as "I can resist everything but temptation" were much sought after. Common sense became piquant if reversed, and the good, plain man disappeared in laughter. When a languid creature told him it was always too late to mend, and never too young to learn, he was disconcerted. The bases of existence were shaken by little earthquakes, and he did not know where to stand or what to say. He felt it was nonsense, but as everyone laughed and applauded he supposed they were all too clever for him—too clever by half, and he went away sadder, but no wiser. "If Christ were again on earth," said Carlyle, of an earlier generation, "Mr. Milnes (Lord Houghton) would ask him to breakfast, and the clubs would all be talking of the good things he had said." Frivolity only changes its form, but the epigrams of the early 'nineties were not Christlike, and Mr. Milnes would have been as much astray among them as the good, plain man.

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The epigrammatist still lingers, and sometimes dines; but his roses have faded, and the weariness of his audience is no longer a pose. A tragic ghost, he feels like one who treads alone some banquet-hall, not, indeed, deserted, but filled with another company, and that is so much drearier. The faces that used to smile on him are gone, the present faces only stare and if he told them now that it may be better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all, but both are good, they would conceal a shiver of boredom under politeness. It is recognised that life with an epigrammatist has become unendurable. "Witty?" (if one may quote again the Carlyle whom English people are forgetting) "O be not witty: none of us is bound to be witty under penalties. A fashionable wit? If you ask me which, he or a death's head, will be the cheerier company for me, pray send *not* him."

Evidently there are some creatures too bright if not too good for human nature's daily food. They are like the pudding that was all raisins, because the cook had forgotten to put in the suet. Sensible people put in the suet pretty thick, and they find it fortifying. Here in England, for instance, it has been the standing sneer of upstart pertness that ordinary men and women always set out upon their conversations with the weather. Well, and why on earth should they not? In every part of the world the weather is the most important subject. India may suffer from unrest, but the Indian's first thought is whether she suffers from drought. Russia may seethe with revolution, but ninety-nine per cent. of Russians are thinking of the crops. France may be disturbed about Germany, but Frenchmen know the sun promises such a vintage as never was. War may threaten Russia, but the outbreak depends upon the harvest. Certainly, in our barren wildernesses of city it does not much matter whether it rains or shines, except to the top hats and long skirts of the inhabitants. But mankind cannot live on smuts and sulphur, and our discussions on the weather keep us in touch with the kindly fruits of the earth; we show we are not weaned from Nature, but still remember the cornfields and orchards by which we live. Every cloud and wind, every ray of sunshine comes filled with unconscious memories, and secret influences extend to our very souls with every change in weather. Like fishes, we do not bite when the east wind blows; like ducks and eels, we sicken or go mad in thunder.

Why should we fuddle our conversation with paradoxes and intellectual interests when nature presents us with this sempiternal theme? Ruskin observed that Pusey never seemed to know what sort of a day it was. That showed a mind too absent from terrestrial things, too much occupied with immortality. Here in England the variety of the weather affords a special incitement to discussion. It is like a fellow-creature or a race-meeting; the sporting element is added, and you never know what a single day may bring forth.

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Shallow wits may laugh at such talk, but neither the publishers' lists nor the Cowes Regatta, neither the Veto nor the Insurance Act can compare for a moment with the question whether it will rain this week. Why, then, should we not talk about rain, and leave plays and books and pictures and politics and scandal to narrow and abnormal minds? To adapt a Baconian phrase, the weather is the one subject that you cannot dull by jading it too far.

Nor does it arouse the evil passions of imparting information or contradicting opinions. When someone says, "It is a fine day," or "It's good weather for ducks," he does not wish to convey a new fact. I have known only one man who desired to contradict such statements, and, looking up at the sky, would have liked to order the sun in or out rather than agree; and he was a Territorial officer, so that command was in his nature. But mention the Lords, or the Church, or the Suffrage, and what a turmoil and tearing of hair! What sandstorms of information, what semi-courteous contradiction! Whither has the sweet gregariousness of human converse strayed? Black looks flash from the miracle of a seeing eye; bad blood rushes to thinking foreheads; the bonds of hell are loosed; pale gods sit trembling in their twilight. "O sons of Adam, the sun still shines, and a spell of fair weather never did no harm, as we heard tell on; but don't you think a drop of rain to-night would favour the roots? You'll excuse a farmer's grumbling."

People do not associate in order to receive epigrammatic shocks, nor to be fed up with information and have their views put right. They associate for society. They feel more secure, more open-hearted and cheerful, when together. Sheep know in their hearts that numbers are no protection against the dog, who is so much cleverer and more terrible than they; but still they like to keep in the flock. It is always comfortable to sit beside a man as foolish as oneself and hear him say that East is East and West is West; or that men are men, and women are women; or that the world is a small place after all, truth is stranger than fiction, listeners never hear any good of themselves, and a true friend is known in adversity. That gives the sense of perfect comradeship. There is here no tiresome rivalry of wits, no plaguy intellectual effort. One feels one's proper level at once, and needs no longer go scrambling up the heights with banners of strange devices. At such moments of pleasant and unadventurous intercourse, it will be found very soothing to reply that cold hands show a warm heart, that only town-dwellers really love the country, that night is darkest before the dawn, that there are always faults on both sides, that an Englishman's home is his castle, but travel expands the mind, and marriage is a lottery.

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Such sentences, delivered alternately, will supply all the requisites of intercourse. The philosopher rightly esteemed no knowledge of value unless it was known already, and all these things have been known a very long time. Sometimes, it is true, a conversation may become more directly informative and yet remain amicable, as when the man on the steamer acquaints you with the facts that lettuce contains opium, that Lincoln's Inn Fields is the size of the Great Pyramid's base, that Mr. Gladstone took sixty bites to the mouthful, that hot tea is a cooling drink, that a Frenchwoman knows how to put on her clothes, that the engineer on board is sure to be a Scotsman, that fish is good for the brain because it contains phosphorus, that cheese will digest everything but itself, that there are more acres in England than words in the Bible, and that the cigars smoked in a year would go ten thousand and a quarter times round the earth if placed end to end. These facts are also familiar to everyone beforehand, and they present a solid basis for gregarious conversation. They put the merest stranger at his ease. They make one feel at home.

Some of the trades and professions secure the same object by special phrases. When you hear that the horses are fat as butter, the men keen as mustard, and everything right as rain, you know you are back to the army again. The kindly mention of the Great Lexicographer, the Wizard of the North, the Sage of Chelsea, and London's Particular calls up the vision of a street descending into the vale of St. Paul's. But such phrases are fleeting. They hardly last four generations of mankind, and already they wither to decay. "Every cloud has a silver lining," "It's a poor heart that never rejoices," "There are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught"—those are the observations that give stability and permanence to the intercourse of man. They are not clever; they contain no paradox; like the Ugly Duckling, they cannot emit sparks. But one's heart leaps up at hearing them, as at the sight of a rainbow. For, like the rainbow, they are an assurance that while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall never cease.

XXIX

THE PRIEST OF NEMI

Here it is cool under thick alders, close to the water's edge, where frogs are doing their very best to sing. Hidden in some depth of the sky, the Dog Star rages, and overhead the mid-day sun marches across his blazing barrack-square. Far away the heathen violently rage; the world is full of rumours of war, and the kings of the earth take counsel together against liberty and peace. But here under thick alders it is cool, and the deep water of the lake that lies brooding within the silent crater of these Alban hills, stretches before us an unruffled surface of green and indigo profoundly mingled. Wandering about among overgrown

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and indistinguishable gardens under the woods, women and girls are gathering strawberries and loading them up in great wicker baskets for the market of Rome. The sound of sawing comes from a few old houses by the lake-side, that once were mills turned by the nymph Egeria's stream, where Ovid drank. Opposite, across the lake, on the top of the old crater's edge, stands a brown village—the church tower, unoccupied “palace,” huddled walls and roofs piled up the steep, as Italian villages are made. That is Genzano. On the precipitous crag high above our heads stands a more ancient village, with fortress tower, unoccupied castle, crumbling gates, and the walls and roofs of dwellings huddled around them. That is Nemi, the village of the sacred wood.

Except where the rock is too steep for growth, the slopes of the deep hollow are covered with trees and bushes on every side. But the trees are thickest where the slope falls most gently—so gently that from the foot of the crater to the water's edge the ground for a few hundred yards might almost be called a bit of plain. Under the trees there the best strawberries grow, and there stood the temple of mysterious and blood-stained rites. Prowling continually round and round one of the trees, the ghastly priest was for centuries there to be seen:

“The priest who slew the slayer,
And shall himself be slain.”

No one can tell in what prehistoric age the succession of murdering and murdered priests first began that vigil for their lives. It continued with recurrent slaughter through Rome's greatest years. About the time when Virgil was still alive, or perhaps just after Christ himself was born, the geographer Strabo appears actually to have seen that living assassin and victim lurking in the wood; for he vividly describes him “with sword always drawn, turning his eyes on every side, ready to defend himself against an onslaught.” Possibly the priest suspected Strabo himself for his outlandish look and tongue, for only a runaway slave might murder and succeed him. Possibly it was that self-same priest whom Caligula, a few years after Christ's death, hired a stalwart ruffian to finish off, because he was growing old and decrepit, having defended himself from onslaughts too long. Upon the lake the Emperor constructed two fine house-boats, devoted to the habits that house-boats generally induce (you may still fish up bits of their splendour from the bottom, if you have luck), and very likely it was annoying to watch the old man still doddering round his tree with drawn sword. One would like to ask whether the crazy tyrant was aware how well he was fulfilling the ancient rite by ordaining the slaughter of decrepitude. And one would like to ask also whether the stalwart ruffian himself took up the line of consecrated and ghastly succession. Someone, at all events, took it up; for in the bland age of the Antonines the priest was still there, pacing with drawn sword, turning his eyes in every direction, lest his successor should spring upon him unawares.

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In the opening chapter, which states the central problem, still slowly being worked out in the great series of *The Golden Bough*, Dr. Frazer has drawn the well-known picture of that haunted man. “The dreamy blue,” he writes:

“The dreamy blue of Italian skies, the dappled shade of summer woods, and the sparkle of waves in the sun, can have accorded but ill with that stern and sinister figure. Rather we picture to ourselves the scene as it may have been witnessed by a belated wayfarer on one of those wild autumn nights when the dead leaves are falling thick, and the winds seem to sing the dirge of the dying year. It is a sombre picture, set to melancholy music—the background of forest showing black and jagged against a lowering and stormy sky, the sighing of the wind in the branches, the rustle of the withered leaves under foot, the lapping of the cold water on the shore, and, in the foreground, pacing to and fro, now in twilight and now in gloom, a dark figure with a glitter of steel at the shoulder whenever the pale moon, riding clear of the cloud-rack, peers down at him through the matted boughs.”

For the priest himself it can hardly have been a happy life. Thanks to Dr. Frazer, we now partly know how much of man’s religious hope and fear that sinister figure represented. But he himself had no conception of all this, nor can we suppose that even if he had possessed Dr. Frazer’s own wealth of knowledge, it would have cheered him much. When violent death impends on every moment and lurks in every shade, it is small consolation to reflect that you stand as a holy emblem, protector of a symbolic tree, the mystic mate both of the tree itself and of the goddess of fertility in man and beast and plant. There is no comfort in the knowledge that the slave who waits to kill you, as you killed your predecessor in the office, only obeys the widespread injunction of primitive religion whereby the divine powers incarnate in the priest are maintained active and wholesome with all the fervour and sprightliness of youth. Such knowledge would not relax the perpetual strain of terror, nor could the priest have displayed an intelligent and scientific interest in all the queer mythologies forcibly dragged in and combined to explain his presence there—Orestes fleeing like a runaway from the blood-stained Euxine shore; or Hippolytus, faithful worshipper of the unwedded goddess, rent by wild horses, and by Diana’s prayer to the medicine-god subsequently pieced together into life; or Virbius, counterpart of Hippolytus; or perhaps even the two-faced Janus himself, looking before and after. The finest conjectures of research, though illustrated in the person of the priest himself, could have supplied him with no antidote to those terrors of ambushed assassination.

