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# MEN OF STRESS



*By the same author*

*Novels*

NORTHERN LIGHTS AND WESTERN STARS  
THE INHERITORS  
FINGAL'S BOX  
AT CAPE FAITHFUL

*Biography*

DOCTORS DIFFER. (*Studies of John Elliotson,  
Hugh Owen Thomas, James Mackenzie,  
William Osler, William Macewen and  
R. W. Philip*).

HARLEY WILLIAMS  
MEN OF  
STRESS

*Three Dynamic Interpretations*

WOODROW WILSON  
ANDREW CARNEGIE  
WILLIAM HESKETH  
LEVER



JONATHAN CAPE  
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE  
LONDON

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Viscount Leverhulme has allowed reference to be made to his own biography of his father, and has himself read the third chapter of *Men of Stress*. Sir Angus Watson has permitted quotations from his autobiography, and made suggestive comments. Mr. George Kirkpatrick has also corrected certain details connected with the first Viscount Leverhulme's career.

Ex-Provost Roderick Smith of Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, has drawn upon his recollections, and Dr. Francis Sutherland has also read this chapter.

To the authors and publishers of works mentioned in the list of references, the author is grateful.

*To my*  
*PYGMALION*

## P R E F A C E

IN writing of these three Men of Stress, I have tried to learn their secrets not only from books but also by visiting places they loved. While sitting under the elm trees on the campus of Princeton, in the library of the University of Virginia, in the great Temple hall at Salt Lake City I have imagined President Wilson there. I have followed Andrew Carnegie's footsteps in the Abbey park at Dumfermline, and watched the white-hot ingots form as he saw them in the furnaces of the Edgar Thomson works at Pittsburgh. When Lord Leverhulme came to the Isle of Lewis for the last time, I was there present in the crowd, and his picture gallery at Port Sunlight has often delighted me.

These three biographical portraits are prefaced by a chapter introducing the theme which connects them, and in this will be found an answer to those who wonder how three such apparently diverse men could ever figure within the pages of one book.





PART ONE

CAUSES OF THE STRESS

'Tis strange — but true; for truth is always strange;  
Stranger than fiction: if it could be told,  
How much would novels gain by the exchange!  
How differently the world would men behold!  
How oft would vice and virtue places change!  
The new world would be nothing to the old,  
If some Columbus of the moral seas  
Would show mankind their souls' antipodes.

What 'antres vast and deserts idle' then  
Would be discover'd in the human soul!  
What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,  
With self-love in the centre as their pole!  
What Anthropophagi are nine or ten  
Of those who hold the kingdoms in control!  
Were things but only call'd by their right name,  
Caesar himself would be ashamed of fame.

*Don Juan* — BYRON

Sometimes I give my soule one visage, and sometimes another, according unto the posture or side I lay her in. If I speake diversely of myself it is because I look diversely upon my selfe. All contrarities are found in her, according to some turne or removing; and in some fashion or other.

A man must thoroughly sound himself and dive into his heart, and there see by what words or springs the nations stirre. But foreasmuch as it is a hazardous and high enterprise, I would not have so many to meddle with it as doe.

*Of the inconstancie of our actions* — MONTAIGNE



## CAUSES OF THE STRESS

WE can be sure that when human life first appeared on the biological scene it received no welcome from established nature. Those creatures which possessed the universe, from diatoms to mammals, resented this newcomer, and ever since he has been able to hold his place only by stern conflict and continuous effort. For generations the two-legged animal, who in assuming the upright posture had made himself overlord of the universe, killed off his enemies before they could kill him. But he was formed for something besides killing. He was made to love his offspring and to provide for their needs. In some inconceivably remote time, these opposite instincts became fixed in grooves; the primary desire to kill, and the newly dawning social instincts to make a better world for his immediate posterity.

In the course of long generations whose history is written only inside ourselves, the aspiring human race knew that the old animal self was still very much alive. In fact, if man allowed his primary impulses to die, he himself was quite defenceless, and was soon liquidated. At the same time, that newly awakened desire to build, to sow seed in the earth and to tame his cattle, in fact all the collective faculties that have formed man's social existence, seemed to make the old animal self obsolete. He would try to forget that destructive survival of his own animal past.

Then would come a frightful warning when war, famine, earthquake, called upon him to make every possible effort merely in order to survive. At a terrible cost to his new social experiments, he was compelled to bring the old beast out of its cage to help him to fight for his existence with all the ferocity and cunning of long ago. And when danger was past, that is providing he had managed to keep alive, he was obliged to carry out the most difficult task of peacetime reconstruction,

## CAUSES OF THE STRESS

that of luring the animal self back into confinement and bidding it be still.

As aeons passed and these sudden heroic episodes became less frequent, the animal ancestor inside was obliged to take to cannibalism. Deprived of outside exercise, it began to devour the other impulses — those grand faculties of love and constructiveness which had meant its own sequestration. And so the war of man versus nature became an armageddon of human nature against itself. The phase of the epic and the fairy tale is passed: we reach the age of humanism. Man has come to have a nature distinct from the rest of animal kind.

Because the loving energies represented all that was fresh and creative in his nature, they were called Good: and the old, but by no means exhausted, animal instincts were named Evil. We have reached the epoch called 'Morality'.

Obedient to the necessity for continuous conflict, man as a social creature began to take an interest in this battleground inside. So far, his whole energies had been directed towards external foes, but now he must painfully develop an original faculty, an inward eye, to measure the violent antics of his still-powerful animal nature, and its ferocious assaults upon his other creative self. As he learned to use this novel organ of interior vision, he took confidence. We have entered the age of 'Psychology'.

In this phase of self-exploration which really has only just begun, we are learning not only how animal our human nature is, but how human all our animal instincts are becoming. We discover that without both sides of our nature we can accomplish nothing. The creative self has the vision, but the animal self possesses the energy. The old primitive impulses operate in every wish, every thought, and every nerve. They colour our ideas and they form the electric power behind our acts. Sometimes they lead us to destroy and to fight. Often their cannibal powers lead us to destroy ourselves. No one has ever been able to distinguish in himself the hair-line between his

## CAUSES OF THE STRESS

destructive instincts and his creative desires, and we are finding that the divine in us all is being formed out of this perpetual struggle. Every creative thing, says Keats, has first to create itself. And the human psyche is the most creative locality in the universe. No longer therefore can we think of the human mind as a battlefield. It has become a laboratory. We have entered on the chapter called 'Science'.

Man has to make himself as he goes along, and to do this he has been given two opposite sets of instincts, those creative and those destructive. The creative powers build up living parts out of dead material, they are always at work, composing, forming affinities, proliferating in a wild insistent way. If they were left unchecked, the whole of existence would be clogged with living material like a tropical jungle, and the raw exuberant life-tissue would be too crude to perform its functions. Somehow, it has to be moulded and sculptured, and this is carried out by the destructive powers which prune like scissors, remove excess, and force the creative energy of life to follow a defined path. Just as the bones of our bodies are manufactured by two opposite sorts of cells — one that makes new bone, and the other which nibbles it away to the correct form.

We may call these opposite sets of powers love and hate, the one eternally creative, not merely preserving our kind upon the face of the earth, but the source of all understanding, beauty and romance: and its opposite, always seeking to hurt and destroy. From the strife between them an individual life is made, and out of perpetual self-conflict man builds his outer world in his own image. Is his love stronger than his hate? If so, the world around him learns to love more, and life is breathed into ideas, peoples and places that were formerly dead. Does hate for the time being obtain the victory? Then there is warfare in his little universe.

The great schizoid personalities, such as our Men of Stress, are examples in which we can see human nature working as though in a model surrounded by glass.

## CAUSES OF THE STRESS

### 2

Woodrow Wilson, Andrew Carnegie and William Lever belong to this breed of self-divided men in whom the common struggle between the two natures becomes a lofty epic.

Their mental affinity explains why they are here brought together, for otherwise it would be difficult to judge what a great American President, whose medium of world exchange was an idea, could have in common with a successful manufacturer whose world token was soap; or to see any possible comparison between the great American who gave the nations peace, and he who furnished the United States navy with armour plate.

To nature, a man's work and status in the social world are irrelevant. She gives him primary instincts as the raw material of all his acts and achievements. To these Men of Stress, nature had given a quite exceptional endowment of the power of aggression, destructiveness, hatred, that natural source of primal energy which possesses the energy both of love and of hunger. The use they each made of this strong aggressive energy was a sport, an accident of circumstance.

But what a significant and wonderful accident! As we read of their lives, we see that the shuffling of circumstances turns out to be as pregnant with meaning as the original gift of the instincts themselves. The primitive stream of aggression and destruction, which may be compared to a fountain gushing out of a jet, is pressed upon by the atmosphere, blown by the wind, vaporized by the sun and altogether transformed in force and direction. The primary unconscious energy of the instincts is modified by social life, by education, wisdom, experience, and chiefly by those chastening mentors guilt and conscience. Its destructive power is throttled, and in the course of this harnessing of natural impulse, its original energy goes over to its opposite. Hate becomes subordinate to harmony. The dynamic potency of the aggression becomes an ally of those

## CAUSES OF THE STRESS

constructive faculties which emancipate the human mind. To put it simply, evil has been conquered by good. Hate has been overcome by love.

The story of how this happened in three men is the story of three lifelong battles which each fought with himself in the secret caverns of the mind.

### 3

Someone called Cardinal Newman 'a tiger by nature, an angel through Grace', and that is a good description of the metamorphosis from a monster of uncivilized aggression into a creator of noble values. The power which performs the miracle is something very ancient, which has been desperately acquired during twenty millenniums of human life. It is deeper and older than religion. It is given to us very early — at the mother's breast, and at the mother's knee; and to the naked elemental passion of destructiveness, which if left unchecked might even destroy itself, this healing power says, stop, halt, and gradually brings the tiger into control. Love, civilization, duty, affection, exercise their immemorial sway, and the energy of the primitive being itself is turned into orderly uses. The tiger is forced to become a beast of burden.

Call this tranquillizing faculty by different names. Call it Conscience and we give it moral authority. Call it Guilt, and it has a socio-legal significance. Term it Repression, and we fit the medico-psychological vocabulary. But the real thing is all three — Conscience, Guilt, Repression; and even those words which are so portentous with familiar meaning fail to give a full impression of the magical reactions, repeated and repeated through a lifetime, by which we learn through painful experience to dominate the aboriginal savage in ourselves. And where that Old Adam, more brutish and terrible even than Epstein's creature in stone, is powerful from the start, as in our three Men of Stress, the battle is bloody, but very interesting.



## CAUSES OF THE STRESS

### 4

Three self-divided men have been driven on, through the perpetual effort to make themselves whole, towards lonely heights, and in the end the constructive faculties triumphed. Those animal instincts which drove them to hate have been over-compensated by a power peculiarly human, that which enables a man long to create something for himself and his kind, something not absolutely essential for his existence or reproducing his species, an unnecessary faculty which the non-human world has never attained.

Not every one among the victims of this love-hate struggle achieves this successful emancipation. Sometimes victory goes the other way. The sadic impulses win the days — or the years — of life and the result is war, madness, despair, disease. It is a sobering thought, and it shows us what we hardly suspect — the precarious balance of this psychological conflict, the sharpness of the razor-edge between the two instincts, as we see the great achievers hesitating, temporarily making a mistake, drawing breath, making a worldly instead of a spiritual choice, in other words, behaving humanly.

The human fallibility of these three Men of Stress is their most surprising quality. They are not great prophets, or poets, gifted with divine insight, unable to go wrong in the sureness of their genius. They do not create effortlessly like Mozart; nor do they conquer new worlds before the age of thirty by leadership, like Alexander; they cannot see through the mystery of the falling apple as Newton did, nor draw pictures of human hells like William Blake. No supernatural or inherited power is there to guide their steps. They are obliged to slave at this conflict alone, and without guidance. This eternally unsolved problem in psychological algebra as to which power is the stronger in the personal equation, confronts them every morning. Each night their painfully achieved solution vanishes away.

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### 5

There is a foolish convention that the lives of great business men are less worthy to be studied than statesmen and literary figures. But this comes of confusing the artist and his material. The mental processes of a millionaire may tell us the secrets of an age. Their efforts to organize markets and dominate men may be as significant as the personalia of a poet, indeed, the titanic nature of the commercial struggle may itself be more a theme for poetry than the quiet, self-absorbed lives of many an artist.

Most studies of commercial men are success stories professing to show other commercial men how the first commercial men made their way. But few biographers have stopped to wonder how it all began, and why this money-seeking energy was begotten in the soul. Did they ever rise above the pursuit of money? And was the result always evil? And now they have gone where they could not take their money with them, what have they left behind?

Andrew Carnegie and Leverhulme were swimming with a mighty tide, and we their successors can know this because the tide has now turned, and business flows in the opposite direction and against the talented individual. But in their day it was otherwise. They found two virgin worlds to conquer, and the field was wide open. These millionaires were the lucky victims of their world. They are interesting now, not for their money, but for their sheer exuberance of energy.

### 6

Carnegie, Woodrow Wilson and Leverhulme prove that the atomic agonies of nature are nothing compared to the stresses of human psychology which alone of their own will have called these devilries out of the slumber where organic nature would have allowed them to remain undisturbed. It seems as though

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the atomic bomb is only the latest and most powerfully effective toy for the expression of mankind's destructive impulse. The atom has always been there, but only modern man has learned how to divide it. Here is something on a scale of diabolical grandeur such as never came within human grasp before.

Atomic power objectifies with awful fidelity the instincts of hate, since it can disrupt the very source from which it comes, just as hatred may finally end in explosive suicide or madness. It seems as though the human searching always for some more deadly, more perfect vehicle for its own uncontrollable destructiveness had examined the whole of nature until this last monstrous secret had come to light, more appalling, more effective than the dynamic hatred man feels inside himself. The awful power of the divided atom is the counterpart of man's schizophrenia, and like a wilful child man cannot make up his mind to leave this terrible toy alone. Atomic energy has always been there, holding together the universe, working silently for our ultimate benefit, detachable from matter only by slow degrees and in harmless amounts. Let alone, nature has every intention of keeping the atom whole, or releasing its power only over aeonal time. What does man do to disturb this perfect equilibrium of natural forces? He searches out the power which corresponds most closely to the impulse he wishes to express. He finds it in atomic energy — something which holds matter together in the same way as instinct operates in every part of his own mind. There it is, the most inevitable and most perfect correspondence which thought could ever conceive, a demon that can destroy men and cities, and perhaps finally the whole globe itself.

Is there no counterbalance to this depressing conclusion? Is the instinct of destruction to find its outlet without restraint or check? Are we meant to end our chronicle of human struggle and human aspiration in one single act of universal suicide?

There is the instinct of love which has so far in the human epic always proved to be more powerful than hatred and fear.

## CAUSES OF THE STRESS

The instincts of creation have triumphed over many awkward situations in the human progress from slime to brain. For a time, destructive instincts gain control, but nature is not without resources. Though our aggressive unconscious nature has impelled us to rush in and meddle with the harm hidden in the bowels of the inorganic world, we are not all made of aggression, and the infinite adaptability and healing capacity of the constructive instincts can repair any damage.

From the study of the aggressive character of our three Men of Stress, it may be inferred that in individuals the hate of the soul may be overcome by love, and since the human mind is as much part of nature as the atom itself, why may such a restorative balance not take place in the social world?

The answer to the riddle of what we shall do with atomic energy is similar to the answer to the problem of what we must do with our own instincts. We cannot eliminate them, or pretend they do not exist. They are urging us on, they are the source of our life and strength, and we must make with them the best terms we can. We have to control them, or they will destroy us. The destructive power is there inside our minds and nerves and will have its way, and our only ally is the compensating force of love and creation also within every cell and fibre of the body. To quell the mutiny of the devils inside us we have to call in the angels. We have to enslave the dark forces to work for us and for our regeneration. This is what mankind has to learn to do with the atom, and it will be easier when we have learned to understand the satanic side of our own natures.



PART TWO

WOODROW WILSON

*President of the United States of America*

You must have chaos in you if you would give birth to a dancing star.

NIETZSCHE

*Allons!* through struggles and wars!  
The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.

Have the past struggles succeeded?  
What has succeeded? yourself? your nation?  
Nature?

Now understand me well — it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.

*The Song of the Open Road* — WALT WHITMAN

# WOODROW WILSON

(1856-1924)

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## CHAPTER I

### PRELUDE—AN AMERICAN MESSIAH

A GREAT American ship *George Washington* approaches the coast of France, and on Friday, the thirteenth of December in the year 1918, disembarks her company at the old harbour of Brest. As they approach the shore in a tender, the Americans see the houses of the old Breton town rising in terraces from the water, the fishermen in wooden shoes, women wearing their picturesque head-dresses crowding the *quais*, and lines of French soldiers with Generals in round red hats, while massed bands thunder out the Star Spangled Banner and cannon boom salutes, the party moves towards a blue train, past masses of flowers and a guard of honour. For the first time in history a President of the United States has left home during his term of office.

Only a month before, the strange silence of an armistice had fallen over the European battlefield where for four years men had been dying in muddy trenches, and now this coming of an American President symbolizes something full of hope and healing. Not only is he the representative of the richest nation on earth, whose land escaped the horrors of war. He is the Messiah whose verbal thunderbolts have hushed the arrogant German Emperor into silence and surrender. He brings the blessing of peace, peace which seems to those tired and trusting faces along the quayside at Brest to have a special sweetness out of the distant spaces and serene enlightenment of America.

The shabbiness of everything, the mud, wooden encampments, the general weariness behind every face gave the American party their first picture of Europe. Beside misery which could not be expressed in figures, France had lost a



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million and a third of her soldiers, and Great Britain a round million, not counting the wounded. As the blue train moved between cheering lines of people, they strained to catch a glimpse. Below a correct silk hat, they saw a long face and formidable jaw, but a face that often smiled. Beside him was the President's lady, young and attractive, and noting her dress and smart hat they decided that another European convention had been changed.

The President's reception at Brest was a feeble manifestation compared with the stupendous welcome which met him at Paris. As he drove along the Champs-Élysées, fanatical homage swept over him. Behind these French were the people of the whole of Europe, yes and the whole of the world, hailing him as saviour. At that moment they would have given him anything. They were naming streets after him, burning candles to his picture, and if the League of Nations could have been established, and universal disarmament proclaimed immediately, those things would have been done willingly at his bidding.

This severe-looking person was indeed not entirely the sort of man they imagined, yet in hailing him as a democratic hero the crowds were instinctively correct. For forty years Woodrow Wilson had trained himself to be responsive to the opinions of the mass, and now he had come to Paris determined to be the spokesman not only of America, but of those who lived in the Champs-Élysées, yes and the peoples of the whole earth.

The object for this journey was the Peace Conference between the nations who had defeated Germany, and during his ten days voyage the President had called together his experts and harangued them solemnly about the purpose which was bringing them to Paris. It was not so much a political talk as a moral lecture, and he told them that the other statesmen who would be at the Peace Conference did not represent the inward desires of their own people. Only the American delegates would be disinterested, and it was their duty to represent the will of mankind. It was his own intention

## PRELUDE—AN AMERICAN MESSIAH

to act in this spirit, and he quoted words of the American statesman Josiah Quincy 'pleasantly if I can, disagreeably if I must'.

And so with the sincerity, the innocence and the complacency of a crusader, he arrives in Paris, prepared to go to war if necessary with Lloyd George and Clemenceau, and as the cheers ring in his ears around the Arc de Triomphe, he feels completely certain that the people have divined his purpose and mean to support his Messianic task.

But Woodrow Wilson is not one man, but two, and as we follow the fascinating course of his life we are never quite sure which of the personalities we shall meet. Europe saw in him only the crusader, whose mind was able to soar above the sordid commonplace. But they did not realize that he was also a rancorous American party politician.

Before leaving the United States, President Wilson had performed an executive act that might seem to belong to the spirit of Richelieu and Bismarck rather than a free democracy. He had caused all the telegraph cables connecting Europe and America to be placed under executive authority. This delirious welcome at Paris was more reassuring than what he knew of public opinion back home in the United States; the one side of his personality could share the enthusiasm of those responsive crowds, but the other was obliged to take nervous glances backward across the Atlantic.