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In his investigations among the “sword-dancers” of Northern England, Mr. Cecil Sharp has discovered that at Earsdon, after the usual captain’s song, a strange interlude occurs, in which two of the dancers feign a quarrel, and one is killed and carried out for burial amid the lamentations of the “Bessy.” A travelled doctor, however, arrives, and calls to the dead man, “Jack! take a drop of my bottle, that’ll go down your thrittle-throttle.” Whereupon up jumps Jack and shakes his sword, and the dance proceeds amid the rejoicings of Bessy and the rest. So priest slays priest, the British Diana laments her hero slain, the British Aesculapius, in verse inferior to Euripides, tends him back to life, and who in that Northumbrian dance could fail to recognise a rite sprung from the same primitive worship as the myths of Nemi? But if one had been able to stand beside that murderous and apprehensive priest, and to foretell to him that in future centuries, long after his form of religion had died away, far off in Britain, beside the wall of the Empire’s frontier, his tragedy would thus be burlesqued by Bessy, Jack, and the doctor, one may doubt if he would have expressed any kind of scientific interest, or have even smiled, as, sword in hand, he prowled around his sacred tree, peering on every side.

Why, then, did he do it? How came it that there was always a candidate for that bloody deed and disquieting existence? It is true that the competition for the post appears to have decreased with years. Originally, the priest’s murder seems to have been an annual affair, regular as the “grotter” which we are called upon to remember every August in London streets, or as the Guy Faux, whose fires will in future ages be connected with autumnal myths or with the disappearance of Adonis or Thammuz yearly wounded. The virtues of fertility’s god had to be renewed each spring; year by year the priest was slain; and only by a subsequent concession to human weakness was he allowed to retain his life till he could no longer defend it. The change seems to show that, as time went on, the privileges of the office were regarded with less eagerness, and it was more difficult to find one man a year anxious to be killed.

But with what motive, century after century, no matter at what interval of years, did a volunteer always come forward to slay and to be slain? Certainly, the priest had to be a runaway slave; but was Roman slavery so hideous that a life of unending terror by day and night was to be preferred—a life enslaved as a horse’s chained to the grinding mill in a brickyard, and without the horse’s hours of stabled peace? Hunger will drive to much, but even when the risky encounter with one’s predecessor had been successfully accomplished, what enjoyment could there be in meals eaten in bitter haste, with one hand upon the sword? As to money, what should all the wealth of the shrine profit a man compelled, in Bishop Ken’s language, to live

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each day as it were his last? Promise of future and eternal bliss? The religion held out no sure and certain hope of such a state. Joy in the divine service? It is not to vigorous runaway slaves that we look for ecstatic rapture in performing heaven's will. Upon the priest was bestowed the title of "King of the Wood." Can it be that for that barren honour a human being dyed his hands with murder and risked momentary assassination for the remainder of his lifetime? Well, we have heard of the Man who would be King, and empty titles still are sought by political services equally repellent.

But, for ourselves, in that forlorn and hag-ridden figure we more naturally see a symbol of the generations that slay the slayer and shall themselves be slain. It is thus that each generation comes knocking at the door—comes, rather, so suddenly and unannounced, clutching at the Tree of Life, and with the glittering sword of youth beating down its worn-out defenders. New blood, new thoughts and hopes each generation brings to resuscitate the genius of fertility and growth. Often it longs imperiously to summon a stalwart ruffian, who will finish off decrepitude and make an end; but hardly has the younger generation itself assumed the office and taken its stand as the Warder of the Tree, when its life and hopes in turn are threatened, and among the ambuscading woods it hears a footstep coming and sees the gleam of a drawn sword. Let us not think too precisely on such events. But rather let us climb the toilsome track up to the little town, where Cicero once waited to meet the assassin Brutus after the murder of the world's greatest man; and there, in the ancient inn still called "Diana's Looking-glass" from the old name of the beautiful and mysterious lake which lies in profoundly mingled green and indigo below it, let us forget impending doom over a twopenny quart of wine and a plate of little cuttlefish stewed in garlic, after which any priest might confront his successor with equanimity.

XXX

THE UNDERWORLD OF TIME

Sometimes, for a moment, the curtain of the past is rolled up, the seven seals of its book are loosened, and we are allowed to know more of the history than the round number of soldiers with which a general crossed a river, or the succession that brought one crazy voluptuary to follow another upon the Imperial throne. We do not refuse gratitude for what we ordinarily receive. To the general it made all the difference whether he had a thousand soldiers more or less, and to us it makes some. To the Imperial maniac it was of consequence that his predecessor in the government of civilised mankind was slain before him, and for us the information counts for something, too; just as one meets travellers who satisfy an artistic craving by enumerating the columns of a ruined shrine, and seeing that they agree with the guidebook. But it is not often that historians tell us what we really

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want to know, or that artists will stoop to our questionings. We would willingly go wrong over a thousand or two of those soldiers, if we might catch the language of just one of them as he waded into the river; and how many a simpering Venus would we grind into face-powder if we could follow for just one day the thoughts of a single priest who once guarded her temple! But, occupied with grandeur and beauty, the artists and historians move upon their own elevated plane, and it is only by furtive glimpses that we catch sight of the common and unclean underworld of life, always lumbering along with much the same chaotic noise of hungry desires and incessant labour, of animalism and spiritual aspiration.

One such glimpse we are given in that book of *The Golden Ass*, now issued by the Clarendon Press, in Mr. H.E. Butler's English version, but hitherto best known through a chapter in Walter Pater's *Marius*, or by William Adlington's sixteenth century rendering, included among *The Tudor Translations*. It is a strange and incoherent picture that the book presents. Pater well compares it to a dream: "Story within story—stories with the sudden, unlooked-for changes of dreams." And, as though to suit this dream-like inconsequence, the scene is laid in Thessaly, the natural home of witchcraft—where, in fact, I was myself laid under a witch's incantation little more than ten years ago, and might have been transformed into heaven knows what, if a remembered passage from this same book of Apuleius had not caused an outburst of laughter that broke the spell only just in time. It is a savage country, running into deep glens of forest and precipitous defiles among the mountains, fit haunt for the robber bands with which the few roads were infested. The region where the Lucius of the book wandered, either as man, or after his own curiosity into mysterious things had converted him into an ass (whereas he had wished to become a beautiful bird)—the region recalls some wild picture of Salvator Rosa's. We are surrounded by gloomy shades, sepulchral caverns, and trees writhing in storm, nor are cut-throat bandits ever far away. Violence and murder threaten at every turn. Through the narrow and filthy streets young noblemen, flown with wine, storm at midnight. When a robber chief is nailed through the hand to a door, his devoted followers hew off his arm and set him free. They capture girls for ransom, and sell them to panders. When one is troublesome, they propose to sew her up in the paunch of the yet living ass, and expose her to the mid-day sun. One of the gang, disguised as a bear, slays all his keepers, and is himself torn in pieces by men and dogs. All the band are finally slaughtered or flung from precipices. Gladiatorial beasts are kept as sepulchres for criminals. A slave is smeared with honey and slowly devoured by ants till only his white skeleton remains tied to a tree. A dragon eats one of the party, quite cursorily. What with bears, wolves, wild boars, and savage dogs, each step in life would seem a peril, were not the cruelty of man more perilous still. Continued existence in that region was, indeed, so insecure, that men and women in large numbers ended the torments of anxiety by cutting life short.

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And then there were the witches, perpetually adding to the uncertainty by rendering it dubious in what form one might awake, if one awoke at all. During sleep, a witch could draw the heart out through a hole in the neck, and, stopping up the orifice with a sponge, allow her victim to pine in wonder why he felt so incomplete. With ointments compounded of dead men's flesh she could transform a lover into a beaver, or an innkeeper into a frog swimming in his own vat of wine and with doleful croak inviting his former customers to drink; or herself, with the aid of a little shaking, she could convert into a feathered owl uttering a queasy note as it flitted out of the window. Indeed, the whole of nature was uncertain, especially if disaster impended, and sometimes a chicken would be born without the formality of an egg, or a bottomless abyss spurted with gore under the dining-room table, or the wine began to boil in the bottles, or a green frog leapt out of the sheepdog's mouth.

So life was a little trying, a little perplexing; but it afforded wide scope for curiosity, and Apuleius, an African, brought up in Athens, and living in Rome, was endlessly curious. In his attraction to horrors, to bloodshed, and the shudder of grisly phantoms there was, perhaps, something of the man of peace. It is only the unwarlike citizen who could delight in imagining a brigand nurtured from babyhood on human blood. He was, indeed, writing in the very period which the historian fixed upon as the happiest and most prosperous that the human race has ever enjoyed—those two or three benign generations when, under the Antonines, provincials combined with Romans in celebrating “the increasing splendours of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden, and the long festival of peace, which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of their ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger.” The slow and secret poison that Gibbon says was introduced by the long peace into the vitals of the Empire, was, perhaps, among the causes that turned the thoughts of Apuleius to scenes of violence and terror—to the “macabre,” as Pater said—just as it touched his style with the preciousness of decadence, and prompted him to occupy a page with rapture over the “swift lightnings” flashed against the sunlight from women's hair. He was, in fact, writing for citizens much like the English of twenty years ago, when the interest of readers, protected from the harsh realities of danger and anxiety, was flattered equally by bloodthirsty slaughters, the shimmer of veiled radiance, and haunted byways for access to the unknown gods.

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Those byways to unknown gods were much affected by Apuleius himself. The world was at the slack, waiting, as it were, for the next tide to flow, and seldom has religion been so powerless or religions so many. Of one abandoned woman it is told as the climax of her other wickednesses that she blasphemously proclaimed her belief in one god only. Apuleius seems to have been initiated into every cult of religious mystery, and in his story he exultingly shows us the dog-faced gods of Egypt triumphing on the soil that Apollo and Athene had blessed. Here was Anubis, their messenger, and unconquered Osiris, supreme father of gods, and another whose emblem no mortal tongue might expound. So it came that at the great procession of Isis through a Greek city the ass was at last able, after unutterable sufferings, to devour the chaplet of roses destined to restore him to human shape; and thereupon he took the vows of chastity and abstinence (so difficult for him to observe) until at length he was worthy to be initiated into the mysteries of the goddess, and, in his own words, “drew nigh to the confines of death, trod the threshold of Proserpine, was borne through all the elements, and returned to earth again, saw the sun gleaming with bright splendour at dead of night, approached the gods above and the gods below, and worshipped them face to face.”

It was this redemption by roses, and the initiation into virtue's path, that caused Adlington in his introduction to call the book “a figure of man's life, egging mortal men forward from their asinal form to their human and perfect shape, that so they might take a pattern to regenerate their lives from brutish and beastly custom,” And, indeed, the book is, in a wider sense, the figure of man's life, for almost alone among the writings of antiquity it reveals to us every phase of that dim underworld which persists, as we have supposed, almost unnoticed and unchanged from one generation of man to another, and takes little account either of government, the arts, or the other interests of intellectual classes. It is a world of incessant toil and primitive passion, yet laughter has place in it, and Apuleius shows us how two slave cooks could laugh as they peered through a chink at their ass carefully selecting the choicest dainties from the table; and how the whole populace of a country town roared with delight at the trial of a man who thought he had killed three thieves, but had really pierced three wine skins; and how the ass in his distress appealed unto Caesar for the rights of a Roman citizen, but could get no further with his best Greek than “O!” It is a world of violence and obscenity and laughter, but, above all, a world of pity. Virgil, too, was touched with the pity of mortal things, but towards the poor and the labouring man he rather affected a pastoral envy. Apuleius had looked poverty nearer in the eyes, and he knew the piteous terror on its face. To him we must turn if we would know how the poor lived in the happiest and most prosperous age that mankind has enjoyed. In the course of his adventures, the ass was sold to a mill—a great flour factory employing numerous hands—and, with his usual curiosity, he there observed, as he says, the way in which that loathsome workshop was conducted:

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“What stunted little men met my eye, their skin all striped with livid scars, their backs a mass of sores, with tattered patchwork clothing that gave them shade rather than covering! ... Letters were branded on their foreheads, their heads were half shaven, iron rings were welded about their ankles, they were hideously pale, and the smoky darkness of that steaming, gloomy den had ulcerated their eyelids: their sight was impaired, and their bodies smeared and filthy white with the powdered meal, making them look like boxers who sprinkle themselves with dust before they fight.”