Yet the President was probably the most optimistic man in that learned American odyssey. He believed in himself and his destiny. Some people might think a landing in Europe on the thirteenth day of the month a bad omen, but Woodrow Wilson laughed, for thirteen was his lucky number. There were thirteen letters in his own name, he had first become President in the year 1913, and his second election was by thirteen votes in California. And now upon this fortunate thirteenth day destiny had brought him to his greatest task.

## WOODROW WILSON

### 2

Rumours of Woodrow Wilson's political background had reached Europe. Someone had told Lloyd George of the President's lonely routine at the White House — his solitary reading of documents, preparing speeches on his own typewriter, a daily round of golf — and Lloyd George remarked 'that seems self-centred and dull'. Yet this President had achieved the most remarkable success with the American people. In 1916 he had won a Presidential Election on a programme of peace; yet less than a year later he had brought America into the war against Germany, and ever since that moment his majestic speeches had made him the moral leader of the Allies. The world knew this. But the world outside America did not grasp that in November 1918, only a month before the President departed for Europe, the Congressional Elections had placed the Senate of the United States under the control of the Republican party, his political enemies, and that it was the Senate which would have to deal with any treaty of peace which might be made. The world did not fully realize that only five days before the *George Washington* sailed, an ex-President of the United States gave a warning that Woodrow Wilson had no power by himself to make a treaty of peace with Germany, but could only do so 'with the advice and consent' of the Senate. Europe did not take into account that the idea of the President's journey was bitterly opposed by some of his fellow countrymen, including his closest friends, who had begged him to stay at home and declare peace from his isolated mountain top, rather than put himself on a level with the politicians who would be wrangling around the conference table. Were he to send someone to represent him, that representative would be able to practise the technique of Spenlow to the President's Jorkins. When a difficulty arose he would gain time by referring back for instructions. But the very mention of such an idea made Woodrow Wilson highly indignant.

## PRELUDE—AN AMERICAN MESSIAH

He thought they were trying to pocket him in order that clever wirepullers at Paris should make a treaty on their own and then consult him when it was all fixed up. The conference would be an intellectual treat and he announced his irrevocable intention of going to Paris in person. This caused consternation in Europe. Lloyd George and Clemenceau saw their authority about to be undermined, but they had not been able to unfix President Wilson's resolve, and this tumultuous reception before the opening of the meeting made them more nervous. But when they met him they did not fear for long. They came to realize that, although the President of the United States was the next thing to an absolute monarch, Woodrow Wilson was, like themselves, a party politician.

In a sumptuous baroque villa in the Parc Monceau, the President and Mrs. Wilson retired after the tiresome official functions which formed a heavy prelude to the real work. In a room lined with crimson damask he sat at a gilt writing desk, and the ghosts of European tradition seemed to challenge his new principles. Here in the next few weeks peace had to be made with Germany, and in that process the map of Europe must be withdrawn. Every political idea ever been accepted by mankind might come up for revision, but there was one new conception which the President was determined should replace old lumber in the political workshop, the notion of a federation between sovereign states which would settle disputes without war. Woodrow Wilson had given years of thought to this idea. It was the foundation of his policy at the Peace Conference, and his idealistic conception of the world's future. He had labelled this imaginary company of states 'The League of Nations', and now it had to be created.

Among the five American delegates to the conference there was one remarkable man with whom the President had talked

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over the League of Nations until it was their joint intellectual offspring. The President's friend was a Texas politician named Edward M. House, called by courtesy Colonel House, and he knew Woodrow Wilson better than any man living. He was the President's sensory apparatus for sounding delegates, and subtly divining the depths of intrigue, conspiracy and passion which surrounds the making of peace.

This Colonel House was short, quiet and but for a pair of wonderful large eyes, he was unimpressive. It was said of him that his prayer was: 'Give us this day our daily compromise.' He was utterly devoted to Woodrow Wilson, and his talent for manipulating men was unselfishly used for the success of the President's policy. His status was endowed with mysterious authority, and European politicians, accustomed to titles and gold braid dignity, could not quite fathom that he was nothing but the President's friend; they shrugged their shoulders, resigned to one more evidence of American queerness. This quiet little man, full of Texan provincialism, who pronounced 'Italian' as '*Eyetalian*', and never forgot his slow Southern drawl, succeeded by the very simplicity and directness of his understanding which ignored the assumptions of the political game and practised subtleties of its own.

The President's chief official adviser was Robert Lansing, the Secretary of State, and in him nature had created the diametric opposite to Edward M. House. Lansing was a straightforward lawyer, honest and well intentioned, loving correct phraseology, but out of sympathy with the President's idealism. Woodrow Wilson practically ignored him at Paris, and one close observer thought that Lansing had only been brought to the Peace Conference so that the President could see him squirm. But Robert Lansing did not squirm, even when he learned for the first time after the departure for Paris that the President had actually worked out on paper a plan for the League of Nations. Lansing kept his composure, wrote a book about the conference, and lived on officially to become a serious embarrassment to the

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President a few years later. The President had other expert advisers but they counted for little. Wrapped up in his lonely self-sufficiency he had made up his mind about the permanent achievement he desired to extract from the victory of the Allies.

His purpose was the covenant — an agreement between sovereign states, an agreement new in human history. The very word *Covenant* went to the marrow of the President's Presbyterian bones, for was it not the name given in the Old Testament to the bargain that God made with man? A solemn deed and covenant signed in drops of blood in an old churchyard in Edinburgh had been the most significant event in Scottish history, and the ancestors of Woodrow Wilson had been proud to call themselves Covenanters long before they migrated to the United States. Europeans might foolishly think of America as a country of raw and modern ideas, but its President now sat at the peace table in Paris with a mind steeped in the past.

In the last year of the war, Woodrow Wilson had sat with Colonel House and worked out a draft of this Covenant. 'We actually got down to work at half past ten and finished remaking the map of the world as we would have it at half past twelve o'clock.' House so describes the way in which the two world makers divided the world after the manner of the Renaissance Pope who shared the universe between Spain and Portugal. At first there were twenty-three articles, but the President had struck out the less important ones and reduced the number to thirteen, for which figure he had a superstitious reverence.

The primary object — to get the Covenant passed — more vital to him than any other question discussed at Paris, explains the President's haste, his unwillingness to see reason, that fanatical stubbornness which his enemies thought the chief defect in his character.

The Peace Conference began its sittings. A council of fifteen men, leaders of the Allied powers, sat around a table in a magnificent rococo saloon, and in hotels all over Paris were the experts with their frontier maps and ethnic data. Behind

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them were the secretaries, the special correspondents and the hangers on. Harold Nicolson in *Peacemaking* has brilliantly reproduced the atmosphere of rumour, jealousy and suspicion, the fretful cynicism in which the experts of various delegations attempted to present the truth, and the sense of frustration that was to pass again and again over everyone connected with the Peace Conference when the Gordian Knot had to be cut by the principal negotiators. But so far the spell had not been broken.

Woodrow Wilson's first success was to secure the appointment of a special commission to draft the Covenant even before the conference itself had opened. The American hustle had begun.

### 4

While the preliminaries of the Peace Conference were being settled, the President left Colonel House behind in Paris to watch over the midwifery of the Covenant and paid a round of ceremonial visits with Mrs. Wilson. In every country, Italy, Belgium and even the unemotional Britain, he was hailed as the Messiah of Peace.

How different it was from his last visit when as an unknown university teacher he had explored the English Lake District on a bicycle and sat for hours beside Rydal Water reading the poetry of Wordsworth. Now, he had said farewell to such peace. The President of the United States was no longer a man, he was an international symbol, and his thoughts were to affect the personal lives of every one of those enthusiastic hearers. In Manchester he said to a roused audience: 'Interest does not bind men together; interest separates men — there is only one thing that can bind people together, and that is common devotion to the right.' In Carlisle he spoke briefly in the church where his grandfather had been minister. At Buckingham Palace the famous gold plate was brought out in his honour, for the first time since the war. Wilson had feared he might not find Lloyd George congenial, but when they met for the first

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time at No. 10 Downing Street, each Celtic nature found pleasure in exploring the other.

There were difficult moments in the triumphal European tour. In Milan this Presbyterian President had stoutly refused to attend an operatic performance in *La Scala* because it was arranged for a Sunday; but he had relented when the function was renamed 'Sacred Concert', although somehow the whole of Verdi's *Aida* managed to be squeezed into the programme. In Rome, when officious policemen tried to keep back the exuberant crowd, the President blazed with anger. He scented oppression, Bourbonism and reaction, convinced they were trying to keep him away from 'the people'. He had been a professor of history, and knew everything there was to be known of the constitutions of nations. But he had hardly travelled, spoke no foreign languages, understood little of those worldly by-ways where other statesmen had learned wisdom. Woodrow Wilson, more at home in a pulpit than at the corner table of a café, was now to play the Galahad among these Machiavellis and Metternichs.

Back in Paris under the adroit management of Edward M. House, the special commissioners had made the Draft Covenant, and now Woodrow Wilson presented it to the full Conference of Peace. His earnest tones sounded odd in the rococo apartment, brilliant with the finest glory of the French Renaissance. He said this document was not a strait jacket, but a vehicle of life that would purify and enrich the life of the world. 'Nothing in this room speaks of democracy' thought the American editor, William Allen White, as he looked from the plaster cupids jumping out of the beautifully proportioned walls, the gilt palm leaves, wreaths and flowers on the ceiling, and the large gold clock after which the place was named *La Salle d'horloge*. The delegates sat around a U-shaped table covered with green baize, and in this atmosphere of baroque grandeur they heard a novel idea described in the President's most unemotional manner.



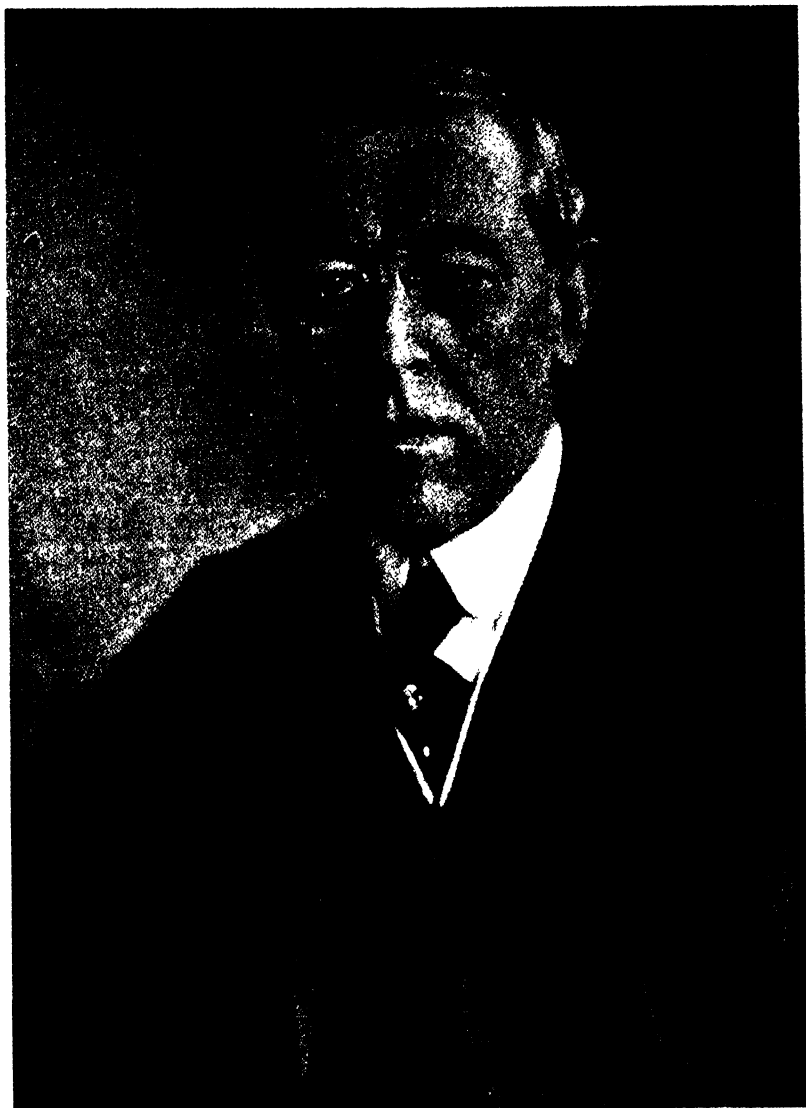
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Says William Allen White: 'It was a typically Wilsonian performance: a great thing done unsignificantly.' Yet the watchful delegates sitting beneath the ornate ceiling had to admit there was something compelling about this professor whose speech was half sermon and half a plan for a new world.

The 'tiger' Clemenceau had cynically observed that Woodrow Wilson had needed fourteen points in his message to the Germans, whereas *Le Bon Dieu* had required only ten commandments to make up his message to mankind, but now even Clemenceau, the dominating figure of the conference in his little black hat and grey gloves, listened with respect to the President's ideas. Mr. Robert Lansing who was so lukewarm about the League of Nations drew caricatures on his order paper, while Mrs. Wilson in purple clothes and purple feather in her hat drank in every word of her husband's speech. This February 14th, 1919, only two months after the *George Washington* touched Brest, was the birthday of the League of Nations, and the zenith of Woodrow Wilson's worldly achievement, and as he crossed the Place de la Concorde in the car with Mrs. Wilson on his way back to the United States, the solemn thought passed through his mind that one man's life counted for very little in the eternal conflict for world regeneration.

Meanwhile, dangerous domestic complications were urgently calling him back to America.

Europe was a land of broken sovereignties, ghosts and starving peoples, and no technique had yet been invented for repairing the immediate social effects of war. The old Austro-Hungarian Empire was broken up and there was nothing in its place. The Ottoman Turks had been pushed back into Asia, leaving a vacuum of power to be filled, and Poland was ready to receive back the freedom she had lost for centuries. The Peace Conference was attempting both to make permanent



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order out of this chaos, and at the same time to prepare a treaty with Germany.

The general reaction to the idea of the League of Nations was favourable, and by the time the President was back home in the White House, 34 State Legislatures and 33 State Governors had put themselves on record as supporters of his policy, while the *Literary Digest* gave a summary of newspaper opinion and declared that the League was 'an experiment tremendously worth trying'. On landing in America, Woodrow Wilson had made a fervent appeal to an excited audience in Boston, who cheered his declaration that the war had been won by ideals and aspirations, and if those ideals were betrayed the world's bitterness would be the bitterness of despair. Then, as though reproving himself for having allowed any such dark thoughts to enter his mind, he paused in his speech and said: 'But I talk as if there were any question.'

Woodrow Wilson always valued the support of unorganized masses more than that of elected bodies. His extraordinary power over their emotions, and the severe intellectual construction of his speeches, and his reassuring voice gave him the mastery of a conductor evoking responses from an immense orchestra. Feeling the real American soul of those diverse millions was behind him, he returned to Washington to meet the U.S. Senators who shared with the President the power of making treaties. Of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, the Chairman was Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Republican in politics, and one of the most learned men who have ever sat in that body.

Senator Lodge's ancestors belonged to Puritan and Conservative New England. He had personal experience of government in Massachusetts, and no political idea could ever take him by surprise. He had moreover been called 'the Scholar in politics', that is before the advent of Woodrow Wilson's meteoric rise into power had taken the wind out of his cultural sails, and Henry Cabot Lodge was antipathetic to the Presi-

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dent's whole background. It has been said that the American Civil War was really a fight between Boston, Massachusetts, and Charleston, South Carolina, and this whole difference in culture and tradition between the North and the South is exemplified in the opposed temperaments of Henry Cabot Lodge, the Yankee Republican, and Woodrow Wilson the Southern Democrat. Only a year before, after a meeting at the White House, Senator Lodge summarized the President in words that leave no doubt of his true feeling: 'I watched and studied his face tonight as I have often done before — a curious mixture of acuteness, intelligence and extreme underlying timidity — a shifty, furtive, sinister expression can always be detected by a good observer.' Those malevolent eyes never left the President's face, and a highly sophisticated intelligence calculated each move the President made. Wilson might be the mouthpiece of his country at Paris, but Lodge was the head of a strong caucus of Senators who hated Wilson and were hated by him. Yet the Senate must approve the Treaty of Peace, and the Senate must agree to the League of Nations before either could become binding upon the United States, and now Wilson's error in having no representative of the Republican party with him at Paris became obvious. While he had driven among the inspired crowds in the Champs Élysées and dined with the King at Buckingham Palace, Henry Cabot Lodge had been haunting the lobbies of the Senate, whispering that this dangerous man of the White House could no longer be trusted in Europe.

The President invited the members of the Foreign Relations Committee to dinner, and Senator Lodge and his friends were allowed to cross-examine him about the peace treaty, the League Covenant, reparations and all those problems which were torturing Europe. The President explained his ideas eloquently, but the dinner was not a success, and Senator Brandegee of Connecticut said he felt he had had tea with the Mad Hatter.

Henry Cabot Lodge made a flaming speech in the Senate,

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attacking the League, and dragging in that old lumbering piece of controversial ordnance the Monroe Doctrine which he insisted must be made a part of the Covenant. In the furious debate hostile lines began to form in the Senate. A Senator from Georgia insisted on putting to the President a series of questions which included such inquiries as whether he was willing to revoke, deny and renounce the Declaration of Independence, and 'Do you believe in Fairies?'

Then a very decisive and dramatic crystallization of senatorial opinion took place, when on March 3rd, 1919, Henry Cabot Lodge rose in his seat and in tense silence moved 'that the Senate of the United States refuse to accept the constitution of the League of Nations as now proposed'.

No one knew better than Lodge that under the rules of debate such a resolution was out of order at this stage. He was allowed to make his speech and it served his purpose, of bringing out opposition to the President. Thirty-seven members of the Senate, supporters of Lodge, signed a document to say that they would have voted for the resolution if there had been an opportunity, and this became known as the 'Round Robin'.

The Senate now decided on a further mode of embarrassing the President. They held up financial legislation by a filibuster. Hour after hour, day after day, Senators made interminable irrelevant speeches, read long extracts from the Bible, ranted columns of the newspapers, until the end of the session, and the financial bills were not passed. The ulterior motive, of course, was to compel the President to summon a special session in which he would carry through the arrears of law-making and find the money needed to carry on the government. The Senators calculated that Woodrow Wilson would not care to be abroad from Washington during such an extraordinary session, and in this way they would succeed in keeping him away from Paris.

To Woodrow Wilson the Covenant of the League of Nations had become more important than domestic politics, more

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important than his own career. To carry this dream into the realm of statesmanship had become an obsession, and the dominating will latent in that austere face and lower jaw came into action. He cared no more for the malignancy of Henry Cabot Lodge, and he was resolved that a filibustering Senate should not defeat him on Capitol Hill any more than those loquacious politicians in the *Quai d'Orsay*. He announced that the Peace Conference demanded his presence in Paris, and five days after the 'Round Robin' had been made known to the world he sailed a second time to Europe.

The weary business at Paris seemed less exhausting and perhaps less important than those inveterate political conflicts at home. President Wilson was new to world affairs, but in the politics of his own country he was the greatest authority of his day, and he failed to judge of the scale between them. Says Mr. Winston Churchill: 'His sense of proportion operated in separate water-tight compartments. The difference in Europe, between France and Germany seemed trivial, petty, easy to adjust by a little good sense and charity. But the differences between Democrat and Republican in the United States! Here were really grave quarrels . . . Peace and goodwill among all nations abroad, but no truck with the Republican party at home.'

This political rancour in the life of Woodrow Wilson is no accident, and by no means originated in the controversy over the Treaty of Versailles. It goes back to the very start of his political career, indeed before its beginning, and passionate hatred of his foes was the strongest motive in his personality.

### 6

While the President was at home pacifying his foes in the U.S. Senate, the Peace Conference had not ceased its labours in Paris. Secretary Lansing was nominal head of the American delegation, but the real power of speaking for the President lay

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with Colonel House. And being a man of optimism he used his wonderful diplomatic flair and his power to see what the others wanted, and during the few brief weeks of the President's absence the pace of the conference gathered momentum. Even so, nearly all the important things still remained to be achieved. To end the state of war with Germany had become an urgent necessity, and interest in the Covenant of the League of Nations had languished.

Knowing nothing of this change of temperature, Woodrow Wilson was in excellent spirits on the voyage. His contact with the crafty politicians on Capitol Hill had braced him for renewed wrestling with the Machiavellian minds of the *Quai d'Orsay* where he was a lonely crusader, yet everyone on board felt that their President was a very human and simple person as they watched him join in the hymns and play shuffleboard.

When the American odyssey arrived once again at the Breton port, Woodrow Wilson sensed a change of political temperature, indeed a sudden touch of frost. Colonel House was there to make his report, and after their conversation the President looked ten years older. The Colonel had been too pliable, too influenced by the old diplomacy, and the President could not help exclaiming bitterly: 'Your dinner was a failure so far as getting together was concerned', heaping upon his friend blame for his own lack of success with those Senators who had sat so impervious at his dinner table.

The truth was that the Colonel was a politician and had perceived that the 'Round Robin' organized by Senator Lodge was a danger signal pointing to a cleavage in American opinion about the League. To save Wilson embarrassment, he had warily trimmed his sails to this new atmosphere, and now on landing Woodrow Wilson was horrified to learn that during his absence, the Covenant of the League had been allowed to drop into the background, and the conference had gone over to the idea that the Treaty of Peace must be drawn up first, leaving the League of Nations to be organized at some vague future



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time. Even on the quayside at Brest journalists were saying complacently to the American experts who had travelled with the President: 'Well, your League is dead.' Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, unable to contain her anger, exclaimed to her husband that Colonel House was a perfect jellyfish.

This time the President was housed in a private flat of less oppressive magnificence than the rococo mansion of his first visit, and as soon as he arrived he acted energetically to undo the mischief of Colonel House's concessions. An immediate Press statement was issued stating that the Peace Conference had already decided that the League of Nations should form an integral part of the peace treaty and that nothing had happened to change this decision. The situation was restored.

Edward M. House had been almost too accommodating. His notions of political strategy had been formed in State Conventions south of the Mason and Dixon line, where neat approximation of the various planks in a 'Party Platform' and a nice understanding of personal qualities and ambitions is more important than doctrinaire principles. He was not less sincere than his master, but the grim fighting determination of the President carried victory out of this temporary set-back at Paris, and thereafter no one dared to propose the slightest delay in the organization of the League.

In his study where hung a Rembrandt and two Goyas, Woodrow Wilson mused over the danger his sacred cause had only just escaped, and for the first time doubts about Colonel House began to steal into his mind. For seven years this man had been an alternative part of himself; together they had fought two Presidential elections, made political appointments, and together they had hatched out the precious embryo of the League Covenant. Wilson's masculine nature needed the soft and subtle ectoplasm that Edward Mandell House possessed in political affairs, and he, always the politician desirous to work through a stronger personality than his own, always knew when it was wise to give way. Woodrow Wilson by no means always

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accepted his advice, but he used that remarkable talent for diplomatic apprehension, and trusted House absolutely. But now journalists were saying that Colonel House was the secret power and real brain behind the Peace Conference, and that it might have been better if he were allowed to control the American delegation without the President.

Mrs. Wilson naturally brought these stories to her husband. There had been articles in certain American newspapers which were especially laudatory about the Colonel, and when the President's wife tackled him on the subject he blushed violently. Powerful forces which hated the Colonel's influence poured poison into Mrs. Wilson's ears. When she told the President he seemed troubled. 'I am sorry you hurt House, I would as soon doubt your loyalty as his,' he said.

Sudden estrangements from his closest friends had been a recurring feature of President Wilson's make-up, and now Edward House came under suspicion.

Was it possible that his friend had been internationalized and captured by the European spirit, and suddenly finding his own political maturity among the diplomats of Paris had cast off that devotion to Woodrow Wilson which had emotionally absorbed the politician from Texas?

Such a possibility unnerved Woodrow Wilson. There is no other way to describe the impact on his temperament which the breaking of such a friendship meant. This grim executive who appeared to the world so stern and self-reliant had an overwhelming need for personal friendship, and to those he trusted he gave one hundred per cent of his confidence. If they failed, the effect on his nerves was devastating. In deep caverns of personality, where he himself had hardly explored, doubts about Edward House gathered dangerously, and at a moment when the complexities of the conference were at their maximum he suffered inward malaise.

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### 7

Time had now become the most precious element in this momentous peacemaking. The French frontier and the Italian boundary line were subject to intense partisan pressures which recalled the bitter fluctuations of fronts during the war. During the President's absence the Japanese delegates had managed to manipulate the conference to such effect that they were a fair way to obtaining virtual possession of the vast province of China called Shantung with its thirty-six million Chinese inhabitants. Every day immense consequences followed the decisions of that handful of men talking quietly, and the patient experts who had maps and figures for everything were often disappointed that justice and scientific accuracy seemed to fade away in fierce passions.

To hurry matters on the council of ten became a council of four. There, facing the fireplace, the old 'tiger' Clemenceau lay back in his square brocaded chair, and frequently closed his eyes, touching the tips of his gloved fingers in a steely repose that missed no move in this complex game. The requirements and necessities of France impregnated every fibre of his being, and even French officials approached him nervously. He alone among the Big Four could speak English as well as French. On Clemenceau's right was Lloyd George whose electric mind seemed to anticipate the ideas of the other three almost before they were formed. Orlando, the Italian representative, was handicapped by the fact that he alone of the four had no language for direct speech with President Wilson, and soon, in a fury of indignation over what was decided about Trieste and Fiume, he was to quit Paris altogether.

When those anxious discussions of the council of four were over, President Wilson, like every other statesman, was the victim of every intriguer, crank and visionary who could present a plausible reason for seeing him — American Governors and philanthropists, delegations from Central Europe, chairmen

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and archbishops, well-meaning admirers came to present addresses. Names passed through his mind—Trieste, the Saar, Teschen, Tsing-Tao, each one the symbol of a hideous problem. In this maelstrom of political complication, he must hold fast to major objectives.

The most difficult was now to carry certain amendments to the Covenant which would undermine the objections of Henry Cabot Lodge. Though only a few weeks before the President had declared that the Covenant must be accepted without the change of a single comma, he saw the political wisdom of making certain minor concessions to Senatorial prejudice, and having persuaded the Big Four, much against their will, to discuss the Covenant once again, he now asked them to insert an article specifically mentioning the Monroe Doctrine, and declaring that it was unaffected by anything in the constitution of the League. When this was proposed a cataract of words from Clemenceau overwhelmed him. The French did not in the least wish to transgress the Monroe Doctrine which forbade European powers to meddle in American affairs; but they very much wanted to bind the United States to come to the aid of France were she to be threatened with outside aggression. In the end, and in return for the insertion of the Monroe Doctrine specifically in the Covenant, the President was obliged to promise Clemenceau a separate treaty of guarantee.

The struggle with these quick minds, the perpetual need to be alive and aware of these experienced verbal swordsmen, Clemenceau and Lloyd George, was wearing out the vitality of the President whose strength lay not in subtlety but in sincerity. While Lloyd George and Clemenceau were, in the words of Harold Nicolson, 'gloriously pachydermatous' over what the Press said about them, President Wilson retained his 'school-girl skin'. The atrocious cartoons which appeared every day in the French newspapers caused him mental distress which the thick-skinned tiger of France found it hard to comprehend. Wilson began to look utterly worn out, his face became haggard

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and his cheek twitched in a way that seemed an ominous signal. Nervously, his faithful private secretary wrote from Washington that this sort of mental pressure would wreck his constitution, to which the President replied with a grim echo of his old wit: 'Constitution? Why man I am living on my By-laws.'

The President of the United States was indeed suffering the agony of the isolation in which he had deliberately placed himself. Safe on his throne, leaving to others this sordid bargaining, and keeping the final decision for himself — then, so far as Europe was concerned, he would have been nearly omnipotent. Lloyd George when in a difficulty could take cover behind the British Parliament, and Clemenceau and Orlando had a similar refuge, but the President was the supreme executive: if he were to confess too often to his own political embarrassment with the Senators, he would lose face in Europe. The American Messiah's magical popularity had faded. Hoover, the chief usher of the White House, who was in charge of the President's household in Paris, wrote mournfully in his diary: 'No one seems satisfied any more. Even the people who were so wild about us when we first came seem to have lost interest in us now.' The President had to go on alone, while catastrophically his estrangement from Colonel House, the only man who knew the way into the labyrinth of his mind, grew wider month after month.

As a warning of the physical state of overstrained Europe, a ghastly pandemic influenza which was to kill more than had perished on the battlefield attacked Woodrow Wilson as a sign that his very constitution was as undermined as any starving European. For several days he remained in bed while the reduced council of four went on with business in the next room, and Colonel House carried in their proposals to the President. The interval gave him time to think.

World complications never ceased. Asia, impassive and formidable, showed her yellow face at the council table. The Japanese had already secured a foothold in Shantung, the

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richest province of China and birthplace of Confucius, and were now demanding a formal decision in favour of racial equality. The Italians were clamouring for Fiume, and the actual figure which the Germans could pay as reparations floated elusively over the conference. The President's influenza cleared up, but his spirits were depressed. The composure of his stern features was altered by an occasional twitching of the right side of his face, an ominous uncontrollable wink.

When he was told what had happened during his absence from the sittings of the Big Four, it seemed that everything for which he contended had been lost. 'If I have lost my fight, which I would not have done had I been on my feet, I will retire in good order,' he said. It seemed that his coming to Paris had been a mistake, and he had better pack up and return to the White House. It was announced that the President had ordered the *George Washington* to be sent for to take him back to America.

This thunderbolt reverberated round the world and its waves came back and overwhelmed the statesmen of Paris. The President was besieged, implored with requests that he should stay, that he should finish his work. The ten days which it would take for the ship to reach Europe were a respite and a sense of urgency came over the conference. Matters began to move. The President's desire to have the Monroe Doctrine incorporated in the Covenant was achieved, but only through a closure of the debate. Clemenceau ordered the volatile Parisian journalists to call off their lampoons of the President. The French agreed to accept a fifteen year occupation of the left bank of the Rhine. At last the League of Nations was brought to birth, and Woodrow Wilson made a speech of such bewitching eloquence that even the shorthand writers came under his spell.

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### 8

Each event in the life of Woodrow Wilson has to be seen in its shadow as well as its luminosity. Almost as soon as those bewitching words were spoken in Paris, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge sent a message to all his senatorial colleagues advising them not to commit themselves to an opinion on the Covenant until they had discussed it with him personally. His critical study of Woodrow Wilson had convinced Lodge that he could predict every manœuvre that the President would make in order to get the Treaty and Covenant passed by the U.S. Senate, and now with the intellectual zeal of a professional inventing a new gambit in chess, Henry Cabot Lodge prepared to forestall each move. His precise and well-trained mind operated crabwise in a series of calculated steps, and he appealed not only to the Senators of his own party but to the Democrats who did not care for the Covenant as it stood but would accept it with certain changes which were being called 'Reservations'. Lodge had to move carefully for by no means did even his own party accept his leadership wholeheartedly.

This senatorial opposition announced that the changes which Woodrow Wilson had risked his health to secure were not enough. Those who had demanded the insertion of the Monroe Doctrine in the Covenant, now complained that its being there was an insult to American sovereignty. The 'Irreconcilables' among the Senators began collecting money for a propaganda campaign, and it was soon obvious that no concessions, or reservations, or permutations would ever reconcile them to anything that Woodrow Wilson had made.

Fate had ordained a battle of personality in which Woodrow Wilson seemed to go out of his way to flaunt the Senate. He who had been the greatest living authority upon the American Constitution knew that the Senate's power to refuse assent to the Covenant was as unquestionable as his own to negotiate it at Paris. Yet he appeared resolved to humiliate them, to keep

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things back, to behave with a want of statesmanlike discretion that requires to be explained, and will become more clear in later chapters.

### 9

After his illness the President fought desperately to resist further concessions both from Paris and from Washington, for now he had political war on two fronts. The League of Nations had been achieved at terrific cost, and part of the price was still to be paid. Yet all through the final difficult negotiations, when many instalments of that hard bargain were extorted from him, he was inwardly confident that in the end the League would set all wrongs aright. There might be inequalities in the Treaty of Peace, but they could be regularized once the League of Nations had come to be a living tribunal of justice between sovereign states. The last few months of Woodrow Wilson's Peace odyssey give the impression that the wanderer who set out to Europe with such inexhaustible hope had lost his way. It was a desperate and pitiable time for the President. That reverent welcome which had been his only a few months before had now changed into open derision. The candles which Italian peasants burned before his picture were blown out angrily when he failed to satisfy Italian claims over Fiume, and the whole of Europe was now finding him a tiresome doctrinaire.

More than any other episode of those last few months, the settlement upon Shantung damaged Woodrow Wilson's reputation. The Japanese delegates claimed, as spoils of war, former German rights in this purely Chinese province, and now they disclosed a further aspiration, that the whole of Eastern Asia should be a Japanese sphere of influence, and quietly they intimated that if their demands for a foothold in Shantung were not granted they would quit the Peace Conference altogether.

Here was a nice dilemma for the high-minded President. He had little sympathy with Japanese ambitions, and he knew that



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all along the Pacific coast of America the yellow island power was more hated and feared than Germany. Yet if the Japs were to withdraw altogether from the Peace Conference it would mean a serious loss of prestige, and there were dark threats of an alliance between Japan, Germany and Bolshevik Russia.

Once more the League of Nations was the only hope. If Japan were allowed to have her way and given credit for good intentions, might not all be well? She had promised not to infringe Chinese rights in Shantung. Well, if this promise were not fulfilled, China could always appeal to the League, and Japan would be called to order. Placing the responsibility on the good fairy, he acquiesced, and the Japs were allowed their way in Shantung. In return for the substance of this immense and tangible concession, they were prepared to give up, as a mere shadow, their earlier claim for a declaration of racial equality. The little men bowed politely, betraying no emotion over the prize they had won by their blackmail of the great European powers, while the President tried to subdue his own haunting fears that what he had done was unjust.

The Chinese submitted their wrongs to the 'impartial judgment of the world', and refused to sign the peace treaty while Senator Hiram Johnson of California, a politician who had swung his state around to support Woodrow Wilson in 1916, now decided that the man who had agreed to the settlement of Shantung was the arch enemy of American democracy.

While the Big Four had been almost exclusively engaged with political questions, a council of economic experts worked out the actual figure that Germany must pay in reparation for the damage caused by the war. While the statesmen were worried by frontiers, plebiscites and national sovereignty, the Supreme Economic Council were counting railway wagons, measuring coalfields, and deciding how many coastal ships Germany could be allowed to keep. On this council the British representative was a young man from Cambridge who could not help allowing his imagination to travel beyond mere

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calculations into the realm where those sordid actualities were translated into political engagements. He saw that traffic along the Elbe, the Rhine and the Danube depended upon trade belonging to the states bordering those rivers, and frontiers which took no account of such commercial necessities seemed to him quite meaningless. Those proposals, amendments and concessions which represented the daily work of the Big Four were leading only to an illusion of permanency based upon inherent impossibility of performance. The name of this clear-sighted economist was John Maynard Keynes.

Above all, he was shocked at the figure which the Allies expected the Germans to pay in reparations. He himself estimated two thousand million pounds as a sum which would be reasonable: whereas the Supreme Economic Council wanted to exact ten times this amount. The German plenipotentiary was to say when he heard terms of the treaty: 'Those who sign this treaty will sign the death sentence of millions of German men and women.' To that argument Keynes could see no answer, and when he could not persuade the Supreme Council he not only resigned his seat as the British delegate but he took his troubles to General Smuts who was also critical of some parts of the treaty. Smuts advised him to write a book setting forth for the world what dangers he saw in the settlement of Versailles. It was to be not a treatise for the specialist such as a Cambridge Don would naturally write, but a popular book, a message to the whole world, almost a work of propaganda.

John Maynard Keynes took this advice, and his book became a best seller, read by half a million people. It was called: *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. But its earliest and most paradoxical consequence was upon the career of Woodrow Wilson. Keynes had provided the President's enemies with their perfect weapon, sharpened for the coming battle in the Senate.

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I O

Six months after the guns had ceased to fire on the Western Front and the last soldiers had crawled out of their dugouts and wearily stretched their arms, the Treaty of Peace with Germany, a document of over 400 clauses, which included the Covenant of the League, was ready to be signed by twenty-seven nations. This was the 'infamous *Diktat*' which ten years later the ingenious propaganda of Hitler was to use as a torch to light fires of hatred.

The question which now worried the negotiators of Paris was 'Will the Germans be willing to sign?' The weariness of those months had produced intense relief, but champions of the new world order began to fear they had divided the skin before the bear was properly killed. Anxiously they asked Marshal Foch whether he possessed sufficient force to compel acceptance, and the German plenipotentiaries were summoned to Versailles. In stammered sentences Count Brockdorff Rantzau gave out the first whispers of German exculpation, but the world remembered a much sterner treaty which the Germans had dictated to the Russians at Brest Litovsk. The plenipotentiaries retired to draw up the German answer to the 400 articles of peace.

At last, at the end of a breathless pause, the Germans gave way. Paris went mad. Twenty-five thousand American soldiers were the lions of the hour, thronging the boulevard cafés, cheering, wildly waving flags, overturning taxicabs and dragging ornamental cannons from their places.

With characteristic insensitiveness, the Germans renewed their complaint of the injustice of the peace they were obliged to sign, while the people of injured France and devastated Belgium contemptuously licked their wounds.

The stern sentences of the Allied reply to the German protestations were written by Woodrow Wilson himself, and there was no forgiveness in the Presbyterian-severity of his denunciation. Yet while he condemned the Germans with a hatred that

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was so powerful an element in his nature, his soul was at ease as he thought of the League of Nations. There indeed was an instrument superior to all hatred, and it was at the disposal of all mankind, eventually including Germans, and he was content that he had brought to pass this new Covenant of righteousness and peace. Treaty with the enemy and Covenant of Peace had been mingled together like eggs in an omelette and the world must swallow it whole. Revenge and reconciliation were so mixed that no man would ever separate them.

It would have been simpler to agree with Colonel House and Clemenceau, to take the peace treaty first, and then with patient deliberation work out the constitution of the League of Nations, and this line of action would undoubtedly have made things more acceptable for the U.S. Senate. Senator Lodge understood the need to hammer out a peace agreement with a conquered Germany, but why this haste to federate the whole world? Those cool men of Paris and Washington who watched the President's impassioned manœuvring for an ideal unification which they could not share, found it incomprehensible that any reasonable man could refuse to take things in their due and proper order: first, in heaven's name, the peace for which the world was yearning; then, after proper discussion, the League of Nations. But why in the name of logic try to accomplish two incompatibles at the same moment? But history is not made by cool men, or upon reasonable and moderate principles.

The real reason for his demonic insistence that Treaty and League must go together is found in Wilson's need to balance his aggressiveness with a healing harmony of love. No man was so capable of hatred. By introspection he was conscious of this hatred, and there swept over him a need to atone for it by repentance. This simple feeling of penitent compensation, strong in a very religious man such as Woodrow Wilson, is the secret of why he always needed to balance his loathing of the individual by a more embracing love for mankind, and to make the compromise acceptable to his soul, it had to be

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embodied in a single act, the fabrication of his unique mind, so that no man would ever be able to separate the hatred from the love. He burned hot and cold simultaneously. No man hated his enemies more violently, and no man was ready to make such sacrifices for an ideal. Great 'realists' like Clemenceau could never understand such a dualistic nature, and we shall see that the enemies of Woodrow Wilson, at each stage in his career, found the same difficulty, and labelled him 'hypocrite'.

### II

In the hall of mirrors of the palace which Louis XIV built at Versailles, two apprehensive Germans were waiting to add two solitary German signatures to a treaty for which the delegates of 16 nations had laboured for six months, and, in that brilliant moment, no Frenchman forgot that less than half a century before those same superb mirrors reflected another ceremonial signing at which the German tongue was heard in strident arrogance. But today, everything is the other way round, and the two unwilling Teutons knew they were signing their own death warrants.

In the centre of the gallery, between the gentlemen of the Press at one end, and the privileged public at the other, is the green horseshoe table where Woodrow Wilson sits beneath gilded arches. We can see them still, at one frozen moment, in Orpen's painting, Clemenceau and Lloyd George and many others. The President tranquilly holds a document in his hand, all passion spent in an exceeding calm of mind. From that canvas he looks quizzically at us, and seemingly at his enemies behind us, as though in this great moment of victory he had penetrated their motives.