Even to animals the same pity for their sufferings is extended—a pity unusual among the ancients, and still hardly known around the Mediterranean. Yet Apuleius counted the sorrows of the ill-used ass, and, speaking of the same flour mill, he describes the old mules and pack-horses labouring there, with drooping heads, their necks swollen with gangrenes and putrid sores, their nostrils panting with the harsh cough that continually racked them, their chests ulcerated by the ceaseless rubbing of their hempen harness, their hoofs swollen to an enormous size as the result of their long journeys round the mill, their ribs laid bare even to the bone by their endless floggings, and all their hides rough with the scab of neglect and decay.

The first writer of the modern novel—first of romanticists—Apuleius has been called. Romance! If we must keep those rather futile distinctions, it is as the first of realists that we would remember him. For, as in a dream, he has shown us the actual life that mankind led in the temple, the workshop, the market-place, and the forest, during the century after the Apostles died. And we find it much the same as the actual life of toiling mankind in all ages—full of unwelcome labour and suffering and continual apprehension, haunted by ghostly fears and self-imagined horrors, but illuminated by sudden laughter, and continually goaded on by an inexplicable desire to submit itself to that hard service of perfection under which, as the priest of the goddess informed Lucius in the story, man may perceive most fully the greatness of his liberty.

XXXI

MENTAL EUGENICS

It is horrible. We are being overpopulated with spirits. Day by day, hundreds of newly-created ghosts issue into the world—not the poor relics and incorporeal shadows of the dead, but real living ghosts, who never had any other existence except as they now appear. They are creations of the mind—figments they are sometimes called—but they have as real an existence as any other created thing. We love them or hate them, we talk about them, we quote them, we discuss their characters. To many people they are much more alive than the solid human beings whom in some respects they resemble. Obviously they are more interesting, else the travellers in a railway carriage would converse instead of reading.

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Some minds cannot help producing them. They produce them as easily as the queen bee produces the eggs that hatch into drones. And both the number and productivity of such minds are terribly on the increase. A few years ago Anatole France told us that, in Paris alone, fifty volumes a day were published, not to mention the newspapers; and the rate has gone up since then. He called it a monstrous orgy. He said it would end in driving us mad. He called books the opium of the West. They devour us, he said. He foresaw the day when we shall all be librarians. We are rushing, he said, through study into general paralysis.

Does it not remind one of the horror with which the wise and prudent about a century ago began to regard the birth-rate? They beheld the geometrical progression of life catching up the arithmetical progression of food with fearful strides. Mankind became to them a devouring mouth, always agape, like a nestling's, and incessantly multiplying, like a bacillus. What was the good of improving the condition of Tom and Sal, if Tom and Sal, in consequence of the improvement, went their way and in a few years produced Dick, Poll, Bill, and Meg, who proceeded to eat up the improvement, and in a generation produced sixteen other devourers hungrier than themselves? It was an awesome picture, that ravenous and reduplicating mouth! It cast a chill over humanity, and blighted the hope of progress for many years. To some it is still a bodeful portent, presaging eternal famine. It still hangs ominously over the nations. But, on the whole, its terrors have lately declined; one cannot exactly say why. Either the mouth is not so hungry, or it gets more to eat, or, for good or evil, it does not multiply so fast. And now there are these teachers of Eugenics, always insisting on quality.

The question is whether some similar means might not check the multiplication of the ghosts that threaten to devour the mind of man. The progression of man's mind can hardly be called even arithmetical, and the increase of ghosts accelerates frightfully in comparison. If Paris produced fifty books a day some years ago, London probably produces a hundred now. And then there is Berlin, and all the German Universities, where professors must write or die. And there are New York and Boston. Rome and Athens still count for something, and so does Madrid. Scandinavia is no longer sterile, and a few of Russia's mournful progeny escape strangulation at their birth. Not every book, it is true, embodies a living soul. Many are stillborn; many are like dolls, bleeding sawdust. But in most there dwells some kind of life, hungry for the human brain, and day by day its share of sustenance diminishes, if shares are equal. They are not equal, but the inequality only increases the clamour of the poor among the ghosts.

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Take the case of novels, which make up the majority of books in the modern world. We will assume the average of souls in a novel to be five, the same as the average of a human family. Probably it is considerably higher, but take it at five. Let us suppose that fifty novels are produced per day in London, Paris, New York, Berlin, and other large cities together, which I believe to be a low estimate. Not counting Sundays and Bank holidays, this will give us rather more than 75,000 newly created souls a year—cannibal souls, ravening for the brains of men and women similar to the brains that gave them birth, and each able to devour as many brains as it can catch. It is no good saying that nearly all are short-lived, dying in six months like summer flies. The dead are but succeeded by increasing hordes. They swarm about us; they bite us at every turn. They sit in our chairs, and hover round our tables. They speak to us on mountain tops, and if we descend into the Tube, they are there. They absorb the solid world, making it of no account beside the spirit world in which we dwell, so that we neither see nor hear nor handle the realities of outward life, but perceive them only, if at all, through filmy veils and apparitions, the haunting offspring of another's mind. And remember, we are now speaking of the spirits in novels alone. Besides novels, there are the breeding grounds of the drama, the essay, the lyric, and every other kind of spiritual and imaginative book. In every corner the spirits lurk, ready to spring upon us unaware. We are ghost-ridden. The witches tear us. Our life is no longer our own. It has become a nebula of alien dreams. O wretched men that we are! Who shall deliver us from the body of these shades?

To what can we look? Prudence may save us in the end, for if the spirits utterly devour us, they will find they cannot live themselves. In the end, Nature may adjust their birthrate. But at what cost, after how cruel a struggle for existence! Might not teachers of eugenics do something drastic, and at once? Critics are the teachers of spiritual eugenics. Could not a few timely words from them hold the productive powers of certain brains in check? It is easily said, but the result is very doubtful. Mr. Walkley, in an unintentionally despairing article in the *Times*, once maintained that the critics were powerless to stem the increasing flood that pours in upon us, like that hideous stream of babies that Mr. Wells once saw pouring down some gutter or rain-pipe. Mr. Walkley said no real and industrious artist ever stops to listen to criticism. He said the artist simply cannot help it; the creature is bound to go on creating, whatever people say. Mr. Walkley went further, and told us the critic himself is an artist; that he also cannot help it, but is bound to create. So we go on from bad to worse, the creative artist not only producing shadows on his own account, but the shades of shadows through the

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critics. Our state is becoming a bewildered horror; and yet we cannot deny that Mr. Walkley was right, though we may regard his pessimism as exaggerated. There are one or two cases on record in which criticism, or the fear of it, has really checked the production of peculiarly sensitive and fastidious minds. I will not mention Keats, for after the savage and Tartarly article he went on producing in greater quantity and finer quality than ever before, and would have so continued but for a very natural death. Robert Montgomery, whom Macaulay killed, is a happier instance. And there may here and there also have been a poet or novelist like that “Pictor Ignotus” of Browning’s, who cried:

“I could have painted pictures like that youth’s
Ye praise so!”

He would have had a painter’s fame:

“But a voice changed it. Glimpses of such sights Have scared me, like the revels
through a door Of some strange house of idols at its rites! This world seemed not the
world it was, before: Mixed with my loving, trusting ones, there trooped ... Who
summoned those cold faces that begun To press on me and judge me? Though I
stooped Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun, They drew me forth, and spite of me ...
enough!”

Unhappily, there are few souls so humble, so conventual as that. George Eliot, as Mr. Walkley recalled, was terrified lest ill-judged blame or ill-judged praise should discourage her production; but then she made it a strict rule never to read any criticism, so that, of course, it had no restraining effect upon her. Wordsworth seems to have read his critics, but though they did their utmost to restrain or silence him, he paid no heed. “Too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet,” he called them:

“Too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him;—men
of palsied imagination and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is
languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after
vicious provocatives;—judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise
ominous!”

In them there was no restraining power for such a man, any more than in Christopher North for Tennyson:

“When I heard from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame;
I could not forgive the praise,
Rusty Christopher!”

On this line, then, there is not much to be hoped from the critics. Over-sensitive writers are too rare, and the productive impulse of the others is too self-confident for prudence to smother. Obviously, they care no more for the critics than Tom and Sal a century ago cared for Malthus. They disregard them. The most savage criticism only confirms their belief in the beauty and necessity of their progeny, just as a mother always fondles the child that its aunts consider plain. Against such obstinacy, what headway can the critics make? May we not advise them to drop the old method of frontal

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attack altogether? Let them adopt the methods of these new teachers of Eugenics, whom we have described as insisting on quality. For the teachers of Eugenics, as I understand, do not go about saying, "O parents, what inferior and degenerate children you have! How goose-faced, rabbit-mouthed, lantern-jawed, pot-bellied, spindle-shanked, and splay-footed they are! It was a most anti-social action to produce these puny monstrosities, and when you found yourselves falling in love, you ought to have run to opposite antipodes." That, I believe, is no longer the method of the Eugenic teacher. He now shows beforehand wherein the beauty and excellence of human development may lie. He insists upon quality, he raises a standard, he diffuses an unconscious fastidiousness of selection. He does not prevent Tom and Sal from falling in love, but he makes Tom, and especially Sal, less satisfied with the first that comes, less easily bemused with the tenth-rate rubbish of a man or girl.

By similar methods, it seems to us, the critics might even now relieve humanity from the oncoming host of spirits that threatens to overwhelm us. They find it useless to tell creative writers how hideous and mis-begotten their productions are—how deeply tainted with erotics, neurotics, hysteria, consumption, or fatty degeneration. Either the writers do not listen, or they reply, "Thank you, but neurotics and degeneracy are in the fashion, and we like them." Let the critics change their method by widely extending their action. Let them insist upon quality, and show beforehand what quality means. Let them rise from the position of reviewers, and apply to the general thought of the world that critical power of which Matthew Arnold was thinking when he wrote:

"The best spiritual work of criticism is to keep man from self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarising, to lead him towards perfection by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things."

Such criticism, if persisted in by all critics for a generation, would act as so wholesome and tonic a course of Eugenic instruction, would so strongly insist upon quality, and so widely diffuse an unconscious fastidiousness of selection, that the locust cloud of phantoms which now darken the zenith might be dissipated, and again we should behold the sky which is the home of stars. For we may safely suppose that excellence will never be super-abundant, nor quality be found in hordes. No one can tell how fine, how fit, and few the children of our creative artists might then become. But, as in prophetic vision, we can picture the rarity of their beauty, and when they come knocking at our door, we will share with them the spiritual food that they demand from our brains, and give them a drink of our brief and irrevocable time.

XXXII

THE MEDICINE OF THE MIND

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There are minds that run to maxims as Messrs. Holloway and Beecham ran to pills. From the fields and mines of experience they cull their secret ingredients, concentrate them in the alembic of wit, mould them into compact and serviceable form, and put them upon the market of publicity for the universal benefit of mankind. Such essence of wisdom will surely cure all ills; such maxims must be worth a guinea a box. When the wise and the worldly have condensed their knowledge and observation into portable shape, why go further and pay more for a medicine of the soul, or, indeed, for the soul's sustenance? Pills, did we say? Are there not tabloids that supply the body with oxygen, hydrogen, calorics, or whatever else is essential to life in the common hundredweights and gallons of bread, meat, and drink? Why not feed our souls on maxims, like those who spread the board for courses of a bovril lozenge apiece, two grains of phosphorus, three of nitrogen, one of saccharine, a dewdrop of alcohol, and half a scruple of caffeine to conclude?

It is a stimulating thought, encouraging to economy of time and space. We read to acquire wisdom, and no one grudges zeal in that pursuit. But still, the time spent upon it, especially in our own country, is what old journalists used to call "positively appalling," and in some books, perhaps, we may draw blank. Read only maxims, and in the twinkling of an eye you catch the thing that you pursue. It is not "Wisdom while you wait"; there is no waiting at all. It is a "lightning lunch," a "kill" without the risk and fatigue of hunting. The find and the death are simultaneous. And as to space, a poacher's pocket will hold your library; where now the sewers of Bloomsbury crack beneath the accumulating masses of superfluous print, one single shelf will contain all that man needs to know; and Mr. Carnegie's occupation will be gone.