If only now, he seemed to say, instead of these stupid crest-fallen Germans, he could meet face to face those New Jersey politicians who had opposed him, if only he were permitted to scorn certain trustees of Princeton University who had belittled

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him, if only Senator Henry Cabot Lodge had been there, that indeed would be a triumph.

Unwilling automatons, the two Germans put their names to the parchment that inaugurated the League of Nations, while great guns roared outside in the park. Wearing the purple clothes, purple hat and feather, perhaps to establish a semi-regal status of a President's wife, Mrs. Woodrow Wilson looked on, and as Colonel House stepped forward to add his signature she heard a voice beside her whispering: 'Please just let me stand long enough to see my lamb sign.' It was Mrs. House speaking, and as she watched that slight figure go up to the table did she have a prevision that this was the last time when her husband would meet the President face to face? Neither of them knew that this day, when the League which they had laboured for came forth as an historic fact, was to be for each of them the end of an old song.

The President had taken on single-handed the powers of darkness at Paris; he had practised a politician's craft against other politicians superbly gifted. There is no need to think of him as an innocent warring with guileful Europeans and cornered by a magic which he was too slow to understand. In subtlety, perhaps, he was below Clemenceau and Lloyd George, but he far outmatched them in stubborn tenacity. In Woodrow Wilson's European excursion we ought to see victory and not defeat.

Now at home in Washington the President of the United States was to face a political cunning that was much more destructive of idealism than anything he had encountered in Paris. In the end, it was not the crookedness of Europe which destroyed the League of Nations, but the isolationism of America, and the most tragic part of Woodrow Wilson's life opened on the day he and Colonel House signed the treaty on behalf of the United States, and sowed the bitter seed of their own repudiation.

The strange story of the battle with the U.S. Senate which

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occupies the next twelve months arises not from the League of Nations, but in Woodrow Wilson's political past. Before he had become a world statesman, he had been a party politician. The idealistic self which conquered the imagination of Europe was no more than the visible crest of the iceberg of which the greater part was hidden from those who did not know of Woodrow Wilson's earlier life. The tale of those years before the first World War helps to illuminate the last bitter twelve months so that it is interesting to break off the President's public career when he returns to America in the summer of 1919, and go back to explore the mystery which perplexed the world.

## CHAPTER II

### A BOY FROM THE BACKWARD SOUTH

THAT Woodrow Wilson who waved his silk hat to the Marines on the deck of the *George Washington* as he returned to America with the Covenant in his pocket was a different person from the man who set out to Europe six months earlier. In that interval he had learned much, known what it was to be World Messiah, with intimations that he was now to suffer martyrdom. Outwardly he was happy and optimistic. Who could fail to extract satisfaction out of that great achievement of matching wits with the statesmen of Europe?

In that strenuous life of sixty-three years which has aged him greatly beyond the usual, Woodrow Wilson has played many parts, and having followed the great actor at the height of his maturity, we may now go back to the earliest impersonation of his genius, that of the precocious boy from the backward South — that is the southern part of the United States which fought the North in the Civil War.

Europeans make the mistake of thinking that because America is 'a new country' that personal background does not matter. But there is no nation in the world where tradition means more, and where knowing where people have been born tells us so much of their lives. In this continent of a single nationality race still means a great deal. All Frenchmen, Englishmen, Chinese have background in common: but how can an American ranger from Texas feel the same as his fellow American a Jewish tailor from New York City?

Woodrow Wilson's family sprang on both sides from that flinty Picto-Irish race which spreads over south-west Scotland and Northern Ireland, and emigrated to the New World in hundreds of thousands. The stock produced the Cameronians, the Seceders and the Disrupters, it gave birth to Robert Burns



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and Thomas Carlyle: a breed of men racially religious, always ready to take to the hills and make a covenant with their stormy and revengeful god; and equally prepared at his bidding to pull down kings from their thrones. All these features lived on in Woodrow Wilson. His mother was actually born in Carlisle on the Scottish border, but the minister she married, the Reverend Joseph Wilson, was one generation more American, though in outlook still very much the shrewd and genial product of Northern Ireland.

Now comes the second important element in Woodrow Wilson's formation. His parents lived in the South, in Virginia and Georgia, where they shared a whole way of life, an emotional outlook, a poetry and angle of seeing things which was partly English, part Colonial and entirely romantic, for it was 'the old South' before the Civil War. His father had been chaplain in the Confederate Army, and when he was a school-boy he had seen whole streets of war-blackened houses.

The Civil War — that gigantic tragedy between the states, costing half a million young men — meant to America what no European ever quite understands, and upon Woodrow Wilson's generation the war and its aftermath made an impression of peculiar horror. Slavery had been killed, but its corpse remained to poison the air, and the mental energy of the people passed into romantic nostalgia. Woodrow Wilson's early years were spent among memories of shooting and burning, and as a child of five in Georgia he remembered the cotton being piled up to be sacrificed in the hope that the Yankee General would spare the houses. He said: 'The only place where nothing has ever to be explained to me is the South.' Both his father and mother had been born in the lifetime of the last 'King of America', George III, who is remembered more in American history than in English. The year of Woodrow's birth also produced Mr. George Bernard Shaw. At that time Darwin's 'origin of species' was still a novelty, and Cyrus Field was spinning his magic thread between Europe and America.

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Compared to him, Lloyd George and Clemenceau were modern men, living in the present, glorifying the future. But the President of the United States was a man of tradition, a product of Presbyterianism and the old South.

### 2

His father, the Reverend Joseph Wilson, was one of those popular preachers who are called frequently to larger and wealthier congregations, and he was not too spiritual to smoke a pipe, take a glass of whisky toddy and exchange good stories.

Once a member of his congregation said to the pastor: 'Why, doctor Wilson, your horse is better groomed than you are yourself.' 'That is because I look after my horse myself, whereas I have only my congregation to look after me,' replied the minister. A vigorous personality in a large body, a strong humorous face fringed with whiskers below the chin in the approved Presbyterian style, old Dr. Wilson was nevertheless a contradictory nature. Beneath this worldly and genial outside lay the militant fanaticism of the Celt.

Woodrow, or Tommy as he was known in the early years, spent his boyhood in different small towns in Georgia and North Carolina, but always with the same mental background. He was the minister's son, and therefore a privileged boy among those sleepy aristocrats, poor whites and black mammies, and in each place he knew, there was the dignified manse among elm trees, from where he would set out in a buggy, driving his mother to pay calls in the old colonnaded mansions and Negro cabins. The America of New York, of the prairies and manufacturing cities was worlds away, and Europe was romance and history. He read books in his father's tobacco-reeking study. He was rather too delicate for games, did not mix much with other boys.

The bespectacled minister's boy loved to listen to his father preaching, and he would try out his own voice up in the pulpit,

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and roll out his glowing sentences to the empty church. To be eloquent, to rule people through words, that was the flavour of his young ambition, and the Reverend Joseph encouraged him. Tommy greatly admired his father, but he was not father fixated, and had no desire to become a Presbyterian minister. The female influence was very strong in him, and indeed his mother had handed to him the genes of a line of Calvinistic ministers — the Woodrows — who were in every way as god-fearing as his father, and in some ways more extreme in their religious views.

Mrs. Wilson, the former Jessie Woodrow from Carlisle, was a reserved, stand-offish person devoted to her house and her family. She was 'English' enough to embarrass her Georgian and North Carolinian neighbours. She seemed slightly superior; they scented criticism in her quiet looks and formal ways, and certainly these characteristics descended markedly to her son. Though he could be very charming when he wished, Tommy was never to be a good mixer, never a 'man's man' like his father. Talking to his mother and sisters, the masculine privilege of describing his ideas before a receptive audience of women, was more congenial.

Doctor Wilson's Ministerial odyssey ended at Wilmington, North Carolina, a pleasant seaport town, full of gracious pillared mansions going back to before the Civil War. Here Tommy spent his adolescence and his holidays from college. He had become bookish, but by no means brilliant; he could hardly read until he was nine years old, but one day he made his father chuckle with laughter. After reading some learned work the boy announced that he had discovered he possessed 'a first-class mind'. That piece of boyish conceit amused the Reverend Joseph, though as a man of the world he must have been nervous as to how such a boy would turn out later. He wondered how much truth there was in this latest notion of Tommy's. Many have wondered since, and the world has not quite been able to decide about Tommy Wilson's mental powers.

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His boyhood had been anything but characteristic of America. He went through no hardship, no pioneering in a covered wagon, no contact with primordial nature in prairies and mountains, no experience of the American frontier. Woodrow Wilson's background was as ordered and civilized as in an eighteenth-century colony. These exclusive ways of the Presbyterian manse were not what Andrew Carnegie encountered in a suburb of Pittsburg. Nor were they the surroundings of New England which produced Longfellow, Emerson and Henry Cabot Lodge. Woodrow Wilson belonged to the 'Reconstructed' yet apathetic South, which had fallen behind the rest of the United States and seemed temporarily to have lost the capacity to generate great Americans. If ever there was a place calculated to produce frustration and neurosis in a dynamic young man, it was the air of these lovely half-alive towns of the South. He is enervated by the air. He puts his whole effort into the intellectual life.

Assuredly, thought the Reverend Joseph, Tommy will do something good when he goes up to Princeton College, with all that reading and those big ideas of his, but what it might be he could not quite decide. His faithful negro factotum named David Bryant, remembered that once in a mood of sentimental rapture the old man had said that one day Mr. Tommy would run for President of the United States, and that David must go and register the vote of a father who would not be there. Thirty years later, David Bryant did not forget to carry out old Dr. Wilson's wishes. But even then it was the father who seemed to him more impressive than the son: 'Mr. Tommy may have the office, but the old doctor — ah, he had the style,' said the old admiring negro.

Woodrow was growing ambitious, but he did not desire in the least to become a Presbyterian minister. His thoughts centred in a picture of the great Mr. Gladstone who was then dominating the British Parliament, about which Woodrow thirstily absorbed everything he could read. In fact Westminster became

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his lifelong obsession. If only he could have been a Prime Minister, making wonderful orations to Mr. Speaker, and leading an obedient majority of faithful Liberals. That impossible dream left behind it a hard germ of practical purpose: could he himself, Tommy Woodrow Wilson, not achieve in America the sort of thing which Gladstone had done at Westminster?

### 3

When Tommy went up to Princeton in 1876, the old college was nothing but a group of very plain buildings set among tall elm trees in a tiny village of frame houses. It lay in the state of New Jersey, half way between New York City and Philadelphia. Here the American Declaration of Independence had actually been ratified in the chapel of the college, the 'old Nassau' hall where degrees were also conferred, but Princeton was not by any means a great university and none of the splendid Gothic halls of today had been erected. The first day when he walked those quiet streets, Tommy Wilson felt his heart leap. Here was a place where his imagination might grow: a library, debating clubs and a beautiful background: everything he asked of life.

On first reaching college with his father's black bag, Tommy Wilson was too nervous to present his father's letter of introduction to the venerable Dr. McCosh, the President of Princeton, and he slipped into the life of the college on his own merits, and established himself in one of the boarding-houses that surrounded the campus. Of course, he joined the old debating society 'The Whig' which happened to have been founded by a former President of the United States — James Madison, and there Woodrow's Southern voice was heard frequently. With him public speaking was no frivolous display of verbosity, it was a solemn exercise. He polished his speeches as his father polished his sermons, and they were much admired. The young gentlemen of Princeton then, regarded a college

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debator much as later generations thought of the baseball gladiator, and Woodrow practised elocution, imitated Burke and Demosthenes. Mr. Gladstone appeared to him far superior to any of the hundreds of orators on Capitol Hill in Washington, and the British idea of a Prime Minister leading a party in the House of Commons and resigning when he no longer commanded a majority, seemed to Woodrow a sublime method of government. He himself was destined to be a leader and a statesman. Like a mighty conviction, a religious conversion, came that revelation — personal leadership. He was meant to show the way. He was destined to teach others to follow, and since America was a democratic country, the way to achieve this was by means of ideas and the power of words.

To prepare himself for such a destiny he was ready to wait a long while, until his style of speaking, his grasp of the science of government were properly matured. He began to realize that no one else but himself could educate Woodrow for this role, and from the age of twenty-one he took his development obstinately in his own hands.

The young men of Princeton College wore sidewhiskers and black silk neckties, narrow brimmed hats and gold watch-chains, and among these decorous seeming boys, Woodrow Wilson was exceptionally serious and religious.

His father still regretted that he was not to be a minister of religion, yet Tommy's whole personality was coloured by the spirit and outlook of the old man who need not have despaired: his son was to be one of the great moral leaders of the age. He was to occupy a pulpit for the whole of his life.

At the age of twenty-three Woodrow graduated, but with no distinction, and returned home to the manse in North Carolina where his father, mother and sisters listened to his enthusiastic descriptions of the Princeton debates, certain that he was marked out to be a great man. After the first transports they asked the important question: 'What was Tommy going to *be*?' He himself thought the question superfluous. Of course, he

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was going to be a leader, a statesman: but the family naturally answered: 'Oh, you mean to go into politics, run for Congress.' But that was not Woodrow's idea at all. Quite the reverse. He had a very poor opinion of American Congressmen, and the way in which the United States was governed did not command his approval. No, he was certainly not prepared to run after 'political honours' as they were understood in North Carolina.

By a process of excluding all other trades, professions and callings, Woodrow Wilson decided to enter the law as more likely to bring him where he wished to be than the church, or medicine, or commerce.

Each of the forty-eight states has its own code of laws, its Senate, House and Legal Tribunals. There are forty-eight State Governors, forty-eight Supreme Courts and side by side with the State Courts are the Federal Courts and, of course, at Washington, the President, Congress and Supreme Court. Legalism is in the air. It invades every business, every discussion of progress. To become a man of power in the United States, an ambitious youth finds a knowledge of law very useful, and so, just as the country gentleman in Shakespeare's England studied Common Law at the Inns of Court, the young man from North Carolina now decided he must go again to college this time to specialize in jurisprudence. 'The profession I chose was politics: the profession I entered was the law. I entered the one because I thought it would lead to the other,' he said later.

For his second academic venture Woodrow Wilson chose the University of Virginia, the state where he had been born. This college had been designed eighty years before, by Thomas Jefferson, third President of the U.S.A. The quadrangle has an atmosphere of dreamlike beauty. Enclosing a grass centre which rises gently towards the pillared rotunda where the library is, rows of buildings in the colonial style reveal their formal design of white colonnades shaded by old trees. Its

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appearance is Georgian and Greek, the very opposite of the Gothic arches of Princeton.

Wilson's college rooms were not far from where that wild Virginian of genius, Edgar Allan Poe, had studied sixty years before. Today a bronze tablet recalls the two years Wilson spent there learning the law, and describes him, in the phrase of Horace, as a man *Tenax propositi*, one who formed his own conviction and held to it.

No more at Virginia than at Princeton did Wilson swerve from his own methods of self-education by debating societies, books, writing articles and arguing. Two years at the University of Virginia passed quickly yet he was seemingly not much nearer his real work in life.

### 4

For all his strenuous success at two colleges something was wrong inside, and when he was nearly twenty-five, old enough to have chosen a career and embarked upon it, Woodrow had a breakdown in health and had to go back to the manse for a year and a half.

As we survey Wilson's life we meet these regular breakdowns of health like full stops. Overwork is usually given as the cause of these periodic calamities, but their true origin was in the emotions. Woodrow's flaming sincerity flared into the hearts of those he liked, and there was aggressiveness even in his love. When he thought himself rebuffed, by man or woman, this devouring flame came back and scorched his own feelings and made him physically ill.

The young man who spouted Gladstone and wrote like Macaulay had formed the habit of taking week-ends off to visit his birth-place. His father's old church had now become a ladies' seminary, and there lived a young girl cousin who suddenly set his fancy on fire. For months Woodrow poured out love letters, and they had wonderful evenings in his aunt's



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drawing-room. But the young lady did not care for Woodrow. Perhaps she found him too prosy, and it may be that she thought him pretentious and conceited. And with the unfathomable wisdom of young love, she exercised her privilege of saying 'No' to a future President of the United States. Woodrow went back home to console himself with the admiration of his mother and sisters.

Here he tarried on a further year, with Gladstone and Edmund Burke as his daily teachers, and his head full of parliamentary majorities. He would put the family mare Nelly in the shafts and drive the buggy around the shabby streets of Wilmington, and while his mother paid the calls Woodrow would dream about the book he would write one day. And after supper his mother would do her embroidery while he read aloud. He was a model son and showed no pioneer ambition to quit the comfortable home.

At last he nerved himself to make a start as a lawyer, as so many famous Americans had opened their careers. He chose the city of Atlanta (Georgia) and here he hung out his sign, furnished his office and attended the Presbyterian church wearing a silk hat. It was like home, on a larger, but hardly grander, scale. Woodrow even put in appearances at the courts! Once a stray negro charged with petty larceny accepted his services, otherwise he never had a brief. And the great speeches he might have delivered in that Atlanta court-house remained inside his brain. As a lawyer Woodrow Wilson did not give himself even the opportunity to be a failure. Brief contact with his mediocre brethren before the Atlanta Bar cured him of any desire to practise seriously. They were beneath his notice, and to them he was only a tiresome youngster, too proud to mix.

Abraham Lincoln, with none of Wilson's academic education, had learned human nature in the circuit courts of Illinois, and Wilson's composition contained none of the earth and granite of honest Abraham, and this fastidious young man who had

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resolved that his career should be made up of the finest materials only, had no dash of commonness, and never attained kinship with the great average.

Once again he was back home at the manse in North Carolina, walking by the sea to shout his frustrations to the wind, singing madrigals with the young ladies, escorting his mother on her calls, turning sentences in his study.

This well-read scholar, who had attended two universities, now decides to enter a third. He cannot conquer the world, so he must fly back to classrooms and remain the perpetual student.

There must have been head shakings in the Wilmington manse when Woodrow announced that he needed just a final polish, just one more course of study, this time at a new post-graduate college which a successful Quaker merchant named Johns Hopkins had established at Baltimore.

### 5

But his brief experience of the law in Georgia did have one momentous result. His sole client was his mother, and one day to look after her property Woodrow visited a little town called Rome, and while listening to a sermon in the Presbyterian church his eyes happened to stray to a head of light brown hair. After the service he lost no time in calling upon the minister, and being introduced to a very engaging daughter whose name was Ellen Axson. That was not his last visit to Rome, and the girl from the manse soon became an audience of one, who listened to the most interesting and talkative young man she had ever met. Her large brown eyes opened wide, and she took this revelation into her heart. Ellen Axson herself was a serious young woman, and this extraordinary boy was her first encounter with a world beyond that sleeping main street of Rome. She was a girl of less dogmatic faith, but wider sympathies than he. She was tormented with religious doubts

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that never came to the firmly believing Woodrow, but she introduced him to the world of art which he had left quite unexplored at two universities.

With her blessing Woodrow passed two years at Johns Hopkins, and his programme did not vary an inch.

Before his desk gleamed the motto: *History is past politics and politics is present History*, and in every sentence he insisted on speaking as though Edmund Burke were still alive. This terrible intensity of his which we are to see at every stage in his life, is now attached to books, and books and books. But he never goes near the Congress at Washington, he seems to have no curiosity that way. He can find all he wants to know about American politics in a library: besides, those Senators and Congressmen on Capitol Hill are such wretched speakers.

He makes a card index of references and, suddenly caught in worship of Teutonic thoroughness, he plans to go to Germany — for still more study. Left to himself, Woodrow Wilson might have continued his intellectual pilgrimage from one university to another, pursuing that *ignis fatuus* of perfect scholarship. Fortunately for him, and for the world, there was a determined young woman in a manse in Georgia.

Ellen Axson duly insisted that he spend a second post-graduate year at Johns Hopkins while she went to New York to study painting, but after that they were married, when he was twenty-nine and she several years younger. The young research student was offered his first job to teach young Quaker ladies in a newly founded college at Bryn Mawr near Philadelphia. Now that he had a wife of his own he was quite ready to take on any number of blue stockinged ladies, and he settled down in a wooden house among dripping trees in a forest. There his first class for the study of constitutional history consisted of a single girl, and presiding over the institution there was a formidable Dean, whose opinion of masculine wisdom was not that of those muslin-clad ladies who had loved to be entertained by his conversation in the drawing-

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rooms at home. The Dean, it has been said, 'grasped in her masterful hand the soft boneless stuff of her sex', and the young professor of history found himself snubbed whenever he ventured to think outside the technical part of his work. He suffered from another disadvantage. Following his usual contemptuous habit towards academic convention, he had come away from Johns Hopkins without taking a doctor's degree, and he discovered that among the militant feminists of Bryn Mawr being a man was bad enough, but being only plain *Mister Wilson* left him almost without any status at all. Under urgent persuasions from Mrs. Wilson he applied to Johns Hopkins for its doctorate, offering as his thesis a book which he had composed in those delicious years of dream-study at Baltimore. It was called *Congressional Government*, and was an attempt to expound the whole intricate working of the American system of government. Woodrow Wilson's lengthy self-education had actually produced an original pearl.

The American Constitution had operated for a whole century, and he now made intellectual history by describing the separate parts of that extraordinary organism, and illustrating the marvels of its function. For a hundred years Americans had lived and died under their government, taken it for granted, but in this book they woke up to see what it was really like. Reviewers and heads of colleges, who were supposed to know about these things, realized they had been close to a most interesting monster, full of strange organs and vestigial parts which a young professor had vivisected with the method of a political zoologist.

Running through it was the English bias, that prejudice in favour of Prime Minister leadership which made one friend say that Woodrow Wilson should have been a statesman at Westminster rather than an American politician. That in every possible way he was disqualified to be. That, in the most authoritative sense, he was to become.

Now, he could wear his doctor's gown among the intellectual

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ladies of Bryn Mawr, which was some comfort to the young professor who found it hard to live upon his professorial salary. Other matters besides the American Constitution now occupied his thoughts, for two baby girls had been born in that wooden house on the campus, and by the light of an oil lamp their father began to weave a new kind of mental fabric out of that accumulated learning of his. In the past he had been rather scornful of the ordinary person's capacity to comprehend the great truths of history, but now he found that the labour of learning these things gave him a way into the imagination of America. After lectures to his few admiring girl students, who did not all share the formidable ideas of the Dean, between amusing attempts at domesticity when he chopped wood and put the babies to bed, rising above his dreamy, ambitious and Southern self-frustrations, he began to organize his knowledge to write a really popular book on the history of the United States.

Often he ground his teeth that he had achieved so little, and compared to those men with whom he was to match wits later it was true that he was buried in obscurity, a mere dreamer beside a kerosene lamp, a late starter in the political race. At his age Lloyd George was already a Member of Parliament with a reputation, and Georges Clemenceau had been elected, and also defeated, as Mayor of Montmartre. Walter Hines Page, a talkative young man whom Wilson had run across in Atlanta, afterwards to be American Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, was already the editor of an influential magazine. They had all made their first impression on the life of the world, but here was Woodrow Wilson only starting to write a sort of bible, a long chronicle of American life from the Red Indian to President Lincoln. Among the dripping trees he begins to spin that vast historical web, while Ellen encourages him, and when a chance comes for him to go to teach at another college he jumps at it and lands in quite a different sort of establishment called Wesleyan University in

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Connecticut, where his textbook and his name had gone before him.

It is a new life, but he carries it on in the old strenuous way. His class of history is made up this time of men students, and it braces him to have their vibrating opposition. He can reserve his feminine contacts to drawing-rooms, where women can be ladies without trying to be learned, and where they love to hear the talk of a clever man. At Wesleyan he can organize a debating society on the lines of the British House of Commons, where the students can learn how to defeat governments in the approved method which the professor of history tells them is so superior. Just when the Faculty of Wesleyan were looking upon him as one of their irreplaceable ornaments, he heard a note that began the longed-for theme in the symphony of his career: a call to go back to Princeton, and the admiring New Englanders pleaded in vain.

### 6

An American college president, says James Bryce that great anatomist of American public life, is better known than even a railroad magnate. He has the power that comes from successful authority, and on his own campus he can be the next thing to omnipotent, more like a bishop in Europe. Learning is based, in an American college, firmly upon a pedestal of finance and good administration. In England the public estimates universities more for their indefinable prestige and for the magic of their sportsmanship than for intellectual eminence that is theirs. In America it is otherwise. A college has to be a commercial success. Its president, like the head of a great corporation, has to make his work a conspicuous achievement, for academic competition is severe.

Woodrow Wilson was now to be twelve years as professor, before they made him President of Princeton. For the next twelve years no shadows hang over the young teacher who

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moves back in Princeton village, with his wife and three little girls. His father's friend, the venerable Dr. McCosh, has been succeeded by President Patton, but otherwise things are much the same as when he left. The great elm trees still brood over the peaceful streets lit by oil lamps, cornfields come to the college windows and at night the rural silence is broken only by outbursts of student singing in the dormitories.

Professor Wilson teaches a mixture of constitutional history and law, and all his favourites, Edmund Burke, Gladstone and Bagehot, walk frequently in and out of lectures along that highroad of history that begins somewhere in seventeenth-century England and goes through colonial America to the days of the Civil War of Reconstruction in the South, the days of the professor's youth. He always went back to origins; no German scholar was ever more thorough in his method of reaching the facts, and as he grew on towards the age of forty he had explored most of the highroads and the by-ways of history. He had discovered the American people walking along those roads of destiny and conducted by their great leaders. The incorruptible George Washington, an Englishman who found the American nation and bundled King George the Third out of the New World; Thomas Jefferson, that queer philosopher of individualism and personal liberty whose most tangible memorial was his inspired amateur architecture at the University of Virginia; the equalitarian President Andrew Jackson, at whose inauguration in 1828 the joyous democrats burst into the White House and consumed the presidential whisky and presidential cigars; and greatest of all, the melancholy giant of Illinois, who held the Union together, who freed the slaves, the man who in Woodrow Wilson's Southern childhood in Georgia and North Carolina had been symbolic of all that was bad — Abraham Lincoln.

Inspired by what John Richard Green had done for the British people, Woodrow Wilson wrote the epic story of the march of the American people towards their unknowable

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future. In a by-lane of Princeton village it grew into five heavy volumes. Those well-illustrated books were on sale in parts of America where no other book had ever been seen except the Bible, and through it hundreds and thousands of Americans began to feel about them the mighty wind of history.

Part of the authority of this *History of the American People* came from his exact knowledge and severe style. He had schooled himself, by long years of imitation, to write like Burke, Macaulay and half a dozen other masters of the language, and this in a land where the use of the English tongue was free and formless made him stand out like a classical temple in a village of wooden huts. The history is majestic, though heavy in reading, and like those lectures he gave at Princeton it made people take him very respectfully.

He said himself: 'I wrote the history of the United States in order to learn it.'

Today those pages seem to us rather stuffy, and the ponderous style, like an old-fashioned production of a Shakespeare play, tells us more than words what sort of men our ancestors were at the beginning of the twentieth century to which they looked forward so eagerly as the age of hope, and could not foresee that for us it has come to seem more like the epoch of despair.

One other revelation which came to him from the teaching of an American named Frederick Jackson Turner was the fact that America of the last hundred years had been not a fixed colonial community, made up of traditions handed down from the early settlers, but a restless, proliferating, migrating body of men and women, who were always moving on towards another frontier. They trekked to Kansas, they crossed the mountains to Utah, they swept up into the forests of Wisconsin and Minnesota, they followed gold and oil in California — but never in four or five generations did they ever feel themselves to be stable and stationary. There was always one more frontier to cross, one more new life to be conquered.



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And the reserved professor who had lived so long in small Southern towns suddenly woke up to the frontier himself. He crossed many frontiers, intellectual and emotional, in learning and teaching the past.

These quiet professorial years in the life of Woodrow Wilson that seem so lacking in any feature or significant event, were indeed the period of a great mental change, in fact they were a revolution of his mind. Until now he had lived in quiet places, North Carolina, Virginia, Wesleyan College, which in their outlook were still strongly flavoured with the settled outlook of colonial America. He had gone so far back, explored so much, that the past came to an end and now he was compelled to go forward, and the laborious student of history became a man who placed future progress before everything. Much study and romantic learning had made him a revolutionary, but few of the professors in this old college realized the fact that in that dignified house in the sleepy lane, their colleague in his library was forming ideas as little in conformity with his environment as Karl Marx in the British Museum. His notebooks, references and articles might cover centuries gone by, but the work on which he was really engaged was nothing less than a chapter in the history of the future, of the age when his little girls, Margaret, Eleanor and Jessie, would be grown-up ladies of the twentieth century. He had learned history, not to remember what happened in the past, but to find out where the American people were going: and once he had discovered that his own instinct as a leader compelled him to show them the way. History which attracts so many conservatives had made him a radical. It was a great irony that for twelve years Princeton saw only the magnetic, cautious, yet brilliant teacher, the most popular in college despite his austere ways, who looked very well in his silk hat, who could preach a rousing sermon, make a polished after-dinner speech, who was an ornament to the college, and when in 1896 the old academy evolved formally into the college of New Jersey, no one else

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but he could have been chosen to deliver a solemn and impressive address for the ceremonial. It glowed with admiration for the place, and enthusiasm for its glory, and it was significantly entitled 'Princeton in the National Service'. They fell on his neck and wept for joy, but few could know the real implications of that message, or foresee the uncomfortable way in which Woodrow Wilson was to make their beloved college a laboratory for working out a theory.

Professor Wilson, unlike his own father, was no back-slapper, yet the icy exterior which he derived from the Woodrows from Carlisle was only the frosting upon an exceedingly rich cake. A man's real nature is found in the temper of his wife and family. Each evening he devoted to his daughters, reading poetry, playing games, inventing limericks, singing glees and talking, and those who entered that inner circle, friends like Professor Hibben, discovered an extraordinarily emotional person beneath the outward chill. Sometimes he would pretend to be henpecked by his wife and girls, but in reality he was worshipped at home, and all his austere qualities, that hard, bad-tempered Woodrow, were kept for the outer world. He had a few intimate friends, men and women, from whom in most self-revealing letters he could keep nothing back, and these friends were as necessary to him as air and food. The chief and most trusted of them was Professor Hibben — Dear Jack — who lived next door, and from whom Wilson had no secrets.

As the nineteenth century ended a great cosmic impatience hung in the air of all countries, and even the sequestered groves of Princeton College felt it. Some of the younger teachers felt the place was stagnating, and they needed new ideas and new blood. Princeton was falling behind other colleges. At Harvard, so the joke was, one received, educationally speaking, dinner *à la carte*, at Yale *table d'hôte*, at Columbia a quick lunch but at Princeton only a *picnic*. Princeton dreamed under its elm trees while other universities and the newer colleges of the

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Middle West were going ahead with their American efficiency.

A palace revolution broke out, and President Patton saw danger, realized his day was over, and promptly resigned. Whereupon the trustees who governed the college acted unanimously on a mysterious inspiration. Woodrow Wilson was made the head of the college, the first layman to hold that distinction; from now onwards he becomes known as President Wilson, and is given a free hand to reform the university, and while the bell of 'old Nassau' tolled, and the students yelled, everyone was delighted that the college had found such a remarkable president.

Even yet they did not understand what a radical they had placed on the throne.

### CHAPTER III

## PRINCETON FINDS ITS MASTER

'THE object of the university is singly and entirely intellectual', the new President declared, and having now the power, proceeded to act in the spirit of this text. Those who came up to Princeton had now to be prepared for something more than an intellectual picnic. It came to be known that they were at Princeton to work rather than to have a good time. 'We are not put into this world to sit still and know,' the President said, 'we are put into it to act,' as he prepared to make the college a nursery of intellectual leaders. Students who failed in examinations received scant sympathy, and it was said that when the mother of one of them came to plead with the President that her boy should be let through, as she herself had to undergo a surgical operation and would never stand the strain of his failure, he replied grimly: 'Madam, if I had to choose between your life and the good name of Princeton I should be obliged to choose for my college.'

News of this kind travels fast, and when the schools which sent their boys to Princeton recovered from their surprise, there was an improvement in quality among the sophomores to make up for a slight decline in numbers, and the name of the New Jersey College began to stand for a strenuous, liberal education.

Raising the standard of the examinations was only the first energetic sweeping of the new broom. Wilson's next plan to renovate Princeton was a complete reform of the teaching, and he told the trustees he must have fifty additional tutors or preceptors, who would coach the students in small groups. Wilson had seen this tutorial system at Oxford, but he wanted something even better. Oxford tutors may remain for life,

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but the Princeton preceptors were to serve for five years only, so that the university would have the cream of their energy and enthusiasm. The trustees began to see a huge master plan. The President took upon himself the burden of raising fresh capital, and on his own typewriter he composed numerous begging letters, and he made speeches to gatherings of Princeton graduates in several states. When he told them that these new schemes would require twelve million dollars — they whistled. But such energetic audacity made the alumni put their hands into their pockets, mesmerized by this new President's eloquence. The millions were promised, the new tutors arrived at Princeton village, while presidents of other colleges scented out a new power in the world of educational competition. Most pleased of all were the Princeton trustees, the Governors of the university, who began to feel a reflected glory from the astonishing transformation he had made in their college. During his first three or four years as president, Wilson was happy in the leadership he had made for himself through his ideas and the power of his oratory, and whenever he spoke, in Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and many other cities, the eager alumni of Princeton thronged to hear him.

The American temperament possesses a truly Latin range from one extreme to the other, and in a very short time this conspicuous success was to become failure. The story of Wilson's meteoric ascent now changes abruptly into the even more exciting and dramatic epic of his fall, which in turn became a further ascent into a region far above the campus politics of Princeton.

Before watching the fury of the storm we must look at the shape of some of those black clouds that were gathering about the year 1905.

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### 2

Princeton was not then a truly residential college. The students lived in boarding-houses in the village, but with inevitable Anglo-Saxon habit they formed private clubs for meals and recreation. From simple beginnings these students' clubs became larger and more exclusive; they built their own premises of increasing luxury, they were called by fantastic names so dear to the fancy of young men. To join one of these wonderful organizations became the ambition of every first-year man. To belong to 'Tiger Inn', to become a member of 'The Alligators', gave him a sense of intoxicating privilege, and to achieve it he was ready to spend his first college months in lobbying to attract notice. Once there, he might come to feel that he had 'arrived' and that mere scholastic honours were nought compared with the club prerogatives. And when he left college the memories of his club were sweeter to him than anything else in Princeton.

It had become more important for a Princeton man to get elected to a first-class club than to take a first-class degree.

Although he had once been himself a member of one of these clubs Woodrow Wilson saw danger to his intellectual ideals. The sideshows were swallowing the circus. He was troubled that men were coming up to Princeton more to have a good time than to fit themselves for serving America by training their minds. Self-indulgence, merry idleness, juvenile sociability and a certain undemocratic caste system seemed to him to have replaced the Spartan simplicity of his own college days.

Older men frequently become victims of the delusion that youth has degenerated since their day. It is not so, but the head of a college can be forgiven if he places a high ideal before those under his charge. Luxury is never a friend of study, and it was right for the President of Princeton to place first things first.

Woodrow Wilson was never at ease until he could rationalize

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current events by an appeal to history, and it dawned on him that the growth of the club exclusiveness in his own campus was only a symptom of a universal tendency to corruption throughout American life. After 1900 the United States had become so rich that the old austere outlook, the fundamental American idea of democratic equality, was being eaten away. Universities were supposed to train future leaders, but how could this be done properly when being elected to a students' club had become more vital than mastery of Greek or Economics?

Most people are revolutionary in their twenties and conservatives at fifty, but with Woodrow Wilson it was the other way round. As a dreamy intellectual boy in North Carolina he had worshipped the past, accepted the present, taken for granted negro inferiority, been content with the ordering of society. We do not hear of him protesting against poverty, or questioning the conventional divisions of that genteel social life.

But now he was fifty and successful he was known as an orator, he came to question the fundamental assumptions on which American life was based. Writing the history of the American people had convinced him that American history had taken a wrong turning, and that he was born to point out the better way. He was fond of quoting his great hero Burke: 'Public duty demands and requires that what is right should not only be made known, but made prevalent; that what is evil should not only be detected but defeated.'

Woodrow Wilson's natural aggressiveness was balanced by an instinctive Masochism that would not allow him to enjoy success for long, and now, at the culmination of a professor's ambition, he suddenly became very unhappy. It seemed a poor thing only to be the head of a college. He felt a vacuum in his soul, and the great intuitive taskmaster urged him to aspire to a new and more dangerous attainment. He felt commanded to drill down deep to critical levels in the public mind and, like a dentist reaching the nerve, he knew he was nearing a very

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sensitive spot — the idea of property, and the idea of personal status.

He proclaimed that the students' clubs must be taken over by the university, and converted into halls of residence, each with a master and two or three resident preceptors. These irresponsible, indolent, snobbish and opulent groups were to be digested by Princeton, and turned into intellectually minded coteries of learning.

Like a tribe of Red Indians, the alumni began their war dance.

As soon as the wealthy graduates in Philadelphia and New York heard that he was proposing to turn those sacrosanct havens of sociability, the clubs, into mere quadrangles, they set up a howl; what was called 'the battle of the Quads' broke out whenever two or three Princeton graduates were gathered together and middle-aged men recalling their joyous days in 'Tiger Inn' and 'The Alligators' began to call Woodrow Wilson an anarchist, a liberal and radical, and all sorts of terrible names. In his fine speeches to them in different cities he was forced to dramatize the issue, and a question merely of university organization broke out into the national Press, it had to become a campaign of political morality. Woodrow Wilson fighting in Princeton College came to be a symbol of American integrity in conflict with dark forces of reaction. In vain at faculty meetings did he point out that of students who were members of the clubs, only nine per cent took an Honours degree, whereas of the non-club men, forty per cent took Honours. In vain did he appeal for intellectual standards. The main sentiment and opinion of Princeton were against him, although the wiser heads in college, like Professor Hibben, told him that he would get his way if only he would be content to have it gradually.

The most terrible moment of the whole affair for him was in the faculty meeting when to his shocked amazement that same Professor Hibben, his most intimate friend, sided with the



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opposition. Here was the man with whom he had shared every thought and confidence now betraying him.

Hibben was a mild conciliator who conceived he was doing his duty by the college, but Woodrow Wilson could only think of him as a Judas. This personal breach made an appalling wound in Wilson's soul, and its immediate consequence was a physical breakdown of health. Wilson never spoke a word to Hibben for the rest of his life. Wilson's daughter declared that next to the failure over the League of Nations, the sundering of this friendship was the blow that hurt him most.

If only he had handled his colleagues and his reactionary alumni with more tolerance and understanding, he would perhaps have won the battle of the quads; but he would never have become President of the United States. His impatience, his inflexibility, his Presbyterian urge for martyrdom and personal atonement, these were the qualities which forced him on the attention of fellow Americans.

### 3

While the quad controversy was burning merrily the President insisted on throwing further combustible material into the flames. At his insistence a second dispute was piled on the first.

The higher education of college graduates is taken very seriously in America, and Princeton was building up a post-graduate department which had its own Dean, named Andrew West, who happened also to be a Scotsman and a Presbyterian. Elaborate plans had been made for a beautiful building in the Gothic style, and for this part of Dean West's plan Wilson had great sympathy. He dreamed that Princeton should become a paradise of spires and turrets suggesting Oxford, but he began to quarrel with Dean West as to the place where this graduate college should actually be located. Or to put the matter more plainly, he was alarmed at the semi-independent status which

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the Dean seemed to be marking out for himself in the Princeton faculty. Bluntly Wilson told the Dean that he must be digested in the interests of Princeton. The Dean wished his new building to go on a site of its own some distance away from the centre of the campus. But to the President of the university, this suggested exclusiveness, the academic membership, from post graduate to sophomores, and he insisted that they should mix together and influence one another.

The battle of the quads became merged in the even more heated warfare over the ideas of Dean West, and in the quiet groves of Princeton, Wilson was learning the game of politics. He was to say afterwards that the college politician was more formidable than the professional, and now he was to learn from these expert amateurs of the campus, through bitter tribulation, the whole technique of leadership that later astonished America.