For these reasons, one heartily welcomes Messrs. Methuen's re-issue of an old and excellent translation of Rochefoucauld's *Maxims*, edited by Mr. George Powell. The book is a little large for tabloids. It runs to nearly two hundred pages, and it might have been more conveniently divided by ten or even by a hundred. But still, as Rochefoucauld is the very medicine-man of maxims, we will leave it at that. He united every quality of the moral and intellectual pill-doctor. He lived in an artificial and highly intellectualised society. He was a contemporary and friend of great wits. He haunted salons, and was graciously received by perceptive ladies, who never made a boredom of virtue. He mingled in a chaos of political intrigue, and was involved in burlesque rebellion. He was intimate with something below the face-value of public men, and he used the language that Providence made for maxims. But, above all, he had the acid or tang of poison needed to make the true, the medicinal maxim. His present editor compares him with Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Bacon—great names,

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but gnomish philosophers rather than authors of maxims proper. Nor were the splendid figures of the eighteenth century, who wrote so eloquently about love, virtue, and humanity, real inventors of maxims. Their sugar-coating was spread too thick. Often their teaching was sugar to the core—a sweetmeat, not a pill; or, like the fraudulent patents in the trade, it revealed soft soap within the covering, and nothing more. George Meredith had a natural love of maxims, and an instinct for them. One remembers the “Pilgrim’s Scrip” in *Richard Feverel*, and the Old Buccaneer in *The Amazing Marriage*. But usually his maxims want the bitter tang:

“Who rises from Prayer a better man, his Prayer is answered.”

“For this reason so many fall from God, who have attained to Him; that they cling to Him with their weakness, not with their strength.”

“No regrets; they unman the heart we want for to-morrow.”

“My foe can spoil my face; he beats me if he spoils my temper.”

One sees at once that these are not medicinal maxims, but excellent advice—concentrated sermons, after our English manner. “Friends may laugh: I am not roused. My enemy’s laugh is a bugle blown in the night”—that has a keener flavour. So has “Never forgive an injury without a return blow for it.” Among the living, Mr. Bernard Shaw is sometimes infected by an English habit of sermonising. “Never resist temptation: prove all things: hold fast that which is good,” is a sermon. But he has the inborn love of maxims, all the same, and, though they are too often as long as a book, or even as a preface, his maxims sometimes have the genuine medicinal taste. These from *The Revolutionist’s Handbook*, for instance, are true maxims:

“Vulgarity in a king flatters the majority of the nation.”

“He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches.”

“Marriage is popular because it combines the maximum of temptation with the maximum of opportunity.”

“When a man wants to murder a tiger, he calls it sport; when the tiger wants to murder him he calls it ferocity. The distinction between Crime and Justice is no greater.”

“Home is the girl’s prison, and the woman’s workhouse.”

“Decency is Indecency’s Conspiracy of Silence.”

But among the masters of the maxim, I suppose no one has come so near as Chamfort to the Master himself. There is a difference. If Chamfort brings rather less strength and bitterness to his dose, he presents it with a certain grace, a sense of mortal things, and a kind of pity mingled with his contempt that Rochefoucauld would have despised:

“Il est malheureux pour les hommes que les pauvres n’aient pas l’instinct ou la fierte de l’elephant, qui ne se reproduit pas dans la servitude.”

“Otez l’amour-propre de l’amour, il en reste tres peu de chose.”

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“Il n’y a que l’inutilite du premier deluge qui empeche Dieu d’en envoyer un second.”

“L’homme arrive novice a chaque age de la vie.”

“Sans le gouvernement on ne rirait plus en France.”

With a difference, these come very near Rochefoucauld’s own. “Take self-love from love, and little remains,” might be an extract from that Doomsday Book of Egoism in which Rochefoucauld was so deeply read. “Self-love is the Love of a man’s own Self, and of everything else, for his own Sake”: so begins his terrible analysis of human motives, and no man escapes from a perusal of it without recognition of himself, just as there is no escape from Meredith’s Egoist. All of us move darkly in that awful abyss of Self, and as the fourth Maxim says, “When a Man hath travelled never so far, and discovered never so much in the world of Self-love, yet still the Terra Incognita will take up a considerable part of the Map.” On the belief that self-love prompts and pervades all actions, the greater part of the maxims are founded. The most famous of them all is the saying that “Hypocrisy is a sort of Homage which Vice pays to Virtue,” but there are others that fly from mouth to mouth, and treat more definitely of self-love. “The reason why Ladies and their Lovers are at ease in one another’s company, is because they never talk of anything but themselves”; or “There is something not unpleasing to us in the misfortunes of our best friends.” These are, perhaps, the three most famous, though we doubt whether the last of them has enough truth in it for a first-rate maxim. Might one not rather say that the perpetual misfortunes of our friends are the chief plague of existence? Goethe came nearer the truth when he wrote: “I am happy enough for myself. Joy comes streaming in upon me from every side. Only, for others, I am not happy.” But Rochefoucauld had to play the cynic, and a dash of cynicism adds a fine ingredient to a maxim.

Nevertheless, after reading this book of *Maxims* through again, all the seven hundred and more (a hideous task, almost as bad as reading a whole volume of *Punch* on end), I incline to think Rochefoucauld’s reputation for cynicism much exaggerated. It may be that the world grows more cynical with age, unlike a man, whose cynical period ends with youth. At all events, in the last twenty years we have had half a dozen writers who, as far as cynicism goes, could give Rochefoucauld fifty maxims in a hundred. In all artificial and inactive times and places, as in Rochefoucauld’s France, Queen Anne’s England, the London of the end of last century, and our Universities always, epigram and a dandy cynicism are sure to flourish until they often sicken us with the name of literature. But in Rochefoucauld we perceive glimpses of something far deeper than the cynicism that makes his reputation. It is not to a cynic, or to the middle of the seventeenth century in France, that we should look for such sayings as these:

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“A Man at some times differs as much from himself as he does from other People.”

“Eloquence is as much seen in the Tone and Cadence of the Eyes, and the Air of the Face, as in the Choice of proper Expressions.”

“When we commend good Actions heartily, we make them in some measure our own.”

Such sayings lie beyond the probe of the cynic, or the wit of the literary man. They spring from sympathetic observation and a quietly serious mind. And there is something equally fresh and unexpected in some of the sayings upon passion:

“The Passions are the only Orators that are always successful in persuading.”

“It is not in the Power of any the most crafty Dissimulation to conceal Love long where it really is, nor to counterfeit it long where it is not.”

“Love pure and untainted with any other Passions (if such a Thing there be) lies hidden in the Bottom of our Heart, so exceedingly close that we scarcely know it ourselves.”

“The more passionately a Man loves his Mistress, the readier he is to hate her.” (Compare Catullus’s “Odi et amo.”)

“The same Resolution which helps to resist Love, helps to make it more violent and lasting too. People of unsettled Minds are always driven about with Passions, but never absolutely filled with any.”

No one who knew Rochefoucauld only by reputation would guess such sentences to be his. They reveal “the man differing from himself”; or, rather, perhaps, they reveal the true nature, that usually put on a thin but protective armour of cynicism when it appeared before the world. Here we see the inward being of the man who, twice in his life, was overwhelmed by that “violent and lasting passion,” and was driven by it into strange and dangerous courses where self-love was no guide. But to quote more would induce the peculiar weariness that maxims always bring—the weariness that comes of scattered, disconnected, and abstract thought, no matter how wise. “Give us instances,” we cry. “Show us the thing in the warmth of flesh and blood.” Nor will we any longer be put off by pillules from seeking the abundance of life’s great feast.

XXXIII

THE LAST FENCE

He was riding May Dolly, a Cheshire six-year-old, and one of his own breeding; for just as some people think that everyone should go to his own parish church, it was a principle with Mr. James Tomkinson that a man should ride a horse from his own county. Straight, lithe, and ruddy, he trotted to the starting-post, and the crowd cheered him as he went, for they liked to see a bit of pluck. He modestly enjoyed their applause: "I think I never saw anybody so pleased," said Mr. Justice Grantham, who was judge in the race. It was known that the old man had passed the limit of seventy, but only five years

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before he won a steeplechase on his own, and if ever a rider fulfilled Montaigne's ideal of a life spent in the saddle, it was he. So he rode to the starting-post, happy in himself and modestly confident—the very model of what a well-to-do English countryman should wish to be—a Rugby and Balliol man, above suspicion for honesty, a busy man of affairs, a consummate horseman, a bad speaker, and a true-hearted Liberal, holding an equally unblemished record for courage in convictions and at fences.

The race was three and a half miles—twice round the circuit. The first circuit was run, the last fence of it safely cleared. The second circuit was nearly complete: only that last fence remained. It was three hundred yards away, and he rode fast for it along the bottom. Someone was abreast of him, someone close behind. May Dolly rushed forward, and the fence drew nearer and nearer. He was leading; once over that fence and victory was his—the latest victory, always worth all the rest. He felt the moving saddle between his thighs; he heard the quick beating of the hoofs. Something happened; there was a swerve, a sideways jump, a vain effort at recovery, a crashing fall too quick for thought; and before the joy of victory had died, the darkness came.

Who would not choose to plunge out of life like that? A sudden end at the moment of victory has always been the commonplace of human desire. When the antique sage was asked to select the happiest man in history, his choice fell on one whose destiny resembled that of the Member for Crewe; for Tellus the Athenian had lived a full and well-contented life, had seen fine and gentlemanly sons and many grandchildren growing up around him, had shared the honour and prosperity of his country, and died fighting at Eleusis when victory was assured. Next in happiness to Tellus came the two Argive boys, who, for want of oxen, themselves drew their mother in a cart up the hill to worship, and, as though in answer to her prayer for blessings on them, died in the temple that night. It has always been so. The leap of Rome's greatest treasure into the Gulf of earthquake was accounted an enviable opportunity. When they asked Caesar what death he would choose, he answered, "A sudden one," and he had his wish. "Oh, happy he whom thou in battles findest," cried Faust to Death in the midst of all his learning; and "Let me like a soldier fall" is the natural marching song of our Territorials.

The advantages of these hot-blooded ends are so obvious that they need hardly be recalled, and, indeed, they have provided a theme for many of our most inspiring writers. To go when life is strongest and passion is at its height; to avoid the terrors of expectation and escape the lingering paraphernalia of sick chambers and deathbed scenes; to shirk the stuffy and inactive hours, marked by nothing but medicines and unwelcome meals; to elude the doctor's feigned encouragements, the sympathy of relations anxious to resume their

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ordinary pursuits, the buzzing of the parson in the ear, the fading of the casement into that “glimmering square”—should we not all go a long way round to seek so merciful a deliverance? “I will not die in my bed like a cow!” cried the Northumbrian king, and was set on his feet in full armour to confront the Arch Fear face to face. There was some poor comfort in a pose like that; it was better than our helpless collapse into a middle-aged cradle, with pap-boat for feeding-bottle, and a last sleep in the nurse’s arms, younger and less muscular than our own. But how much finer to die like Romeo with a kiss, quick as the true apothecary’s drugs; to sink like Shelley in the blue water, with mind still full of the Greek poet whom he tucked against his heart; to pass hot with fever, like Byron, from the height of fame, while thunder presaged to the mountaineers the loss of their great champion in freedom’s war!

There is no question of it; these are axioms that all mankind is agreed upon. Every mortal soul would choose a quick and impassioned death; all admire a certain recklessness, an indifference to personal safety or existence, especially in the old, to whom recklessness is most natural, since they have less of life to risk. That was why the crowd cheered Mr. James Tomkinson as he trotted to the starting-post, and that was why everybody envied his rapid and victorious end. In his *Tales from a Field Hospital*, Sir Frederick Treves told of a soldier who was brought down from Spion Kop as a mere fragment, his limbs shattered, his face blown away, incapable of speech or sight. When asked if he had any message to send home before he died, he wrote upon the paper, “Did we win?” In those words lives the very spirit of that enviable death which all men think they long for—the death which takes no thought of self, and swallows up fear in victory. Such a man Stevenson would have delighted to include in his brave roll-call, and of him those final, well-known words in *Aes Triplex* might have been written:

“In the hot-fit of life, a-tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.”

Yes, it is all very beautiful, and all very true. Stevenson himself, like Caesar, received the death he wished for, and, whether in reason or in passion, every soul among us would agree that death in the midst of life is the most desirable end. And yet—and yet—we hardly know how it is, but, as a matter of fact, we do not seek it, and when the thing comes our way, we prefer, if possible, to walk in the opposite direction. The Territorial may sing himself hoarse with his prayer to fall like a soldier, but when the bullets begin to wail around him, it is a thousand to one that he will duck his head.

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A man may be reasonably convinced that, since he must die some day, and his reprieve cannot be extended long, it is best to die in battle and shoot full-blooded into the spiritual land; nevertheless, if the shadow of a rock gives some shelter from the guns, he will crawl behind it. A few years ago there was a great Oxford philosopher who, after lecturing all morning on the beauty of being absorbed by death into the absolute and eternal, was granted the opportunity of being wrecked on a lake in the afternoon, but displayed no satisfaction at the immediate prospect of such absorption.

In the same way, despite our natural and reasonable desires for a death like Mr. Tomkinson's, we still continue to speak, not only of sleeping in our beds, but of dying in them, as one of the chief objects of a virtuous and happy existence. The longest and most devotional part of the Anglican Common Prayer contains a special petition entreating that we may be delivered from the sudden death which we have all agreed is so excellent a piece of fortune. That we are not set free from love of living is shown by what Matthew Arnold called a bloodthirsty clinging to life at a moment of crisis. I shall not forget the green terror on the faces of all the men in a railway carriage when I accidentally set fire to the train, nor have I found it really appetising to suspect even the quickest poison in my soup. Instead of leaping gallantly into death while the trumpets are still blowing, nearly every civilised man deliberately plots out his existence so as to die, like Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyitch, amid the pitiful squalor of domestic indifference or solicitude. We think health universally interesting, we meditate on diet, we measure our exercise, and shun all risks more carefully than sin. Praising with our lips the glories of the soldier's death, we tread with minute observance the bath-chair pathway to the sick-rooms of old age.

Are our praises of death in victory, then, all cant, and are all the eloquent rhapsodies of poets and essayists a sham? Montaigne seems to have thought so, for, writing of those who talk fine of dying bravely, he says:

"It happeneth that most men set a stern countenance on the matter, look big, and speak stoutly, thereby to acquire reputation, which, if they chance to live, they hope to enjoy."

The case of our eloquent rhapsodists who hymn the joys of sudden and courageous death is evidently more favourable still, since they have every chance of living for a time, and so of enjoying a reputation for bravery without much risk. But rather than accuse mankind of purposely dissembling terror in the hope of braggart fame, we would lay the charge upon a queer divergence between the mind and the bodily will. No matter what the mind may say in commendation of swift and glorious death, the bodily will continues to maintain its life to the utmost, and is the last and savages enemy that the mind can overcome. So it is that no one should reckon beforehand upon

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courageous behaviour when the supreme summons for courage comes, and only those are faultlessly brave who have never known peril. In reason everyone is convinced that all mankind is mortal, and we hear with vague sympathy of the hosts of dead whose skulls went to pile the pyramids of Tamerlane, or of the thousands that the sea engulfs and earthquakes shatter. But few realise that the life of each among those thousands was as dear to him as our life is, and, though we congratulate heroes upon the opportunity of their death, the moment when that opportunity would be most happy for ourselves never seems exactly to arrive. Hardly anyone really thinks he will die, or is persuaded that the limit to his nature has now come. But it is through realising the incalculable craving of this bodily will to survive that men who have themselves known danger will pay the greater reverence to those who, conscious of mortal fears, and throbbing with the fullness of existence, none the less in the calm ecstasy of their devotion commit themselves to the battle, the firing squad, or the prison death as to a chariot of fire.

XXXIV

THE ELEMENT OF CALM

All are aware that we have no abiding city here, but that, says the hymn-writer, is a truth which should not cost the saint a tear, and our politicians appear to lament it as little as the saints. Their eyes are dry; it does not distress their mind, it seems hardly to occur to them, unless, perhaps, they are defeated candidates. One might suppose from their manner that eternal truths depended on their efforts, and that the city they seek to build would abide for ever. Could all this toil and expenditure be lavished on a transitory show, all this eloquence upon the baseless fabric of a vision, all this hatred and malice upon things that wax old as doth a garment and like a vesture are rolled up? One would think from his preoccupied zeal that every politician was laying the foundation stone of an everlasting Jerusalem, did not reason and experience alike forbid the possibility.

May it not rather be that the politicians, like the saints, keep the tears of mortality out of their eyes by contemplating this passing dream under the aspect of eternal realities? In months when the heavens at night are filled with constellations of peculiar beauty, may we not suppose that the politician, emerging from the Town Hall amid the cheers and execrations of the voice that represents the voice of God, lifts up his eyes unto the heavens, where prone Orion still grasps his sword, and Auriga drives his chariot of fire, and the pole star hangs immovable, by which Ulysses set his helm? And as he gazes, he recognises with joy in his heart that the stars themselves, with all their recurrent comets and flaming meteors and immovable constellations, hardly cast a stain upon the white radiance of eternity, under which he has been striving and crying and perpetrating comparatively trifling deviations from exactness.

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It is a consolation which a large proportion, probably more than half, of mankind shares with our politicians. Like them, the greater part of mankind is aware that there is peace somewhere beyond these voices, that life with all its unsatisfied longings and its repetition of care is transitory as a summer cloud, and that the only way of escape from the pain and misery, the foulness and corruption, of this material universe is by the destruction of all desires, except the one engrossing desire for non-existence. That is why the majority of mankind has set itself to overcome the unholy urgings of ambition, the pleasure of selfish and revengeful purposes, and the deeply-implemented delight in cruelty and unkindness. Such conquest is the essential part of the Fourfold Path by which the bliss of extinction may be attained. Let him cease to be ambitious, let him purge himself of selfish aims and revengeful or unkind thoughts, and a man may at last enter into Nirvana, even a politician may slowly be extinguished. Life follows life, and each life fulfils its Karma of destined expiation, working out the earthly stain of previous existences. "Quisque suos patimur manes." The sin that most easily besets us fixes the shape of our next incarnation, and, did not a politician strictly follow the guidance of the Fourfold Path, the first election after his death might see him re-appear as a sheep, a cave-dweller, or a rat.

Never to have been born is best; never to be born again is the hope and motive of all good men among the greater part of mankind. It is not only the teaching of the most famous Buddha which has told them so. A Preacher more familiar to us has said the same, and our Western churches do but repeat an echo from the East. "I praised the dead who are already dead more than the living who are yet alive," he wrote; "yea, better is he than both they which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun." Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery? asked Job. From age to age the question has been asked by far more than half the human race, and yet the human race continues, miserable and unholy though it is.

But the widest expression of this common cry is found in Buddhism, and therein is found also a doctrine of peace that seeks to answer it. From the turmoil of the street and market-place, from the atomic vortex of public meetings, ballot stations, and motors decked with flags, let us turn to the "Psalms of the Sisters," those Buddhist nuns whose utterances Mrs. Rhys Davids has edited for the Pali Text Society. In this inextricable error of existence—this charnel-house of corrupting bodies wherein the soul lies imprisoned too long—time and space do not seriously matter. Let us turn from Haggerston and Battersea and the Parliamentary squabbles of to-day, and visit the regions where the great mountains were standing and the holy Ganges flowed within two or three centuries before or after the birth of Christ.

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Somewhere about that time, somewhere about that place, these women, having in most cases, fulfilled their various parts in wives, mothers, or courtesans, retired to the Homeless Life in mountains, forests, or the banks of streams where they might seek deliverance for their souls. With shaven heads, and clad in the deep saffron cloth such as the ascetic wanderer of India still wears, furnished only with a bowl for the unasked offerings of the pious and compassionate, they went their way, free from the cares and desires of this putrefying world. As one of them—a goldsmith's daughter, to whom the Master himself had taught the Norm of the Fourfold Path—as one of them explained to the tiresome relations who tried to call her back:

“Why herewithal, my kinsmen—nay, my foes—
Why yoke me in your minds with sense desires?
Know me as her who fled the life of sense,
Shorn of her hair, wrapt in her yellow robe.
The food from hand to mouth, glean'd here and there,
The patchwork robe—these things are meet for me,
The base and groundwork of the homeless life.”

Some sought escape from the depression of luxury, some from the wretchedness of the poor, some from the abominations of the wanton, some from the boredom of tending an indifferent husband. One of them thus utters her complaint with frank simplicity:

“Rising betimes, I went about the house,
Then, with my hands and feet well cleansed I went
To bring respectful greeting to my lord,
And taking comb and mirror, unguents, soap,
I dressed and groomed him as a handmaid might.
I boiled the rice, I washed the pots and pans;
And as a mother on her only child,
So did I minister to my good man.
For me, who with toil infinite then worked,
And rendered service with a humble mind,
Rose early, ever diligent and good,
For me he nothing felt, save sore dislike.”

Others sought freedom of intellect, others the free development of personality; but, in the end, it was deliverance from earthly desires that all were seeking, for it is only through such deliverance that the final blessedness of total extinction can be reached. Then, as they cry, they cease to wander in the jungles of the senses, rebirth comes no more, and the peace of Nirvana is won. A poor Brahmin's daughter who had been married to a cripple, thus exults in a multiplied redemption:



“O free, indeed! O gloriously free
Am I in freedom from three crooked things:—
From quern, from mortar, from my crook-back’d lord!
Ay, but I’m free from rebirth and from death,
And all that dragged me back is hurled away.”

But more truly characteristic of the spiritual mind is the joyful advice of one who, having perfected herself in meditation, could thus commune with her soul:

“Hast thou not seen sorrow and ill in all
The springs of life? Come thou not back to birth!
Cast out the passionate desire again to Be.
So shalt thou go thy ways calm and serene.”

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Thus only by the recognition of the sorrow of the world, by the conquest of all desires, and by the exercise of kindness to all that breathe this life of misery, is that Path to be trodden of which the fourth stage enters Nirvana's peace. Thus only can we escape from this repulsive carcass—"this bag of skin with carrion filled," as one of the Sisters called it—and so be merged into the element of calm, just as the space inside a bowl is merged into the element of space when at last the bowl is broken and will never need scrubbing more.

It is thought that Gautama, the great Buddha, whose effigy in the calm of contemplation is the noblest work of Indian art, fondly believed that all mankind would seek deliverance along the path he pointed out, and that so, within a few generations, the human race, together, perhaps, with every living thing that breathes beneath the law of Karma, would pass from sorrow into nothingness. Mankind has not fulfilled his expectation. The task of expiation is not yet completed, and, in the midst of anguish, corruption, and the flux of all material things, the human race goes swarming on. I suppose it is about as numerous as ever, and, though something like half of it accepts the teaching of the Buddha as divine, they seem in no more hurry to fulfil its precepts than are the followers of other Founders. We cannot say that mankind has gone very far along the Fourfold Path, for there are still many of us who would rather be a mouse than nothing; yet it remains an accepted truth of the Buddhistic doctrine, that above this fleeting and variegated world there abides the element of calm. As the final Chorus "Mysticus" of *Faust* proclaims: "All things transitory are but a symbol," and if any politician during the storm of worldly desires has for a moment lost sight of truth's eternal stars that guide his way, let him now turn to the "Psalms of the Sisters." Even if he has been successful in his ambition, he will there find peace, discovering in Nirvana the quiet Chiltern Hundreds of the soul.

XXXV

"THE KING OF TERRORS"

Skulls may not affright us, nor present fashion ordain cross-bones upon our sepulchres; but still in the face of death the commonplaces of comfort shrivel, and philosophy's consolations strike cold as the symbolism of the tomb. All that lives must die; we know it, but that death is common does not assuage particular grief, nor can the contemplation of prehistoric ruins soften regret for one baby's smile. Man's dogma has proved vain as his philosophy. Age after age has composed some vision of continued life, and sought to allay its fear or sorrow with suitable imaginations. Mummies of death outlive their granite; vermilion and the scalping-knife lie ready for the happy hunting grounds; beside the royal carcass two score of concubines and warriors are buried quick; Walhalla rings with clashing swords

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whose wounds close up again at sunset; heroes tread the fields of shadowy asphodel, and on Elysian plains attenuated poets welcome the sage newcomer to their converse; houris reward the faithful for holy slaughter; prophets reveal a gorgeous city and pearly gates beyond the river; the poet tells of circles winding downward to the abyss, and upward to the Rose of Paradise; upon the bishop's tomb in St. Praxed's one Pan is carved, and Moses with the tables; upon the gravestone of an Albanian chief they scratch his rifle and his horse; and over the slave's low mound in Angola plantations his basket and mattock are laid, lest he should miss them. So various are the devices contrived for the solace of mankind, or for his instruction. But one by one, like the dead themselves, those devices have passed and passed away, leaving mankind unwitting and unconsolated. For there is still one road that each traveller must discover afresh, and death's door, at which all men stand, opens only inwards.