Dean West prepared a wonderful design for his college. Each separate room would have a wood fire and a bathroom. And then, as though the plutocratic gods were hearing his prayer, a wealthy soap manufacturer from Cincinnati offered half a million dollars for the graduate college on the sole condition that it should be built on the site favoured by Dean West. Here, indeed, was the challenge to Wilson's authority as President and his democratic principles. Were people who gave money to be allowed to dictate the policy of the university? By all that was right, intellectual and decent, assuredly no. The half million hung like a dark cloud, while the whole of America grew interested in this storm over Princeton.

Wilson proposed to the trustees that the half million be rejected outright, and once more the national newspapers spun headlines about the lonely gladiator fighting privilege and the forces of darkness. A college to throw away half a million dollars — such a thing had never been heard of. Here was a new philosophy of life for the eager dollar worshipping America of railroad kings, prince manufacturers and steel barons.

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For years the energetic cowboy, President Theodore Roosevelt, had lead the forces of progressivism, but now the fickle public caught a new small voice in Princeton, and as the college quarrel grew more narrow on the question of where a building should be placed, Woodrow Wilson became a national hero. Spotting candidates for each four yearly Presidential election long in advance is a popular American exercise. Anyone outstanding in the newspapers is sure to be mentioned as a Presidential possibility and rumours about the candidates for the years 1908 and 1912 were circulating.

When the trustees finally refused the soap maker's half million at Wilson's request, the legend of principle conquering filthy lucre was complete. Woodrow Wilson's university had proved once more to America's satisfaction that it was truly democratic. But inside the college councils his enemies saw him as an intriguer, full of cant and hypocritical pretence.

### 4

Soon after the breach with Professor Jack Hibben a strange thing happened to Woodrow Wilson. He woke up one morning to find that he could not see out of his left eye, and that his right hand was stiff and useless. Doctors in Philadelphia, the best men of their day, told him that this indicated disease of a small artery in the brain, and a situation potentially dangerous to life. It did not take much worldly knowledge to realize that this sudden and painless incapacity was not a trivial affair, and Woodrow Wilson came alarmingly face to face with the fear of complete physical breakdown. He took it without flinching. When the doctor said, 'I want to look at your pupils', the President of Princeton covered his anxiety with a joke: 'You'll have a long job. I've had many thousands of them.'

Here was the supreme calamity for the Man of Stress whose whole life had now become a struggle, and who had only just discovered the impelling command of his own temperament

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that he should champion an unpopular cause. The doctors said that retirement from work was the only thing that would save his life. But to him such ignominious repose meant death. To the psychiatrist there is significance in the fact that the paralysis affected the right hand, the instrument through which his power of words found expression. At this culminatory point the tide of aggression in Woodrow Wilson's nature comes to a temporary halt in failure of his nerves, and for the moment all is silence. After a few perfunctory eulogies his enemies will be only too glad to see him retire, and he will be paid the respect usually given to men after they are dead. His potential value to America is gone, and he will be known as one of those who were obliged to teach because they could not perform. The Job's agony through which this egotist passed is pitiful until we remember he was something more than a Presbyterian in his passive acceptance of God's will.

Accepting his physician's advice, he took a holiday for the whole summer in the English Lake District where somehow by Rydal Water and Helvellyn his belief in his own future was restored, and the bitterness of Hibben's betrayal was assuaged. Wilson perceived that he who tried to save his life would really lose it. Back then into the struggle at Princeton, to keep Dean West in order, to preserve the college fair and righteous, and to serve God's idealistic purpose for America. His eye and his semi-paralysed hand much improved, and the doctors agreed cautiously he might go back to work if he were very careful. So he used a specially made thick pen to ease his hand, and threw himself into the battle over the graduate school.

Faith in the triumph of will over infirmity was to be justified in history. Woodrow Wilson, like his successor Franklin Roosevelt, became great through a supreme effort to subdue physical adversity. It has always to be remembered, as we read of Wilson's later achievement, that he was subtly the more crippled of the two Presidents. His left eye was practically useless, and his arteries kept him on the brink of disaster.

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### 5

During those two years between 1908 and 1910, when the accumulated bitterness of the quadrangle controversy heaped on the still-lively hatreds aroused over the site of the graduate college, a certain sense of unreality came over Wilson and he heard voices calling him. The readers of *Harper's Weekly* had become accustomed to reading his name monotonously each week as the Democratic Presidential possibility. Even before he reached American shores from holiday in England a cable had invited him to be Democratic candidate for the Senatorship from New Jersey, and people continued to talk of him for the Presidential contest in 1908. Firmly he put aside such premature suggestions. The timetable of his destiny was firmly lodged in his brain.

His speeches were confined to college politics suitably dramatized like medieval mystery plays. On the one side was plutocracy and the crooked shadows of social privilege: and advancing against it a flaming sword which he was to call the *New Freedom*.

His Presidential campaign really began in these efforts to convince the Princeton alumni of certain emotional ideas for America which were disguised in his plans for the future of Princeton. 'Those speeches at the Princeton Club in Grammercy Park, New York, at Pittsburgh and Chicago, reveal the Woodrow, full panoplied, stern, unyielding, cold and deadly.'<sup>1</sup>

The final act of the college drama now opened. The issue had become personal, and Wilson allowed his anger and resentment to be seen. Princeton had all the drawbacks of a gossiping village, and there is no rancour so vehement as that among intellectuals. One half of the college thought him Saint and Socrates, the other half whispered about the ladies. The President, so popular a few years before, was now an object of suspicion amongst the elm trees and Gothic arches.

<sup>1</sup> William Allen White.

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One of the professors said: 'I hope that Wilson's foolish friends will not put it into his head that he might become President of the United States,' and when this was reported to him Wilson replied without bitterness: 'It would be a queer time for me to think of the Presidency of the United States when I may not be able to keep the Presidency of my own university,' and in the summer of 1910 this latter possibility had occurred to many minds in the Princeton faculty.

The climax of the final act came in a strange piece of symbolism too dramatic ever to have been invented by the most ingenious tragedian. In Boston an old man died leaving a large fortune, and when the will was read, two million dollars were found destined for the graduate school at Princeton, and Dean Andrew West was made a trustee.

'We have beaten the living, but we cannot fight the dead. The game is up,' said the President of Princeton.

This was clear and absolute defeat, and he knew it. The trustees had refused the bequest of half a million, but no body of men could be proof against two millions. It was now June 1910, and seemingly the blackest moment of Wilson's life.

Yet within a few months he was to be elected Governor of New Jersey, and in two years President of the United States.

The Democratic party which had been out of office since 1897 began to feel the tide was turning. Advanced social ideas were in the air, and ex-President Theodore Roosevelt who had led such a spirited charge against what he called 'the malefactors of great wealth' seemed to have lost his inspiration. In 1907 there was panic on the stock market due to a few irresponsible speculators. Public opinion was growing tired of the Republican party, and in each state, the Democratic bosses were sure that if only they could find strong candidates they were certain to win. Political wirepullers were not

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familiar with the details of those delicate matters which agitated Princeton, but fortunately Democratic bosses, in New Jersey and elsewhere, could understand only one side of the controversy, and that was Woodrow Wilson's side.

The stage was ready. That well-trying favourite, the folk-drama of American politics, was ready to go on for its grand biennial performance of 1910, and the producers were searching for the principal lead. There at hand in their own state was a figure cut out for the part, though only an amateur, and the political managers were quite ready to coach him. All he had to do was to walk before the public and bring in the votes. In the Democratic party caucus, a minority of the bosses managed to persuade the others that 'the Princeton school-master' was their man, and at the depth of his failure and disappointment he accepted.

We can admire him at this moment, about to set out on his dangerous adventure to lonely heights where few have ventured. He is not a whole man. He has heard the warning crack of an avalanche, and knows the frailty of his own bodily resources, yet he starts to climb with the peculiar courage of one no longer young who enters an entirely new way of life.

The brilliant technicolor cinema film by Twentieth Century Fox opens where those respectful bosses walk into the book-lined study of the President of Princeton, overawed by his scholarly reputation, and conscious that they are asking a favour in requesting so lofty a dignitary to descend into the dusty arena of Democratic politics.

Woodrow Wilson saw at last that the leadership he has prepared himself for is calling. He tells those professional politicians that he will accept the party nomination provided no conditions are attached, and they readily, innocently agree. They think they will be able easily to rule this inexperienced professor, but in reality it is he who will rule them. Those well-satisfied political managers go away from the professor's study quite sure that in choosing Woodrow Wilson they have

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virtually won the election. In that they are correct, but no one can tell them that they have made the same misjudgment which the Princeton faculty made.

Woodrow Wilson leaves Princeton, but vibrations of his personality live on in her beautiful Gothic architecture which he inspired. When he came as a student in 1876 it had been a jumble of featureless buildings, now it was a handsome university city among trees. We are reminded of his conflict with the faculty by the painting which hangs in the 'old Nassau' hall, a picture portraying that stern cantankerous master under whom the college became great, and as we leave that lovely village, as our last glimpse of the university, we see the spires of the graduate college, situated on the site which Woodrow Wilson condemned so vehemently.



## CHAPTER IV

### A PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR

THE ex-professor appeared on the stage of the Trenton Opera House and the unprepared Democrats in this capital of New Jersey received from this candidate a first impression of an entirely new sort of political speech-making, while in the stage box, beaming with self-satisfied approval, the party bosses heard him declare that he had given no pledges of any kind, but if elected he would act according to his conscience. Strange to say, the bosses liked that. It was 'grand stand play', and in the present critical mood of the electors certain to bring in votes.

It was ironic, but not surprising, that this misunderstanding should have spread to the ranks, and caused Woodrow Wilson's candidature to be vehemently opposed by a progressive section of their party, and in this left wing which disliked boss rule was an excitable Irishman named Joseph Tumulty.

Among Irish, Germans and Italians of Jersey City, the very populous borough across the Hudson from New York, Joseph Patrick Tumulty had taken his first lessons in politics in his father's grocery store which to the boy was a political laboratory. Joseph had the gift, the intuition, the temperament. He was fervent and very human, and his Irish blarney and combativeness made him a power among the younger Democrats. When he heard a rumour that 'big interests' in New York wished to put over this Princeton College professor as candidate for the Governorship, Joseph Tumulty went into violent and verbose opposition. Here were the old gang in the Democratic party of the state attempting to nominate a mere tool, and sarcastically he asked one of the bosses whether Woodrow Wilson would make a good Governor. The reply was: 'He will make a good candidate, and that is all that inter-

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ests me.' And young Tumulty and his friends went about doing all they could to defeat this nominee of the state machine. But the bosses were too strong for them.

But all areas of the Trenton Opera House applauded that speech of acceptance, those variations upon a single theme, his campaign speeches about the New Freedom which he had practised for years. When ostensibly speaking of college quadrangles, he was really proclaiming a political gospel, and his wrath over the exclusiveness of Dean West's graduate college was really protest against the conservative regime of President Taft. He left the stage of the Trenton Opera House, mobbed by excited Democrats, and Joseph Tumulty was overtaken by a vision. All around him stood men with tears streaming from their eyes.

On a lucky impulse Wilson made Joseph Tumulty his private secretary and henceforward the new Governor had no difficulty about understanding the average Democrat.

The Governor of an American state is a President in miniature, but Wilson brought in his Prime Minister obsession which he had held since a schoolboy. He intended to lead; to carry his measures in the law-making assembly of New Jersey and instead of sitting back with the dignity of a four-year king, he made himself a responsible minister of a very radical persuasion.

Although the Democratic party in New Jersey had been out of office for fourteen years, they had an understanding with their nominal enemies the Republicans, and both sides had a common interest in preserving the system that served them both so well. The parties controlled taxation, legislation and the entire machinery of the state, and they in turn were controlled by wealthy private corporations, the railroads and public utilities and banks. It never occurred to either side that this amateur in politics, now Governor, meant to keep those naive promises he had made during the election. To the bosses it was simply not conceivable that any state could be run in other than by the well-tried methods of graft and manipulation.

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The people of New Jersey had given the Democrats a majority of fifty thousand votes, and to them by custom belonged the spoils, but now they realized that their new Governor was not merely an interfering doctrinaire, he was a power, he was a danger.

He had given them explicit warning. He said he would consult the leaders of his party, naturally he would do that. And if, on his own independent judgment, he found their advice sound, he would take it. But he gave no promises. The party bosses should have measured their man more accurately, but excessive deference for the inside of a college had inhibited these professionals from understanding the true nature of Woodrow Wilson's struggle. Off their own small territory of political management they were as children, but now even their own narrow field was captured by the forcible man in the Governor's office who had such crazy ideas of law-making.

The old State of New Jersey is only across the river from New York City, and its laws had become very indulgent to big business. In fact, New Jersey was called 'the mother of the trusts', and a tender-hearted parent she was to every kind of corporation that shrank from the more bracing climate of the great city and had only to cross the Hudson river to find an atmosphere favourable to money power.

Governor Wilson's general theme of reform was to remove the power from private hands and give it back to the state legislature. He proposed a Public Utilities Commission to bring gas, water and electricity out into the open. Bills were drafted on workmen's compensation and corrupt practices. Gaily he encouraged his personal supporters to fight the organized opposition of the bosses in the New Jersey legislature. 'It is a house of cards,' he said. 'Go and put your shoulders against the thing and it collapses.' Above all, he announced that the entire constitution of New Jersey must be overhauled so that government itself would be more under direct control of the people. Probably if Woodrow Wilson had had time to carry through

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this reform, he would have made cabinet administration on the English system a living experiment at Trenton.

The story of how promptly Wilson defeated the bosses became headline news. There was a newspaper cartoon showing the chairman of the New Jersey Democratic Committee being summarily ejected from the Governor's office by a boot labelled 'Wilson', and in speaking of the bosses the Governor was reported to use language of 'a vigour drawn from resources not commonly tapped by Presbyterian elders'. A labour leader who had differed strongly with Wilson on the Employer's Liability Bill came away from a conference saying: 'That's the greatest man in America: he's dead right about his bill: it's better than ours.'

The Governor was in reality an expert in political science, and having taught students on these matters for thirty years, it was easy for him to produce a theory for each occasion. It was a case of the expert being in power, as though Adam Smith had been elected Prime Minister of eighteenth-century England.

Yet there is now a melancholy flavour of decay about Woodrow Wilson's intense efforts in New Jersey between 1910 and 1912. The moment he ceased to hold office the old gang came back, and, one by one, his progressive measures were reversed, and the 'mother of the trusts' settled down on her nest to give her former maternal care to her privileged offspring.

The New Jersey years form an interesting episode in Woodrow Wilson's career, a final preparation for the Presidency. If anything proves the fallacy in his idea of personal leadership as a technique of American politics it is surely the fact that his reforms in New Jersey never went below the surface. Their roots hardly pushed deep, and they were extirpated when the bosses returned to the State House.

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### 2

His greatest achievement of those two years was to become known to a hundred millions of Americans, and to emerge into clear political daylight as the one progressive hope for the Presidential election of 1912. He performed this miracle entirely by his speeches all over the United States, so that his enemies sneeringly called the Governorship of New Jersey 'Woodrow Wilson's travelling scholarship'. Those journeys taught him to appreciate the vast new America west of the Alleghenies and west of the Mississippi. He had known the American frontier as an historical phenomenon, but now he was to find in those bracing lands far west a fresh stimulation. Those new regions, so different from the old colonial America where he had been brought up, accepted him as a prophet and were to stand by him to the end of his career. In that land of oratory his speeches made a sensational appeal. An Oregon newspaper said: 'Woodrow Wilson is the unexpected. He is a national surprise. Wilsonism today is one of the largest facts in American life.'

As the significant Presidential year of 1912 opened, a strange, haphazard, yet entirely inevitable series of moves began, and they made Wilson Democratic candidate, then President. The story is a political fairy tale, so illogically romantic is it. Failure at Princeton had propelled him into the Governorship, and now his lack of moderation, his militant self-confidence as Governor landed him into the White House; every defect in his character, each mistake, the explosive violence of his methods, his hard Presbyterian exclusiveness, in fact everything in Woodrow Wilson that a political expert would have considered disadvantageous worked in his favour. For the next twelve months it seemed as though he could not go wrong.

That singular man from Vermont, George Harvey, who had been the first publicly to put forward Woodrow Wilson as a candidate for the Presidency, did not survive among Wilson's friends. Harvey was a man of great penetration, a fierce fighter,

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and a dangerous enemy, but he had many allies among the bankers of Wall Street. Now it began to be whispered that Woodrow Wilson who was so popular with George Harvey must be himself a 'tool of the interests', that is unduly well disposed towards high finance, and as ready to be guided by them as the bosses in New Jersey had been. When this ludicrous notion began to spread in the over-suspicious atmosphere of election year, Wilson's friends reported it to Harvey himself, and it was mentioned casually in conversation between them. What was said is not quite clear. They never raised their voices, but from that moment Harvey became Wilson's inveterate foe, and his name was removed from its prominent niche in *Harper's Weekly*. Wilson's supposed tactlessness in handling Harvey was taken as a rebuke to the Right wing of the Democratic party, those financiers whom the country feared and Wilson hated, and the personal episode strengthened him. As for Harvey, he was henceforth to swing over to the Republican party, and eventually to become United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. As Walter H. Page wrote: 'It is more important to have the right kind of enemies than the wrong kind of friends.'

Woodrow Wilson succeeded often through his enemies and the power of antagonism, but he also had worshipping friends, and down in the capital of Democratic Texas lived a quiet shrewd person whose expert eye saw every move in the game. He was a man who loved politics as others love beautiful china. In the junk shop of state politics, in lobbies and capitals all over the South, this collector had searched for the supreme trophy of an enthusiast's career — the man who might be President. He had looked over several promising politicians but now, as he read those speeches of Woodrow Wilson, he recognized the genuine political specimen. 'Never before,' said this observant judge, 'have I found both the man and the opportunity,' and in his unobtrusive way, 'like a tiger walking on dead leaves and making no sound,' he began to organize his

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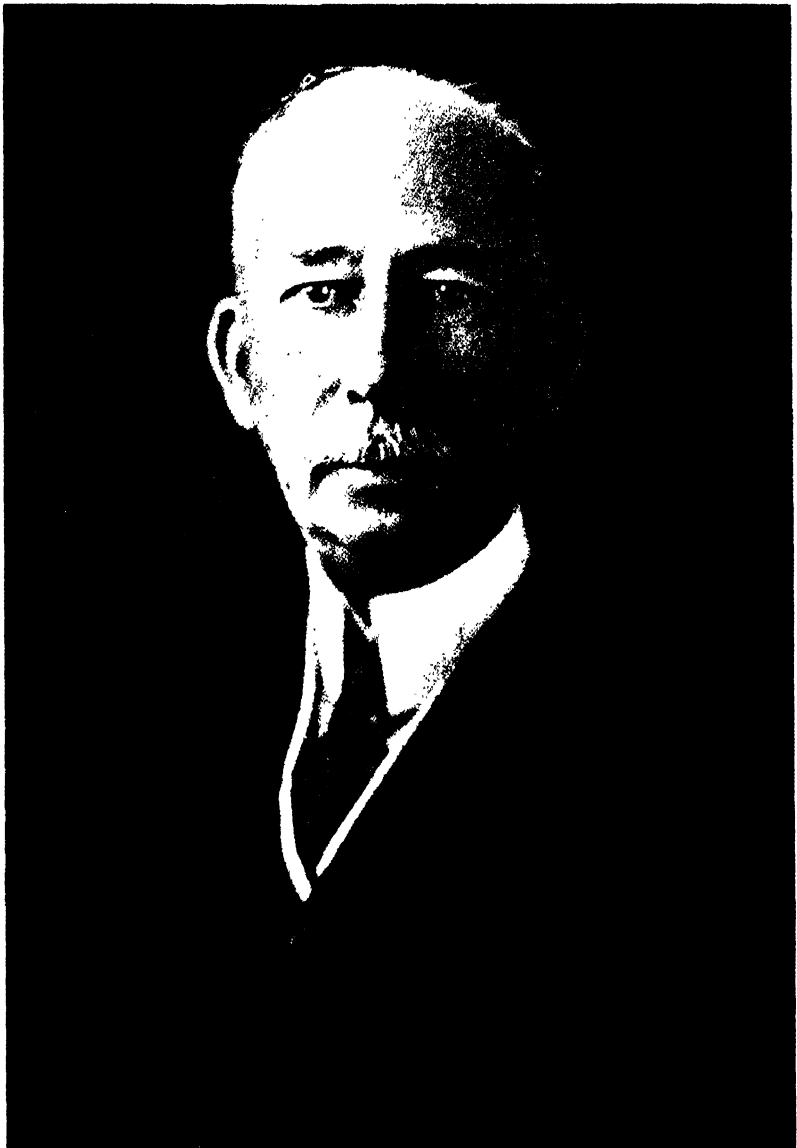
native state of Texas to support Wilson. This successful manipulator from the South was Edward Mandell House, called by courtesy Colonel House, and from now onward he becomes an organ of Wilson's personality. So intimate was their understanding that House suppressed his intuitive feeling that the day would come when Woodrow Wilson would have no further use for him. For the next four years Edward M. House could do no wrong.

### 3

In June 1912, the Democratic Convention of a thousand noisy delegates, picked from each of the 48 states, assembled at Baltimore to choose their candidate and to draw up their party policy. There has never been anything in the world like an American political convention. Its science, its working, its peculiar emotional tempo can only be understood when we admit that it is unique, without parallel or comparison.

Its thousand or so members are composed of 48 state delegations each made up of a fixed number according to population. Thus a thinly peopled state like Nevada or Arizona have few delegates, while New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois have many. To gain two-thirds of the votes, the candidate makes a bid for the larger states and it was a strong Democratic tradition from previous conventions that no candidate had ever managed to win the nomination without the backing of New York's block of votes. But New York had already formed up against Wilson. The great Tammany boss, Charles F. Murphy, was bitterly opposed to him, and on the New York delegation were several Tammany braves who sensed acutely that he was hostile to all they represented.

During the early months of the year, these state delegations were being chosen all over America, but it was a melancholy fact that few of them were pledged for Woodrow Wilson. New York favoured his leading opponent, and so did Pennsylvania. The large block of votes belonging to Texas had, under the



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manipulation of Colonel House, been promised to Wilson, but most of the other state delegations were pledged for Champ Clark, one of the old timers of the party, a regular politician, whom Wilson called privately 'a sort of elephantine smart Aleck'. The powerful newspapers of William Randolph Hearst were roaring enthusiasm for Champ Clark, but the *New York World* kept the spirit of the no longer living Joseph Pulitzer who had always supported Wilson.

When the convention assembled Wilson had achieved only 248 pledges, as against 426 promised for Champ Clark. Yet a political convention is as unpredictable as a horse race. When a thousand excited Americans get together, surrounded by banners and brass bands, shouting through megaphones, singing doggerel songs, working themselves up for different candidates, fiercely emotional and iconoclastic in the same moment — the result cannot be forecast by logical analysis.

America's enormous distances, and the divergent interests of her various regions make this tumultuous mass meeting the only reliable judge of the candidate. A thousand Democrats swayed and rocked in their gruelling labour for a whole week, day after day, and sometimes until the following dawn, while miles away in a house on the sea coast, Governor Wilson heard by telephone the ebb and flow of his chances, quite unmoved, almost detached. While the frenzied Democrats were in labour at Baltimore, he sat reading Morley's *Life of Gladstone*. As his votes slowly increased, he said: 'At the present rate of gain I reckon I shall be nominated in 175 ballots.'

The leading personality on the convention floor was the great master of mob psychology, William Jennings Bryan, called 'The Great Commoner', who had himself been three times chosen as Democratic candidate, and three times defeated. And now some people think he will try to snatch the nomination a fourth time. He is a dark horse but as he thinks, so think hundreds of others in that meeting. 'Waving a palm leaf fan, he sits a prematurely old, hulking figure, in his shiny alpaca

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coat, with the Bryan smile rather fatuously spread over the moon face.<sup>1</sup> Bryan would rise every now and then to throw the convention into a frenzy by some scathing denunciation of the Conservative wing of the party, and especially of the New York delegation, and he succeeded in swinging the emotional barometer of the assembly well over to the Left.

With hours of cheering, processions, speeches only half-heard in the din, intense moments of silence followed by hysterical roars of enthusiasm, the ballots went on, ten, twenty, thirty times without any candidate securing the necessary two-thirds, though Champ Clark and Wilson were leading. Then came for Wilson's backers the darkest moment. Champ Clark attained more than fifty per cent of the votes, including New York and Pennsylvania. It seemed quite impossible that Wilson could ever win the two-thirds majority and it was the candidate himself who escaped from the deadlock by a masterly strategic move.

He sent a message to the convention stating that he would never accept the nomination supported by the New York delegation and he called upon the other candidates to give the same pledge. This brought pandemonium among the perplexed and perspiring thousand. What did this Wilsonian defiance of New York really mean?

It had the effect of making them sure that Woodrow Wilson was resolutely opposed to the powers of finance and conservatism as symbolized by the wealthy state of New York. The Westerners who envied and hated the power of the East began to come around to Wilson, and of course Champ Clark did not dare to repudiate the New York delegation on which he was counting for victory. Wilson's message had acted like a crystal dropped into a super-saturated solution, it caused the whole thing to precipitate and from that moment the convention realized that it was radical and progressive and that only one candidate was really opposed to the 'interests'.

<sup>1</sup> William Allen White.

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At this crisis, William Jennings Bryan declared himself for Wilson in the fourteenth ballot, and after that the result was certain. Champ Clark went back, while Wilson rose consistently. Yet it was only at the forty-sixth ballot that he was chosen Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States.

We can recapture only with an effort of imagination the religious and delirious enthusiasm which Woodrow Wilson's first Presidential campaign aroused in forward-looking Americans: he was a phenomenon so fresh and persuasive, and he had outwitted the bosses with ease. Like the proud edge of a great progressive tide that was roaring across the country, his campaign speeches drew their supporting waves from that naive but genuine idealism that is the great American gift.

Against this surging storm the Republican threw his break-water in vain, for that party was split in two, the Right wing under the genial malevolence of President Taft, and a Left wing lead by that romping cowboy-statesman Theodore Roosevelt. His personal party had a bull moose for its symbol, and 'Onward Christian Soldiers' for its campaign song. Between them, these two mutually destructive branches of the Republican party secured seven million popular votes, but this was useless against six million who voted directly for Wilson. Taft carried only Vermont and Utah: Roosevelt five states, but over forty chose Wilson. Even more important for what he wished to achieve as President, was the fact that, for the first time in many years, the Democratic party won a majority of 147 in the lower House, and 6 in the United States Senate. It was indeed a Wilson triumph.

### 4

As he drove through the streets of Washington to take the oath of office on the steps of the Capitol, millions of Americans were wondering what sort of man this almost unknown pro-

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fessor might be. The public character that was being invented for him, a sort of disembodied intellect in a black silk hat, was not the real Woodrow Wilson who was known to so few. From one point of view the popular estimate was correct. He was certainly the most educated, the most cultivated man who had ever gone to the White House, and none of his great predecessors knew so much about the government of the United States as this professor of politics. Yet beneath the cool and competent outside of the most efficient of American Presidents were the boiling intensities of the Man of Stress.

Accepting the need for physical recreation he played golf mechanically, and when snow lay on the ground he would use red-painted balls. For him, such things were a necessary welcome medicine after the intellectual toil of a President, and the life of the body was of secondary importance. Yet every now and then sensational rumours of Woodrow Wilson's private life would flash around Washington.

Men compelled to live in the world's eye and give their days to the thankless drudgery of politics usually find recreation in some form of excitement. Sporting events, social relaxations, parties, dinners and alcohol are the normal excitements of the public man's leisure, but to Woodrow Wilson all such things were distasteful. Yet he too required his stimulation, and he received it from two sources: his family, and his intimate friends.

The serious young gentleman who in North Carolina loved to lounge in his mother's drawing-room and read improving books while his sisters did their embroidery, had grown into the popular professor.

Reading aloud, swapping limericks with his daughters, singing old songs of the South while one of them played the piano, gave him extraordinary pleasure. He was the opposite of those who are always seeking outside glory because they are unappreciated at home. Wilson jealously guarded his family life and kept it going even when he became President, so much so

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that his political supporters complained that they never could get near him. He had the old-fashioned Southern conception that his own home was a sacred preserve.

Immediately outside the family were his intimate friends, those like the whilom Professor Hibben, whom he must see every day, and with whom he found it absolutely necessary to exchange all his thoughts, feelings, hopes, ambitions without reserve. 'I have talked with Jack Hibben, and I am refreshed,' he would say. Alas, that friendship had been reduced to ashes, and in the burning Woodrow Wilson had suffered severely. Such insatiable thirst for emotional refreshment, from both man and woman, was a trait that alarmed those around him. How could he invest so much of himself in the uncertain enterprise of human relations? Again and again throughout his life he lavished this over-generous, quixotic, and passionate outpouring of emotion on a small number of intimate friends, and wrote them deeply personal letters.

Once on vacation in Bermuda he had met one of those ultra-charming, well-dressed women who flower at holiday resorts; he found her most sympathetic. She was Mrs. Hulbert Peck, and for years they exchanged letters which from any other man would be passionate declarations of exclusive affection. He pours out all the poetry, the hope and the perplexity of life. He calls her his devoted and dearest friend, and unreservedly communicates the deepest things in his soul. In Woodrow Wilson's private letters the language is highly emotional, romantic, sentimental. Yet in those letters to Mrs. Hulbert Peck the tone is never erotic, and we have the impression that this excessively gracious way of writing to a woman is an affair of the imagination, and has little to do with the body. Besides, Mrs. Hulbert Peck visited Mrs. Wilson and was a friend of the family.

Naturally the lady treasured those letters, but others came to know of them, and mysteriously the correspondence came into the hands of the Republican party. Here was a melodramatic

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opportunity to discredit the great Democratic President. Letters to a woman — why the very phrase itself was ruin.

A famous lady novelist, Mary Roberts Rinehart, was given the task of reading Wilson's letters to Mrs. Peck to extract damaging propaganda which could be used to discredit Wilson in the eyes of the great puritanical mass of 'home folks'. She found nothing. Instinct told her that the man who wrote so beautifully to a handsome woman did so because that was his nature. But he went no further. 'Line by line I read them, and neither written in them or implied, was there to be found any suggestion of love,' reported the novelist. 'Half way through came the dignified and grief-stricken announcement of his first wife's death. The final one in my possession announced with no change of tone, his engagement to marry again.' Mary Roberts Rinehart reported to the regretful Republicans that these two hundred letters to Mrs. Hulbert Peck contained no political dynamite. Even Theodore Roosevelt who did not in the least admire Wilson laughed incredulously: 'How can you cast a man for the part of Lothario when he looks like an apothecary's clerk?'

Yet the impressions of that whispering campaign remained. If his enemies had alleged that Woodrow Wilson accepted bribes, or traded away national oil wells, the people of the United States would have replied with a loud incredulous guffaw. But to whisper that he was *immoral* — that the average mind was too willing to believe of a Presbyterian college professor.

Wilson's masculine friendships had the same intensity, and now that Jack Hibben was gone he came to expose his intimate thoughts to that quiet, worshipping political amateur from Texas, Edward Mandell House.

They had met in the Gotham Hotel in New York, just before the election of 1912; they talked, met again in a few days, and soon Wilson was saying: 'My dear friend, we have known one another always.'

Edward House caught a splendid vision. He who had known

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politics chiefly in its more trivial and sordid aspects, now perceived grandeur of aim and supreme emotional force. To the end of his life, House would remain intoxicated with that vision, and when the man Wilson cast him off, House would remain faithful to the prophet he met that day in the Gotham Hotel. Now for six years he becomes Wilson's alternative personality. Their relationship can be described as a kind of mutual parasitism, a two-way exchange of ideas, feelings, policies. Edward M. House, a genuine and lovable man, understood what every Democrat was thinking, and presently he was to use his extraordinary sense-perceptive apparatus upon Lloyd George, Kaiser Wilhelm and Clemenceau. House provided the raw material of information and ideas, whilst the President, who in his White House isolation could never have found these things for himself, took responsibility. Colonel House, it was, who first captured the idea of the League of Nations and the first American draft of the Covenant was composed by the two friends working in privacy. For six years they formed a superb, ultra-sensitive and creative instrument, and while their friendship lasted the self-centred Woodrow Wilson was in touch with the whole human world.

Alas, such friendships of the over-communicative man cooled, and love became changed to hatred. The violent change from one extreme to the other caused inflammation in Woodrow Wilson's soul.

A man with so many friends might have been more happy if he had not also had his bitter feuds, but he would not have been so interesting, nor would he have accomplished so much. This other side of Wilson's nature, his capacity for overmastering hatred was as powerful as his love and, in the end, more powerful. His mental life hung in unstable equilibrium between these opposite poles.

It is the essence of Woodrow Wilson's tragedy that in the end of his days, when his mind was tired out, his brain weakened and his eyes dim, the hatred inside him got the better of the love.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PEACE PRESIDENT

BACK in 1910 Woodrow Wilson had made a strange prophecy to Joseph Tumulty. 'The next President will have a war on his hands, and I am not sure I should make a good War President.'

Even then he was thinking of war, but the subject was far from his mind on that triumphal day in March 1913 when he was installed in the White House, whose stately corridors now heard a music unknown there for a whole generation — the slow Southern drawl and Southern laughter, as the three Wilson girls took possession. Fashionable Washington was disappointed to hear there would be no inaugural Ball such as was the usual ending to this festive day. The Presbyterian Elder who was now President had resolved to make it a different sort of occasion.

His inaugural address was pitched on a note of sombre idealism. 'This is not a day of triumph, it is a day of dedication. Here muster not the forces of party, but the forces of humanity. Men's hearts wait upon us; men's lives hang in the balance; men's hopes call upon us to say what we will do. Who shall live up to the great trust? Who dares fail to try?' The first Democratic administration for sixteen years began its crusade of progress and reform. It was a peace programme such as Great Britain had adopted through her Liberal revolution in 1906, and now for the space of a year, the President had everything in his favour — popularity, zealous followers, a responsive Congress. It was like his honeymoon at Princeton. He sat at a desk which had been the gift of Queen Victoria, and under the green-shaded reading-lamp which he had used as a law student in Virginia, he worked conscientiously, and in the scholarly fashion that was his habit; the most efficient President who ever entered the White House.

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His first troublesome responsibility was patronage. According to the political seesaw, postmasters, lighthouse keepers, customs men in all parts of the United States must be changed, and the President conceived it his stern duty to examine the claims of each candidate, and to see that only just and true men were appointed to these offices. Like a host of locusts, Democratic Senators and Congressmen descended upon the White House to press upon him their favourite candidates, Democrats who had worked well in Michigan, Democrats related to other Democrats who could be counted on to vote the right way next time. How was he to drive the idea into the heads of these men that public office was a public trust, and not a mere reward for political hacks?

The Postmaster-General, Albert Burleson, an old-time politician from the South, rescued the President from the dilemma by pointing out that it was beyond human power for him to deal personally with every appointment. With reluctance, Woodrow Wilson made his first bow of acquiescence to the Presidential fates. Burleson and Secretary Tumulty took the responsibility, and the President used to say wryly that there were some post offices where he would never dare to post a letter, when he remembered what a struggle there had been over choosing a particular postmaster.

Some cabinet appointments had aroused storms; the choice of Secretary of State, for instance. Wilson had given this portfolio to that emotional orator in the alpaca coat and baggy trousers who had won him the nomination at Baltimore—William Jennings Bryan, who was immensely pleased to have the post. Fashionable Washington laughed when he served grape juice at state banquets in place of stronger liquors, and the notion of his lecturing upon 'The Prince of Peace' for a large fee was unexpected in a Secretary of State. But Mr. Bryan was the arch Democrat: as he thought, so thought millions in the Bible Belt.

For the important post of Ambassador to Great Britain, the

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President chose an old acquaintance from North Carolina named Walter Hines Page. As editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Page had published articles by Professor Wilson of Princeton. Now, full of enthusiasm and Southern loquacity, the Ambassador departed to London where, after a chilly start with the unresponsive British of 1913, he became one of the best friends England has ever had.

The President determined to reform the method of government. Instead of leaving the initiative with committees of Congress he proposed to keep leadership in his own hands. This theory of personal responsibility had been maturing for thirty years, and now at last had come his opportunity. But he possessed one advantage that no English Prime Minister ever had, an unalterable four-years term of power. For that period the only ruler in the world with more power than he was the Pope of Rome.

For his mighty office Woodrow Wilson had a long preparation, as lengthy as any cardinal of the Church. Nothing in the routine of a President of the United States could surprise him. He had done it all before, and after those crafty politicians of the campus, he was to find the 'real article' on Capitol Hill comparatively simple. Woodrow Wilson was the most appropriately trained man who had ever found his way to the White House. Yet he was to learn that education is not everything.

It is fated that every statesman shall spend his life dealing with the uncalculated combination of events which no theory can ever foresee.

La Rochefoucauld says we attain each new stage in our lives entirely unprepared by previous experience, and now Woodrow Wilson was to learn many things he had not known even when writing the *History of the American People*. A President has to conduct his education in public while all the world watches for mistakes. As a scholar he had turned for guidance to written authorities, but as President he must explore those oceans of human experience that are uncharted and irrational, where

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passions make the laws. This man is handicapped not only by precarious health and a blind eye, and by the scholarship he has brought in that finely developed mind. His first appalling dilemma was Mexico.

### 2

In 1911 the man who ruled that country with a rod of iron, President Porfirio Diaz, was compelled to retire after a dictatorship of thirty years, and Mexico was the first nation in modern times to have its revolution. The successor to the strong man was not strong enough; he was murdered. The peasants of those dusty plateaux gashed by steaming gorges were struggling towards a technique of self-government, but meanwhile all they had done was to hand over their country to rival 'Generals' and armies of semi-bandits. The great arid land of Mexico was reeking with oil, and her sanguinary political episodes caused anxiety in boards of directors sitting in Wall Street, New York, and Queen Victoria Street, London.

Yet this southern neighbour was old in her civilization, and she could not forget that two of her provinces, Arizona and New Mexico, had been taken over by the United States, and that the whole Pacific coast as far north as San Francisco had once used the Spanish tongue.

The new ruler in Mexico City, an Indian named Victoriano de la Huerta who having eliminated his predecessor, was now at the head of sixty thousand men, and in control of three-quarters of the national territory. Woodrow Wilson was no sooner in the White House than he was faced with the question of whether this successful usurper was to be acknowledged as the ruler of a neighbouring state.

The President had no first hand acquaintance with the Mexican issue, and Secretary of State Bryan was the last man in the world to be able to assist him: nor could the leading

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officials in the State Department, for they were mostly Democrats new to their jobs.

Woodrow Wilson went back to first principles. Ever since the thirteen states of the Union revolted from George the Third, Americans had clung fast to the idea that a people has the sacred right to choose its ruler and form of government. But this brigand Huerta who had climbed through murder, his very existence was an outrage to democracy. The President dispatched to Mexico City a special envoy charged with the delicate task of persuading Huerta to go quietly. He was advised to arrange a general election and allow the Mexican people to choose someone more civilized than himself.

But the little Indian, master already of eighteen of the twenty-seven states of his country, received this naive mission with outward courtesy. He had no intention of being dispossessed, and privately he talked of invading the United States with his brigand army. The gringos of the North desired a new President chosen by the Mexican people. Well, who was to say that the people wanted anyone else but himself, Victoriano Huerta? By all means, a general election could easily be arranged, and after putting in prison several members of the opposition and managing the ballot box, he proved his point when in October 1913 he was duly and formally elected as President of Mexico.

Several claimants to power were active on the sun-baked Mexican scene, notably Venustiano Carranza, and a roving adventurer named General Villa with a private army of his own. President Wilson decided to use Carranza to evict Huerta whom he determined to destroy. Other people, both in the United States and outside, entirely failed to see that this Carranza was any better than the unspeakable Huerta, but anything that might be called 'the general opinion' had no influence with Woodrow Wilson. Huerta must go.

An embargo was established to prevent ammunition reaching the brigand President. But his opponent Carranza was allowed

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to receive arms, and as the fateful year 1914 opened, the official policy of the United States was to encourage civil war in Mexico, in the hope that the virtuous Carranza would remove the evil Huerta.