Maurice Maeterlinck has always remained very conscious of that door. How often in his whispering dramas we are made aware of it! How often, without even the knock of warning, it suddenly gapes or stands ajar, and unseen hands are pulling, and children are drawn in, and young girls are drawn in, and wise men, and the old, while the living world remains outside, still at breakfast, still busy with its evening games and sewing, still blindly groping for its departed guide! From the outset, Maeterlinck has been an amateur of death. In a little volume that bears Death's name, he utters his meditation upon death's nature and significance. Like other philosophers and all old wives, he also attempts our consolation. Mankind demands a consolation, for without it, perhaps, the species could hardly have survived their foreknowledge of the end. But in treating the first two terrors to which he applies his comfortable arguments, Maeterlinck's reasoning appears to me almost irrelevant, almost obsolete. He attributes the terrified apprehension of death, first, to the fear of pain in dying, and, secondly, to the fear of anguish hereafter. In neither fear, I think, does the essential horror of death now lie. All who have witnessed various forms of death, whether on the field or in the sick chamber, will agree that the process of dying is seldom more difficult or more painful than taking off one's clothes. The blood ebbs, the senses sleep, "the casement slowly grows a glimmering square," breath gradually fails, unconsciousness faints into deeper unconsciousness, and that is all. Even in terrible wounds and cases of extreme pain, medicine can now alleviate the worst, nor, in any case, do I believe that the expectation of physical agony, however severe, has much share in the instinct that stands aghast at death. If fear of pain thus preoccupied the soul, martyrs would not have sown the Church, nor would births continue.

In combating the dread of future torment, Maeterlinck may have better cause for giving comfort. Long generations have been haunted by that terror. "Ay, but to die," cries Claudio in *Measure for Measure*:

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"Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling!"

Nor were such terrors mediaeval only. Till quite recent years they cast a gloom over the existence of honourable and laborious men. Remember that scene in Oxford when Dr. Johnson, with a look of horror, acknowledged that he was much oppressed by the fear of death, and when the amiable Dr. Adams suggested that God was infinitely good, he replied:

"As I cannot be sure that I have fulfilled the conditions on which salvation is granted, I am afraid I may be one of those who shall be damned' (looking dismally). Dr. Adams: 'What do you mean by damned?' Johnson (passionately and loudly): 'Sent to Hell, Sir, and punished everlastingly.'"

No one disputes that for many ages the lives of even the just and good were burdened by such oppressive fears. Perhaps, indeed, the just and good were more burdened than the wicked; for to the wicked their own sins seldom appear so deadly black, and when a Balkan priest lately displayed pictures of eternal torment as warnings to a savage mountaineer's enormities, he was met by the reply, "Even we should not be so cruel." But to the greater part of thinking mankind, Maeterlinck's reassurances upon the subject, even if they could be established, would appear a little out-of-date, and I do not believe that, even where they linger, such terrors form the basis of the fear of death. Was there not, at all events, one strenuous Canon of the Established Church who defiantly proclaimed that he would rather be damned than annihilated?

"Men fear death," says Bacon's familiar sentence; "men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark." It is not the dread of pain and torment; it is the dark that terrifies; it is Kingsley's horror of annihilation; it is the hot life's fear of ceasing to be. I grant that many are unconscious of this fear. In word, at all events, there are multitudes, perhaps the greater part of mankind, who long for the annihilation of self, who direct their lives by the great hope of becoming in the end absorbed into the Universe. Their perpetual prayer is to be rid of personality at the last, no matter through what strange embodiments the self must pass before it reach the bliss of nothingness. Similar, though less doctrinal, was the prayer of Job when he counted himself among those who long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; who rejoice

exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave. “Why died I not from the womb?” he cried:

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"For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept; then, had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built solitary places for themselves."

How far the loss of personal consciousness by absorption into universal infinity is identical with the eternal rest desired by Job might be long disputed. Sir Thomas Browne, having heard of the Brahmin or Buddhist conceptions of futurity, would draw a thin distinction:

"Others," he says, "rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being; and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again."

In effect this doctrine comes very near Maeterlinck's plea of comfort. Annihilation, he says, is impossible, because nothing is destructible. But when confronted with the eternal antinomy of death, that both the end and the survival of personality are equally inconceivable, he hesitates. He admits that survival without consciousness would be the same as the annihilation of self (in which case he maintains death could be no evil, bringing only eternal sleep). But he rejects this solution as flattering only to ignorance, and has visions of a new ego collecting a fresh nucleus round itself and developing in infinity. For the "narrow ego" which we partly know—the humble self of memories and identity, the soul that sums up experience into some kind of unity—he expresses considerable contempt, as a frail and forgetful thing; and he seeks to waft us away into an intellect devoid of senses, which he says almost certainly exists, and into an infinity which is "nothing if it be not felicity."

I do not know. A man may say what he pleases about intellect devoid of senses, or about the felicity of infinity. One statement may be as true as the other, or the reverse of both may be true. Talk of that kind rests on no sounder basis than the old assertions about the houris and the happy hunting-grounds, and it brings no surer consolation. Even when Maeterlinck tells us that it is impossible for the universe to be a mistake, and that our own reason necessarily corresponds with the eternal laws of the universe, we may answer that we hope, and even believe, that he is right, but on such a basis we can found no certainty whatever. Nor does the self, when, warm with life, inspired with vital passion, and energising for its own fulfilment, it stands horrified before the gulf of death, fearing no conceivable torment, but only the cessation of its power and identity—at such a moment that inward and isolated self can derive no reassurance from the dim possibility of some future nucleus, under cover of which it may pass into the felicity of the universal infinite, stripped of its memory, its present personality, and its flesh.

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Fear of annihilation, or of the loss of identity, which is the same thing, I take to be one of the remaining terrors in European minds meditating on death. Of all the imagined forms of survival, only one is obviously more horrible than the night of nothing, and that is the state in which Beethoven twangs a banjo and Gladstone utters the political forecasts of a distinguished journalist. It may be that my affection for the “narrow ego” is too violent, but, for myself, I do not find M. Maeterlinck’s consolations more genuinely consoling than other philosophy. On the second and far more poignant terror that still survives in the very nature of death, he hardly touches. I mean the severance of love, the disappearance of the beloved. “No, no, no life,” cries Lear:

“Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou’lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!”

It is the cry of all mankind when love is thus slit in twain; nor is sorrow comforted because coral is made of love’s bones, or violets spring from his flesh, and the vanished self is possibly absorbed into the felicity of an infinite and everlasting azure.

XXXVI

STRULDBRUGS

What a fuss they make, proclaiming the secret of long life! We must stay abed till noon, they say; we must take life slowly and comfortably; we must avoid worry, live moderately, drink wine, smoke cigars, and read the *Times*. Yes; there is one who, in a letter to the *Times*, boasted his grandfather sustained life for a hundred and one years by reading all the leading and special articles of that paper; his father got to eighty-eight on the same diet; himself follows their footsteps on fare that is new every morning. Another writer has subscribed to the *Times* for sixty-seven years, and now is ninety-two on the strength of it. Avoid worry, fret not yourself because of evildoers, let not indignation lacerate your heart, take the sensible and solid view of things, read the *Times*, and you will surpass the Psalmist’s limit of threescore years and ten.

What a picture of beneficent comfort it calls up! The breakfast-room furniture fit to outlast the Pyramids, the maroon leather of deep armchairs, the marble clock ticking to half-past nine beneath the bronze figure with the scythe and hourglass, the boots set to warm upon the hearthrug, the crisp bacon sizzling gently beneath its silver cover, the pleasant wife murmuring gently behind the silver urn, the paper set beside the master’s plate. Isaiah knew not of such regimen, else he would not have cried that all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field.

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Others there are whom poverty precludes from silver, and the narrow estate of home from daily sustenance on the *Times*. Some study diuturnity upon two meals a day, or pursue old age by means of “unfired food,” Others devour roots by moonlight, or savagely dine upon a pocket of raw beans. These are intemperate on water, or bewail the touch of salt as sacrilege against the sacrifice of eggs. These grovel for nuts like the Hampshire hog, or impiously celebrate the fruitage by which man fell. Some cast away their coats, some their hosen, some their hats. They go barefoot but for sandals. They wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, eschewing flesh for their food, and vegetables for their clothing. They plunge distracted into boiling water. Shudderingly, they break the frosty Serpentine. They absorb the sun’s rays like pigeons upon the housetops, or shiver naked in suburban chambers that they may recover the barbaric tang. They walk through rivers fully clothed, and shake their vesture as a dog his coat; or are hydrophobic for their skins, fearing to wash lest they disturb essential oils. They shave their heads as a cure for baldness, or in gentle gardens emulate the raging lion’s mane. One dreads to miss his curdled milk by the fraction of a minute; another, at the semblance of a cold, puts off his supper for three weeks and a day. One calculates upon longevity by means of bare knees, another apprehends the approach of death through the orifice in the palm of a leather glove.

Of course, it is all right. Life is of inestimable value, and nothing can compensate a corpse for the loss of it. Falstaff knew that, and, like the Magpie Moth, wisely counterfeited death to avoid the irretrievable step of dying. Our prudent livers display an equal wisdom, not exactly counterfeiting death, but living gingerly—living, as it were, at half-cock, lest life should go off suddenly with a flash and bang, leaving them nowhere. Of course, they are quite right. Life being pleasurable, it is well to spread it out as far as it will go. As to honour, the hoary head in itself is a crown of glory, and when a man reaches ninety, people will call him wonderful, though for ninety years he has been a fool. The objects of living are, for the most part, obscure and variable, and prudent livers may well ask why for the obscure and variable objects of life they should lose life itself—“Propter causas vivendi perdere vitam,” if we may reverse the old quotation.

So they are quite justified in eating the bread of carefulness, and no one who has known danger will condemn their solicitude for safety. But yet, in hearing of those devices, or perusing the *Sour Milk Gazette* and the *Valetudinarian’s Handbook*, somehow there come to my mind the words, “Insanitas Sanitutum, omnia Insanitas!” And suddenly the picture of those woeful islanders whom Gulliver discovered rises before me. For, as we remember, in the realm of Laputa, he found a

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certain number of both sexes (about eleven hundred) who were called Struldbrugs, or Immortals, because, being born with a certain spot over the left eyebrow, they were destined never to know the common visitation of death. We remember how Gulliver envied them, accounting them the happiest of human beings, since they had obtained in perpetuity the blessing of life, for which all men struggle so hard that whoever has one foot in the grave is sure to hold back the other as strongly as he can. But in the end, he concluded that their lot was not really enviable, seeing that increasing years only brought an increase of their dullness and incapacity:

“They were not only opinionative,” he writes, “peevish, covetous, morose, vain, talkative, but incapable of friendship, and dead to all natural affections, which never descended below their grandchildren. Envy and impotent desires are their prevailing passions. But those objects against which their envy seems principally directed are the vices of the younger sort, and the deaths of the old. By reflecting on the former they find themselves cut off from all possibility of pleasure; and whenever they see a funeral they lament and repine that others have gone to a harbour of rest, to which they themselves never can hope to arrive.”

The explorer further discovered that, after the age of eighty, the marriages of the Struldbrugs were dissolved, because the law thought it a reasonable indulgence that those who were condemned, without any fault of their own, to a perpetual continuance in the world, should not have their misery doubled by the load of a wife; also that they could never amuse themselves with reading, because their memory would not serve to carry them from the beginning of a sentence to the end; and after about two hundred years, they could not hold conversation with their neighbours, the mortals, because the language of the country was always upon the flux.

It is a pity that the laws of Laputa stringently forbade the export of Struldbrugs, else, Gulliver tells us, he would gladly have brought a couple to this country, to arm our people against the fear of death. Had he only done so, what a lot of letters to the *Times*, advertisements of patent medicines; and Eugenic discussions we should have been spared! If earthly immortality were known to be such a curse, we could more easily convince the most scrupulous devotee of health that old age was little better than immortality.

It is not, therefore, as though great age were such a catch that it should demand all these delicate manipulations of diet, sleep, rest-cures, health-resorts, scourings, and temperatures, for its attainment. How refreshing to escape from this hospital atmosphere into the free air, blowing whither it lists, and to fling oneself carelessly upon existence, as Sir George Birdwood, for instance, has done! He also wrote to the *Times*, but in a very different tone. Like

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another Gulliver, he pictured the calamity of millionaires living on till their heirs are senile. It is all nonsense, he said, to prescribe rules for life. One of his oldest friends drank a bottle of cognac a day, and, as for himself—well, we know that he is eighty, has lived a varied and dangerous life in many lands, has written on carrots, chestnuts, carpets, art, scholarship, all manner of absorbing subjects, and yet he heartily survives: “I attribute my senility—let others say senectitude,” he shouts in his cheery way, “to a certain playful devilry of spirit, a ceaseless militancy, quite suffragetic, so that when I left the Indian Office on a bilked pension I swore by all the gods I would make up for it by living on ten years, instead of one, which was all an insurance society told me I was worth.”

That sounds the true note, blowing the horn of old forests and battles. “A playful devilry of spirit,” “a ceaseless militancy”—how stirring to the stagnant lives of prudent regularity! “Lie in bed till noon-day!” he goes on; “I would rather be some monstrous flat-fish at the bottom of the Atlantic than accept human life on such terms.” Who in future will hear of rest-cures, retirements, retreats, nursings, comforts, and attention to health, without beholding in his mind that monstrous flat-fish, blind and deaf with age, rotting at ease upon the Atlantic slime? Life is not measured by the ticking of a clock, and it is no new thing to discover eternity in a minute. “I have not time to make money,” said the naturalist, Agassiz, when his friends advised some pecuniary advantage; and, in the same way, every really fortunate man says he has no time to bother about living. So soon as a human being does anything simply because he thinks it will “do him good,” and not for pleasure, interest, or service, he should withdraw from this present world as gracefully as he can. Of course, we all want to live, but even in death there can hardly be anything so very awful, since it is so common.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink.” “He that loses his life shall find it,” said one Teacher. “Live dangerously,” said another; and “Try to be killed” is still the best advice for a soldier who would rise. For life is to be measured by its intensity, and not by the tapping of a death-watch beetle. “I’ve lost my appetite. I can’t eat!” groaned the patient whom Carlyle knew. “My dear sir, that is not of the slightest consequence,” replied the good physician; and how wise are those scientists who deny to invalids the existence of their pain! Sir George Birdwood recalled the saying of Plato that attention to health is one of the greatest hindrances to life, and I vaguely remember Plato’s commendation of the working-man, who, in illness, just takes a dose, and if that doesn’t cure him, remarks, “If I must die, I must die,” and dies accordingly. That is how the working-man dies still; though sometimes he is now buoyed up by the thought of his funeral’s grandeur. “A certain playful devilry of spirit,” “a ceaseless militancy”—for life or death those are the best regulations.

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XXXVII

“LIBERTE, LIBERTE, CHERIE!”

Just escaped from the prison-house of Russia, I had reached Marseilles. The whole city, the bay, and the surrounding hills, bright with villas and farms, glittered in sunshine. So did the spidery bridge that swings the ferry across the Old Harbour's mouth. Even the fortifications looked quite amiable under such a sky. Booming sirens sounded the approach of great liners, moving slowly to their appointed docks. Little steamers hurried from point to point along the shores with crowded decks, and the lighthouses stood white against the Mediterranean blue.

The streets were thronged with busy people. The shops and cafes were thronged. At all the bathing places along the bay crowds of men, women, and children were plunging with joy into the cool, transparent water. The walls and kiosks were covered with gay advertisements of balls, concerts, theatres, and open air music-halls. Flaunting and flirting to and fro, women recalled what pleasure was. Electric trams went clanging down the lines. Motors hooted as they set off for tours in the Alps. Little carriages, with many-coloured hoods, loitered temptingly beside fine pavements. The stalls along the quay shone with every variety of gleaming fish, and every produce of the kindly earth. The sun went smiling through the air; the sea smiled in answer. And over all, high upon her rocky hill, watched the great image of Notre Dame de la Garde.

“This is civilisation! This is liberty!” cried a Frenchman, who had joined our ship in Turkey, and was now seated beside me, enjoying the return to security, peace, and the comfort of his own language.

Yes; it was civilisation, and it was liberty. Has not the name of Marseilles breathed the very spirit of liberty all over the world? And yet his words recalled to me another scene, and the remark of another native of Marseilles.

We were steaming slowly along the West Coast of Africa, landing cargo at point after point, or calling for it as required. Day by day we wallowed through the oily water, under a misty sun, that did not roast, but boiled. Day by day we watched the low-lying shore—the unvarying line of white beach, almost as white as the foam which dashed against it; and beyond the beach, the long black line of unbroken forest. Nothing was to be seen but those parallel lines of white beach and black forest, stretching both ways to the horizon. At dawn they were partly concealed by serpentine ghosts of mist that slowly vanished under the increasing heat; and at sunset the mists stole silently over them again. But all day and all night the sickly stench of vegetation, putrefying in the steam of those forests from age to age, pervaded the ship as with the breath of plague.

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One morning the scream of our whistle and the bang of our little signal-gun, followed by the prolonged rattle of the anchor-chain running through the hawse-pipe, showed that we had reached some point of call. The ship lay about half a mile off shore, and one could see black figures running about the beach and pushing off a big black boat. The spray shot high in the air as the bow dived through the surf, and soon we could hear the hiss and gasp of the rowers as they drew near. They were naked negroes, shining with oil and sweat. Standing up in the boat, with face to bow, they plunged their paddles perpendicularly into the water with a hiss, and drew them out with a gasp. A swirling circle of foam marked where each stroke had fallen, and the boat surged nearer through the swell, till, with a swish of backing paddles, it stopped alongside the ship's ladder, like a horse reined up. Out of the stern there stepped a little figure, just recognisable as a white man. His helmet was soaked and battered out of shape. The tattered relics of his white-duck suit were plastered with yellow palm-oil and various kinds of grease. So was the singlet, which was his only other clothing. So were his face and hands. But he was a white man, and he came up the ship's side with the confident air of Europe.

The purser greeted him on deck, and they disappeared into the purser's cabin to make out the bill of lading. The hatch was opened, and the steam crane began hauling barrels and sacks out of the boat, and then depositing other great barrels in their place, according to the simplest form of barter. The barrels we took smelt of palm-oil; the barrels we gave smelt of rum. When the boat could hold no more, the little man reappeared with the purser, and was introduced to me as Mr. Jacks.

He took off his battered helmet, inclined his body from the middle of his back, and said, "Enchanted, sair!"

Then he gave me his oily hand, which wanted rubbing down with a bit of deck swabbing.

"You fit for go shore one time?" he asked in the pidjin English of the Coast, still keeping his helmet politely raised.

"Oui, certainement, toute suite," I replied in the pidjin French of England.

If I had been the King conferring on him the title of Duke with a corresponding income, his face could not have expressed greater surprise and ecstasy.

He replied with a torrent of French, of which I understood nearly all, except the point.

Taking my arm (the coat-sleeve never recovered from the oily stain), he led me to the ship's side and steadied the rope ladder while I went down, the purser following behind, or rather on my head. We sat on the barrels, M. Jacques took a paddle to steer, and hissing and gasping, the queer-smelling crew started for the beach. When we came

near, M. Jacques turned with his pleasant smile to the purser, and said, "Surf no good! Plenty purser live for drown this one place."

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"That's all right," said the purser. Then the paddling stopped, and M. Jacques looked over the stern to watch the swell. For a long time we hung there, the waves rolling smoothly under us and crashing against the steep bank of sand just in front, as a stormy sea crashes against a south-coast esplanade at full tide under a south-west wind. Gently moving his paddle this way and that, M. Jacques held the stern to the swell, till suddenly he shouted "One time!" and the natives drove their paddles into the water like spears. On the top of a huge billow we rushed forward. It broke, and we crashed down upon the beach. In a dome of green and white the surge passed clean over us, and then, with a roar like a torrent, it dragged us back. Another great wave broke over the stern, and again we were hurled forward beneath it. This time a crowd of natives rushed into the foam and, clinging to the gunwale, held us steady against the backwash. Out we all sprang into two feet of rushing water, and hauled the boat clear up the shore.

"Surf no good!" observed M. Jacques; "but purser live this time," Then he shook himself like a dog, rolled on the fine sand, shook himself again, and with the smile of all the angels, remarked, "Now we fit for go get one dilly drink."

Leaving the natives to roll up the great barrels from the boat, we climbed the beach to a long but narrow strip of fairly hard ground, on which one solitary thorn-tree had contrived to grow. The further side of the bank fell steeply into the vast swamp of the coast. There the mangrove trees stood rotting in black water and slimy ooze, so thick together that the misty sun never penetrated half-way down their inextricable branches, and even from the edge of the forest one looked into darkness. On the top of that thin plateau between the roaring sea and the impenetrable swamp, M. Jacques had made his home. It was a ramshackle little house, run together of boards and corrugated iron, and bearing evidence of all the mistakes of which a West African native is capable. At midday the solitary thorn afforded a transparent shade; for the rest of daylight the dwelling sweltered and boiled unprotected. Round house and tree ran a mud wall, about five feet high, loop-holed at intervals. And just inside the house door was fastened a rack of three rifles, kept tolerably clean.

"Plenty pom-pom," said M. Jacques, as I looked at them (he returned to the language that I evidently understood better than his own). "Black man he cut throats too plenty much."

Opening a padlocked trap-door in the flooring, he disappeared into an underground cavern. Calling to me, he struck a match, and I looked down into a kind of dungeon cell, smelling of damp like a vault. There I saw a broken camp-bed, covered with a Kaffir blanket.

"Here live for catch dilly sleep," he cried triumphantly, as though exhibiting a palace. "Plenty cool night here."

Then, with a bottle in one hand, he came up the ladder, and carefully locking the trap-door and pulling a table over it, he observed, "Black man he thief too plenty much."

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With one thought only—the longing for liquid of any kind but salt water—we sat in crazy deck-chairs under the iron verandah, where a few starved chickens pecked unhappily at the dust. Presently there came the padding sound of naked feet upon the hard-baked earth, and a dark figure emerged from an inner kitchen. It was a young negress. Her short, woolly hair was cut into sections, like a melon, by lines that showed the paler skin below. The large dark eyes were filmy as a seal's, and the heavy black lips projected far in front of the flat nostrils, slit sideways like a bull-dog's. From breast to knee she was covered with a length of dark blue cotton, wound twice round her body, and fastened with two safety pins. In her hands, which were pinkish inside and on the palm like a monkey's, she held a tray, and coming close to us, she stood, silent and motionless, in front of M. Jacques.

Into three meat-tins that served for cups, he poured out wine from the bottle he had brought up from his subterranean bedroom. Then he filled up his own cup from a larger meat-tin of water fresh from the marsh. We did the same to make the wine go further, and at last we drank. It was the vilest wine the chemists of Hamburg ever made, though German education favours chemistry; and the water tasted like the bilge of Charon's boat. But it was liquid, and when we had drained the tins—I will not say to the dregs, for Hamburg wine has no dregs—M. Jacques lay back with a sigh and said, "Drink fine too much."

The girl handed us sticky slabs of Africa's maize bread, and then padded off with the tray. Coming out again, she crouched down on her heels against the doorpost, and silently watched us with impenetrable eyes, that never blinked or turned aside, no matter how much one stared.

Meantime, the natives from the beach, with many sighs and groans, were rolling up the cargo of barrels, and setting them, one by one, in a barricaded storehouse. "That's Bank of France," said M. Jacques, locking the door securely when all the barrels were stowed. "Plenty rum all the same good for plenty gold."

Their spell of labour finished, the natives stretched themselves in the shadow of the enclosure wall, and slept, while we sat languidly looking over the steaming water at the ship, now dim in the haze. The heat was so intense that, in spite of our drenching in the surf, the sweat was running down our faces and backs again. The repeated crash and drag of the waves were the only sounds, except when now and again a parrot shrieked from the forest, or some great trunk, rotted right through at last, fell heavily into the swamp among the tangled roots and slime. Even the mosquitoes were still, and the only movement was the hovering of giant hornets, attracted by the smell of the wine.

"Holiday fine too much," said M. Jacques, smiling at us dreamily, and stretching out his legs as he sank lower into his creaking chair.

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"One month, one ship; holiday same time," he explained, and he went on to tell us he worked too plenty hard the rest of the month, stowing the palm-oil and kernels as the natives brought them in by hardly perceptible tracks from their villages far across the swamp.

"Bit slow, isn't it, old man?" said the purser.

"Not slow," he answered quickly; "plenty black man go thief, go kill; plenty fever, plenty live for die."

"I should think you miss the French cafes and concerts and dancing and all that sort of thing," I remarked.

"No matter for them things," he answered. "Liberty here. Liberty live for this one place."

"Where there ain't no Ten Commandments," I quoted.

"No ten? No *one*," he cried, shaking one finger in my face excitedly, so as to make the meaning of "one" quite clear.

Just then the steamer sounded her siren.

"The old man's getting in a stew," said the purser, slowly standing up and mopping his face.

The crew stretched themselves, tightened their wisps of cotton, and slowly stood up too.

As M. Jacques led us politely down to the surf-boat again, I heard him quietly singing in an undertone, "Liberte, Liberte, cherie!"

"What part of France do you come from?" I asked.

"From Marseilles, monsieur," he answered, and having helped push off the boat, he stood with raised hat, watching us dive through the breakers. Then he slowly climbed the sand again, and I saw him pass into the gate of his fortified wall.

It was strange. Against that man every possible Commandment could be broken, but there was only one which he could have had any pleasure in breaking himself. And as I sat at Marseilles, watching the happy crowds of men and women pass to and fro, it appeared to me that he would have been at liberty to break that Commandment without leaving his native city.

XXXVIII

A FAREWELL TO FLEET STREET

It is still early, but dinner is over—not the club dinner with its buzzing conversation, nor yet the restaurant dinner, hurried into the ten minutes between someone's momentous speech and the leader that has to be written on it. The suburban dinner is over, and there was no need to hurry. They tell me I shall be healthier now. What do I care about being healthier?

Shall I sit with a novel over the fire? Shall I take life at second-hand and work up an interest in imaginary loves and the exigencies of shadows? What are all the firesides and fictions of the world to me that I should loiter here and doze, doze, as good as die?

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They tell me it is a fine thing to take a little walk before bed-time. I go out into the suburban street. A thin, wet mist hangs over the silent and monotonous houses, and blurs the electric lamps along our road. There will be a fog in Fleet Street to-night, but everyone is too busy to notice it. How friendly a fog made us all! How jolly it was that night when I ran straight into a *Chronicle* man, and got a lead of him by a short head over the same curse! There's no chance of running into anyone here, let alone cursing! A few figures slouch past and disappear; the last postman goes his round, knocking at one house in ten; up and down the asphalt path leading into the obscurity of the Common a wretched woman wanders in vain; the long, pointed windows of a chapel glimmer with yellowish light through the dingy air, and I hear the faint groans of a harmonium cheering the people dismally home. The groaning ceases, the lights go out, service is over; it will soon be time for decent people to be in bed.

In Fleet Street the telegrams will now be falling thick as—No, I won't say it! No Vallombrosa for me, nor any other journalistic tag! I remember once a young sub-editor had got as far as, "The cry is still—" when I took him by the throat. I have done the State some service.

Our sub-editors' room is humming now: a low murmur of questions, rapid orders, the rustle of paper, the quick alarum of telephones. Boys keep bringing telegrams in orange envelopes. Each sub-editor is bent over his little lot of news. One sorts out the speeches from bundles of flimsy. The middle of Lloyd George's speech has got mixed up with Balfour's peroration. If he left them mixed, would anyone be the less wise? Perhaps the speakers might notice it, and that man from Wiltshire would be sure to write saying he had always supported Mr. Balfour, and heartily welcomed this fresh evidence of his consistency.

"Six columns speeches in already; how much?" asks the sub-editor. "Column and quarter," comes answer from the head of the table, and the cutting begins. Another sub-editor pieces together an interview about the approaching comet. "Keep comet to three sticks," comes the order, and the comet's perihelion is abbreviated. Another guts a blue-book on prison statistics as savagely as though he were disembowelling the whole criminal population.

There's the telephone ringing. "Hullo, hullo!" calls a sub-editor quietly. "Who are you? Margate mystery? Go ahead. They've found the corpse? All right. Keep it to a column, but send good story. Horrible mutilations? Good. Glimpse the corpse yourself if you can. Yes. Send full mutilations. Will call for them at eleven. Good-bye." "You doing the Archbishop, Mr. Jones?" asks the head of the table. "Cup-tie at Sunderland," answers Mr. Jones, and all the time the boys go in and out with those orange-coloured bulletins of the world's health.

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What's a man to do at night out here? Let's have a look at all these posters displayed in front of the Free Library, where a few poor creatures are still reading last night's news for the warmth. Next week there's a concert of chamber-music in the Town Hall I suppose I might go to that, just to "kill time" as they say. Think of a journalist wanting to kill time! Or to kill anything but another fellow's "stuff," and sometimes an editor! Then there's a boxing competition at the St. John's Arms, and a subscription dance in the Nelson Rooms, and a lecture on Dante, with illustrations from contemporary art, for working men and women, at the Institute. Also there's something called the Why-Be-Lonesome Club for promoting friendly social intercourse among the young and old of all classes. I suppose I might go to that too. It sounds comprehensive.

There seems no need to be dull in the suburbs. A man in a cart is still crying coke down the street. Another desires to sell clothes-props. A brace of lovers come stealing out of the Common through the mist, careless of mud and soaking grass. I suppose people would say I'm too old to make love on a County Council bench. In love's cash-books the balance-sheet of years is kept with remorseless accuracy.

The foreign editors are waiting now in their silent room, and the telegrams come to them from the ends of the world. They fold them in packets together by countries or continents—the Indian stuff, the Russian stuff, the Egyptian, Balkan, Austrian, South African, Persian, Japanese, American, Spanish, and all the rest. They'll have pretty nearly seven columns by this time, and the order will come "Two-and-a-half foreign," Then the piecing and cutting will begin. One of them sits in a telephone box with bands across his head, and repeats a message from our Paris correspondent. Through our Paris man we can talk with Berlin and Rome.

From this rising ground I can see the light of the city reflected on the misty air, and somewhere mingled in that light are the big lamps down in Fleet Street. The City's voice comes to me like a confused murmur through a telephone when the words are unintelligible. The only distinct sounds are the dripping of the moisture from the trees in suburban gardens, and the voice of an old lady imploring her pet dog to return from his evening walk.

The voice of all the world is now heard in that silent room. From moment to moment news is coming of treaties and revolutions, of sultans deposed and kings enthroned, of commerce and failures, of shipwrecks, earthquakes, and explorations, of wars and flooded camps and sieges, of intrigue, diplomacy, and assassination, of love, murder, revenge, and all the public joy and sorrow and business of mankind. All the voices of fear, hope, and lamentation echo in that silent little room; and maps hang on the walls, and guide-books are always ready, for who knows where the next event may come to pass upon this energetic little earth, already twisting for a hundred million years around the sun?

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The editor must be back by now. Calm and decisive, he takes his seat in his own room, like the conductor of an orchestra preparing to raise his baton now that the tuning-up is finished. The leader-writers are coming in for their instructions. No need for much consultation to-night—not for the first leader anyhow. For the second—well, there are a good many things one could suggest: Turkey or Persia or the eternal German Dreadnought for a foreign subject; the stage censorship or the price of cotton; and the cup-ties, or the extinction of hats for both sexes as a light note to finish with. He's always labouring to invent "something light," is the editor. He says we must sometimes consider the public; just as though we wrote the rest of the paper for our own private fun.

But there's no doubt about the first leader to-night. There's only one subject on which it would be a shock to every reader in the morning not to find it written. And, my word! what a subject it is! What seriousness and indignation and conviction one could get into it! I should begin by restating the situation. You must always assume that the reader's ignorance is new every morning, as love should be; and anyone who happens to know something about it likes to see he was right. I should work in adroit references to this evening's speeches, and that would fill the first paragraph—say, three sides of my copy, or something over. In the second paragraph I'd show the immense issues involved in the present contest, and expose the fallacies of our opponents who attempt to belittle the matter as temporary and unlikely to recur—say, three sides of my copy again, but not a word more. And, then, in the third paragraph, I'd adjure the Government, in the name of all their party hold sacred, to stand firm, and I'd appeal to the people of this great Empire never to allow their ancient liberties to be encroached upon or overridden by a set of irresponsible—well, in short, I should be like General Sherman when at the crisis of a battle he used to say, "Now, let everything go in"—four sides of my copy, or even five if the stuff is running well.

Somebody must be writing that leader now. Possibly he is doing it better than I should, but I hope not. When Hannibal wandered all those years in Asia at the Court of silly Antiochus this or stupid Prusias the other, and knew that Carthage was falling to ruin while he alone might have saved her if only she had allowed him, would he have rejoiced to hear that someone else was succeeding better than himself—had traversed the Alps with a bigger army, had won a second Cannae, and even at Zama snatched a decisive victory? Hannibal might have rejoiced. He was a very exceptional man.

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But here's a poor creature still playing the clarionet down the street, on the pretence of giving pleasure worth a penny. Yes, my boy, I know you're out of work, and that is why you play the "Last Rose of Summer" and "When other Lips." I am out of work, too, and I can't play anything. You say you learnt when a boy, and once played in the orchestra at Drury Lane; but now you've come to wandering about suburban streets, and having finished "When other Lips," you will quite naturally play "My Lodging's on the Cold Ground." Only last night I was playing in an orchestra myself, not a hundred miles (obsolete journalistic tag!)—not a hundred miles from Drury Lane. It was a grand orchestra, that of ours. Night by night it played the symphony of the world, and each night a new symphony was performed, without rehearsal. The drums of our orchestra were the echoes of thundering wars; the flutes and soft recorders were the eloquence of an Empire's statesmen; and our 'cellos and violins wailed with the pity of all mankind. In that vast orchestra I played the horn that sounds the charge, or with its sharp reveille vexes the ear of night before the sun is up. Here is your penny, my brother in affliction. I, too, have once joined in the music of a star, and now wander the suburban streets.

That leader-writer has not finished yet, but the proofs of the beginning of his article will be coming down. In an hour or so his work will be over, and he will pass out into the street exhausted, but happy with the sense of function fulfilled. Fleet Street is quieter now. The lamps gleam through the fog, a motor-'bus thunders by, a few late messengers flit along with the latest telegrams, and some stragglers from the restaurants come singing past the Temple. For a few moments there is silence but for the leader-writer's quick footsteps on the pavement. He is some hours in front of the morning's news, and in a few hours more half a million people will be reading what he has just written, and will quote it to each other as their own. How often I have had whole sentences of my stuff thrown at me as conclusive arguments almost before the printing ink was dry!

Here I stand, beside a solitary lamp-post upon a suburban acclivity. The light of the city's existence I think my successor would say, of her pulsating and palpitating or ebullient existence—is pale upon the sky, and the murmur of her voice sounds like large but distant waves. I stand alone, and near me there is no sound but the complaint of a homeless tramp swearing at the cold as he settles down upon a bench for the night.

How I used to swear at that boy for not coming quick enough to fetch my copy! I knew the young scoundrel's step—I knew the step of every man and boy in that office. I knew the way each of them went up and down the stairs, and coughed or whistled or spat. What knowledge dies with me now that I am gone! *Qualis artifex pereo!* But that boy—how I should love to be swearing at him now! I wonder whether he misses me? I hope he does. "It would be an assurance most dear," as an old song of exile used to say.



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