Out of the thunder clouds of war piling up on both sides of the Mexican frontier came the inevitable flash. Huerta's men arrested American marines as they harmlessly purchased stores in Tampico, whereupon the American Admiral demanded full apology and a salute of twenty-one guns. Huerta played for time, and even suggested referring the matter to the new International Court at The Hague. The old Indian had subtly divined the nature of his great American opponent and crafty instinct told him that an appeal to abstract legality would touch Woodrow Wilson in his most sensitive spot. Besides, Huerta knew that he had European backing in his resistance to the U.S.A.: England was favourable towards him, and rifles were on their way from Germany. He was not impressed by Wilson's show of moral indignation, and he cherished the dream that one day he could lead his hard Mexican guerrillas across the Rio Grande and up the Mississippi valley to restore his lost provinces. For himself he thrived upon war, and now he resolved to hold fast and allow this brash white-skinned ruler of the North Americans to burn his fingers.

Woodrow Wilson's desire for abstract justice had indeed brought his country to the threshold of war. His plan was to seize the Mexican port of Vera Cruz by American marines in order to prevent further shiploads of German rifles from reaching Huerta. This proposal threw the United States Congress into a violent frenzy. The senate passed a resolution supporting the President, and a large number of Americans were shouting for war.

Here was a painful situation for a pacifist. His high-handed interference had brought his country to the edge of battle. His denunciations of Huerta's wickedness had aroused in his own fellow countrymen the spirit he most hated, that belligerent

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blindness that soon burns justice to threads. American marines captured Vera Cruz, but even in so limited an operation and designed for such noble ends nineteen lost their lives, the first Americans to die for Wilson's 'New Freedom'.

At a press conference the President trembled and blanched. By his own act he had sent these young men to their deaths, and his sense of guilt was unbearable.

Aggressiveness was his motive power and the source of his achievement. And yet, overlying it was a crust of guilt, his conscience, his Presbyterian conviction of sinfulness. Having created Huerta as the image of wickedness, he cannot leave him alone, blind to the fact that Carranza may be no better. Conscience tells him that war is a terrible thing, yet it does not prevent him from forming a policy that must lead to war. The needle of this man's emotion swings rapidly from war to peace, and back again from peace to war, while his enemies do not understand how a pacifist can be so bellicose, or how the hater of Huerta can tremble when Americans are killed as a result of his hatred.

Then the sky cleared, and an amazing burst of sunshine gladdened the conscience-stricken President. The A.B.C. powers of Latin America, Argentina, Brazil, Chili, in response to his own invitation undertook to arbitrate upon the Mexican issue, and to his enormous relief Huerta agreed also. It was appropriate that the negotiators should have their conference near Niagara Falls, there to attempt the control of passions quite as powerful as the waters which thundered around them. Woodrow Wilson determined that there should be only one outcome of this meeting: the unspeakable Huerta must go, and the 'Constitutionalist' Carranza must become President of Mexico. The President had persuaded himself that this Venustiano Carranza was a man after his own mind.

But alas, an even greater disappointment was now to come. Even the sacrifice of blood was not enough to bring about the victory of abstract justice. The Mexican negotiators behaved

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like touchy *caballeros*, and both parties declared they would never accept dictation from the President of the United States. The wicked Huerta and the virtuous Carranza were entirely unanimous in demanding the withdrawal of American troops from Mexican soil. The American President had committed a blunder like interfering between husband and wife, and drawn the wrath of Mexican patriots of all parties.

The conference at Niagara Falls petered into compromise, without any undertaking from the cunning Huerta that he would abdicate. Carranza's representatives refused even to sign the agreement. The only result, it seemed, of Woodrow Wilson's policy had been to drive two hostile Mexicans into one another's arms, and Theodore Roosevelt thundered: 'Every argument against Huerta applies with tenfold more truth against Carranza.'

Now came a further complication. The roving 'General' Villa had made a sudden sportive raid across the American border and murdered American citizens in their beds. Once more the President was obliged to intervene. He ordered General Pershing to pursue Villa and catch him. This involved violating the Mexican frontier, and so enraged Carranza that, to kill General Pershing's soldiers, he used the rifles the United States had given him, while Villa remained elusive in the highlands of Mexico.

The Mexican affair drawn out over years had ended in that most tragic form of mockery — a bad thing done from the highest motives. Wilson's idealism had almost produced war, and his failure of penetration had removed one Mexican tyrant only to set up another in his place. Far from pacifying Mexico, he had made that tormented land more anarchic than ever, and he had sanctioned a vicious principle, that of arming one party in a foreign country and encouraging civil war.

President Wilson's Mexican policy is now interesting chiefly because it helps to explain his attitude to the European war, and we have to remember that the two questions overlap.



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Intervention which had proved so ineffective in Mexico warned him against taking sides in Europe. He learned from Huerta the bitter lesson that to resist evil with all the power of one's hatred may not necessarily produce the good.

### 3

Against the sinister Mexican background the domestic policy of Wilson's administration burst forth like a Jack-in-the-box. That is a fair image of the precipitation with which the two great internal issues — repeal of tariffs, and reform of the currency — were revealed to the American public and propelled through Congress. Woodrow Wilson was a Liberal, both in the English and the American sense, and now we see his dextrous efficiency in the art of political management at home, in contrast to his fumbling uncertainty when dealing with Mexico. The battle of the tariffs began four days after the President's inauguration.

The tariff upon manufactured goods entering the country was as native to American ideas as free trade was to Victorian England, and to secure preferential treatment each important industry had its 'Lobby' perpetually at work in Washington, keeping the protective duty as high as possible, and there were 'sugar Senators', 'steel Senators', and other enthusiastic spokesmen of other special interests. Woodrow Wilson had long had his eye on this system, and he hated it as much as the favouritism of the Princeton clubs. Protection secured through political lobbying seemed to him a particularly obnoxious form of special privilege, and the Democratic party had now in both houses of Congress majorities sufficient to pull down those overgrown tariff barriers.

But the battle of the tariffs was a mere skirmish compared with the reform of the national currency which was started at the same time, with Woodrow Wilson's instinctive technique of piling one issue on top of another. At Princeton he had

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forced the trustees to consider the quadrangle system even before they had recovered their surprise over his preceptorial idea, and now he threw himself simultaneously into both tariff reform and currency reform in a way no President had ever done before.

Woodrow Wilson made a practice of interviewing Senators and Congressmen. Those who complained of his tendency to quarrel with men like Dean West and Henry Cabot Lodge, had to admit his skill in persuading and stimulating the average member of the party. All through the hot summer of 1913 this inexorable pressure continued. He drove them on, insisted on a special session of Congress being convened for August.

Metallic gold was the magic lamp governing commerce and industry. The value of labour, corn, cattle and machinery depended upon the number of bars of the metal in bank strong-rooms, while every new goldfield discovered in Alaska or South Africa caused the sensitive needle of commercial credit to tremble.

Two world wars, national controls, loans, lend-lease and a return to international barter have made orthodox economics as out of date as a Victorian crinoline, but in 1912 every banker shuddered at the notion of tampering with the sacred mysteries of credit.

Though each of the 48 states had its own banking system, they all tended to rely on New York, and in the six financial panics which had occurred since the American Civil War, the whole country suffered because money power was concentrated in a few powerful banks.

In the brief financial panic of 1907 money cost a hundred per cent, and the whole business world had been temporarily ruined through a gigantic poker game of speculation in railroad securities, after which the great Pierpont Morgan was made a sort of financial dictator, and the picture of a single banker alone in his library, dealing out cards in a game of solitaire, while from time to time, as fresh information from

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the Stock Exchange came in, he would remove his cigar, look up and issue gruff orders, was vivid in the public memory. That was financial autocracy in its most absolute and picturesque form.

At the other end of the scale the American people had admired the adroitness of a certain Mrs. Hetty Green, a shrewd lady of bonds and securities, who, foreseeing the coming crash, took her money out of the bank in time. When she died in a modest apartment in Hoboken, it was found she was worth a hundred million dollars. An example of middle-class thrift in its thriftiest form.

Was it not possible to find a scientific way of managing wealth, a system somewhere between Mr. Morgan's unrestrained individualism and the miserliness of Mrs. Hetty Green?

Henry Morgenthau senior, a financier who made a large fortune from New York City real estate, declared that one man of shrewdness and energy, possessing a hundred million dollars at the beginning of the century, could have gained control of the entire banking system of the United States. It was possible for a few men in Wall Street to compress the carotid artery of credit at the very moment when the commerce of the country most needed blood in the head. Conversely, when the economic brain suffered from a dangerous congestion, that same arbitrary power could force even more money into the overloaded circulation.

As a Democrat, whose party speaks for the individual and the average, Wilson represented the consumer point of view, the attitude of the farmer and the manufacturer who looked upon bankers as a necessary affliction. Currency reform was part of Wilson's intellectual faith. He had not forgotten his grievance against those wealthy alumni of Princeton, nor had he forgiven them.

It was left to Colonel House to convince the Wall Street bankers that although the President was set upon financial reform, he was not a revolutionary in the money sense as Mr.

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W. J. Bryan was, and this service the Colonel did to perfection. What the President's enemies had been pleased to call a 'Wilson panic' on the Stock Exchange subsided, and the bankers prepared to accept the inevitable.

A group of Democratic Senators worked out the bill to set up what was called the Federal Reserve System, and a group of bankers tore it to pieces. Wall Street dreaded political manipulation of the delicate balance of credit. Woodrow Wilson calmed the Radicals and soothed the Conservatives. As his enemy George Harvey put it: 'He was conciliatory yet essentially unyielding.'

The bankers foresaw all sorts of calamities from Wilson's bill, but they predicted opposites. One authority pronounced that the bill would bring 'the most damnable contraction of currency ever seen in any country'; while another school of thought said the bill would 'cause dangerous inflation of currency'. The Chicago banker, General Dawes, afterwards Vice-President of the United States, said that Federal Reserve 'would cripple the present national banking scheme and pave the way for panic'.

The act was passed. It created a Federal Reserve Board, made up of men appointed by the government, and the United States was divided into districts. Smaller banks became members of the Federal Reserve which issued its banknotes and radiated credit. This great achievement enabled the United States to stand the financial strain of the first World War. Henry Morgenthau said this act had destroyed for ever the possibility that one man or a group of men could control the money power of the United States.

Even as he completes these two great internal reforms, the first flashes of an international complication draw Wilson's mind away and compel him to think in European terms. When the Panama Canal was completed solely by American capital and American skill, it was realized that under a treaty with Great Britain the United States was pledged to show 'no

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discrimination', and that ships of all nations were to be allowed through the Canal at the same rates. But once the Canal gates were open, a strong agitation began that American coastal ships were outside this agreement and should be allowed free passage.

President Wilson set his face against such an interpretation of the treaty, and despite strong opposition he induced Congress to take the British rather than the American view of the controversy. His first venture into world affairs had been both correct and magnanimous.

### 4

This great year 1913 was the swan song of the professor in national politics. During those first magnificent eight months of the Presidency he had produced the miracle that ripe knowledge when applied with unlimited fanaticism can accomplish. Wilson said he had a 'one-track mind', and this explains his success with domestic legislation, and his simultaneous failure over Mexico for which he had neither the experience nor the necessary absorption. If fate had been different he would have gone down in history as a great American Liberal, a supreme craftsman of law-making: but he would not have become a world prophet.

As the crisis of 1914 drew on the President suffered the hardest trial of his life. Mrs. Wilson had been ill for some months. Life in the White House was heavy and responsibility was crushing her zest. No outsider would ever know how deeply she was committed to the life of this aggressive man of intellect, or what he owed to her intuitive wisdom ever since the moment when he saw the sunlight on her light brown hair in that sleepy Georgia church. Ellen Wilson's natural gift for affairs had moderated the sharpness of his contact with the world, forced him to laugh at his own precipitation, made him friends instead of enemies. It was owing to her that William Jennings Bryan

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had become his supporter. The chief usher at the White House said she was the sweetest and most beloved of the Presidents' wives he had known. But for Ellen Axson, Woodrow Wilson would have remained an erudite professor in a Ladies' College. Thanks to her he had become the teacher of America, and presently of the whole world. It must have been hard for a wife to tolerate without apparent jealousy his friendships with other women, but she had the subtle art of cultivating his admirers and so neutralizing the dangers that lurked in his inflammable temperament.

Beside her deathbed, suffering as though some vital part were being torn out of him, he would have to turn aside to some momentous complication of the President's life: Mr. Tumulty on the telephone reporting that the outrageous Huerta had murdered another Mexican Deputy, or Secretary of Navy Daniells with intelligence of naval operations in the Caribbean Sea. It was in this poignant situation that serious news came from Europe — Austria had issued an ultimatum to Serbia, Russia was mobilizing, worst of all that Germany had invaded Belgium. What did it all mean? Was this the war which he had predicted? Surely the mad European nations would listen to reason, to fair and open arbitration.

As he sat at the bedside, writing out the terms of his offer to mediate, fighting his own despair, the first part of his life was coming swiftly to an end, and the purpose for which destiny and Ellen Wilson had made him was advancing with uncontrollable speed.

### 5

It had been Edward M. House who roused the President out of his instinctive aversion from European politics. In his wide vision, the Colonel from Texas was unlike the average American for whom, ever since George the Third, isolation from Europe had become a national habit. The Pilgrim Fathers

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who came to Massachusetts to escape religious persecution, the Germans of Pennsylvania who refused to submit to oppression, the Irish whose very nationality was a religion of suffering, had all good reasons for quitting Europe. They might love it with sentimental nostalgia, but to them it was, politically speaking, a Noah's Ark, and to a large extent this was Woodrow Wilson's feeling too. His contacts with England were literary and historical, like a man romanticizing his birthplace and unaware of all that had happened since. He thought in terms of Burke, Gladstone and Bagehot, but of modern European politics he knew little. House wrote that the President 'never appreciated the importance of our foreign policy and always laid undue importance on domestic affairs'. Now in his congenial role of President's receiving apparatus, Colonel House put into Wilson's mind the idea of an exploring mission to find out what was going on across the Atlantic.

So, before the first world war began, this unassuming Colonel set out on his pacific odyssey, his strongest shield in the world of European intrigue being his almost complete ignorance of European diplomacy.

House's talk with the German Kaiser at Potsdam was very interesting, and the Colonel came away believing he had 'made a dent'. The loquacious emperor had brought his face very near to that of the sensitive American, and put into words ideas which since that day have had a familiar and sinister sound on German lips — how greatly he desired friendship with England, which nation was, along with Germany, the only bulwark against the Slav races. Of course, said the Kaiser, preparedness for war was a vital doctrine with the Germans, and it was essential for them to have both a large army and a large navy. The imperial suite looked on anxiously, wondering what their master could be saying to this American who was mysteriously not a 'Colonel' in the military sense at all. Like Andrew Carnegie Colonel House was at first impressed by the peaceful tone of the Kaiser's speeches, and the German emperor must

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have read the Colonel's memoranda about the time when the imperial yacht was cruising around Norway and the bomb of Sarajevo did its work.

Having duly reported back to his friend in the White House, Edward M. House passed on to England where he interviewed the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey. England as a whole was more interested in cricket, the royal meeting at Ascot and the outrageous manners of the suffragettes than in foreign policy, but Sir Edward Grey seemed to be 'visibly impressed' by this unusual missioner from Texas through whose mind such ideas as understanding, goodwill, conciliation were constantly passing, and sincerely House believed that his own ideas were shared by everyone he met. His large observant eyes saw everywhere the preparations for a European war, yet on the statesman's lips were nothing but words of peace, and the first victim of his own gullibility was Edward House himself; the second was that isolated ruler in the White House who read with enthusiasm the letter describing how simple after all the European problem was when regarded with good sense and tolerance.

Lord Birkenhead wrote that the statesmen of Europe regarded Colonel House as a sort of 'recurrent peripatetic joke', but perhaps this is too harsh a judgment upon this naive idealist who might, if he had been given more time, have achieved the miracle of bringing Woodrow Wilson to Europe four years before 1918. The apparent simplicity of House gave him the inwardness of perfect understanding. It may be that Kaiser Wilhelm II was not altogether deluding himself when he told George Sylvester Viereck, after the German defeat, that the visit of the Colonel to Europe in 1914 had almost prevented the first World War.

Then came the crash. The old European order, based upon negotiations, pacts and treaties, came suddenly to an end when the Germans crossed the frontier into Belgium and thereby exploded the idea of neutrality. Yet President Wilson's first act



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was to pledge the United States to complete neutrality, and like a schoolmaster prescribing a high moral tone for his boys, he informed his astonished countrymen they must be neutral in thought as well as in action: the natural vivacity and outspokenness of Americans must be curbed: the pupils of Dr. Wilson's academy must not be contaminated by the bad example of boys in other schools, and they must shun those evil boys: virtuous America must behave as though Europe did not exist.

Soon the natural vigour of American speech broke through, and in the Eastern States, especially, a strong demand for intervention began. Yet Wilson could never forget he was President of the United States as a whole, and the story of the next three years describes a feat of political balancing that has never been surpassed. He was indeed two men at the same moment, a fighter by instinct, and a pacifist by conscience. The minor episode in Mexico had been a hideous lesson to the dispassionate Woodrow Wilson who sat in judgment between these opposite selves. It is impossible to understand the paradoxes, the alternate weakness and strength of Woodrow Wilson's policy during neutrality without realizing that it rested upon an uncertain psychic equilibrium. In this hair-balance between peace and war no one could foresee the minute circumstance which would deviate it to one side or the other. The galvanic needle of emotion swung dangerously, but it was to return to the middle point where it gave the impression of being fixed and stationary. No impression of Wilson's mind could be more false, and we must face the paradox that his work for peace is the expression of a deep belligerency.

### 6

Today it has become obvious that to win the first World War Great Britain had to keep command of the seas around continental Europe, and that this could be achieved only through

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a system known as the blockade. In 1914, when International Law still possessed authority, it was accepted that in order to have the right to use this method the war-making country had not merely to establish a blockade in theory, but was obliged to make it effective. Thus, for example, since Rotterdam was a port by which 'contraband of war' might reach Germany, Great Britain must search all ships entering there, even though they be neutral ships, and Rotterdam a neutral port. The Royal Navy succeeded in drawing a net closely around the coastline of Europe, and it was inevitable that American ships bearing American cargoes from American firms should be escorted into some British port and searched. Even to hint that Great Britain might not use the advantage of her naval supremacy was like cutting Samson's hair.

The President declared that he had no legal power to prohibit manufacturers in the United States from supplying munitions of war to either belligerent nation, and while this was intended by him as a gesture of neutrality, its practical result was as though he had expressly authorized American manufacturers to place themselves at the disposal of Great Britain and France. American supplies dispatched to Germany would be impounded by the Royal Navy, but whatever was ordered for Great Britain would be warmly welcomed. This was the necessary consequence of the blockade, but it was not to be expected that all American business men would submit tamely to being thus virtually enlisted on the side of Britain and France, and the situation was far removed from the strict neutrality in thought, word and deed which the President had laid down. Once again the Wilsonian method achieved only a paradox.

Americans of German descent began a loud clamour, while another vocal body of opinion demanded that the United States should enter the war on the side of Great Britain. To both extremes the man in the White House, schooled to compose his own antagonisms, remained deaf. Was he not President

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of a nation of forty-eight parts, yet one whole? Was he not the elected head of New England Puritans, sons of the Cavaliers of Carolina, of Pennsylvania Dutch, Boston Irish, Mexicans and Wisconsin Swedes? He was the only perfect symbol of their unity. Until they were resolved to change, how could the President change? And who could tell him, among the thoughts of a hundred and twenty million, when the turning point of decision had come? There was no one to perform that service. Alone the President had to catch the voice of the nation.

Three thousand miles away the war, so strangely apart from American thought, had become a conflict of two immense armies locked in trenches. While to penetrate the iron network drawn ever more tightly around her coasts, Germany used the submarine, and before long not only the ships of her enemies but neutral vessels were being sent to the bottom. American shippers had now a further grievance.

Their only remedy, and that a feeble one, was to protest to the State Department in Washington, but this the American manufacturers did energetically. Secretary Bryan heard their complaints with sympathy, for he entirely disapproved of the war. A sharp protest would be cabled to the American Ambassador in London, which in due course he would deliver at the Foreign Office. It was accepted that Woodrow Wilson was personally in charge of the foreign policy of the United States. Secretary Bryan, shocked and horrified because the President would not force the nations to stop fighting at once, had escaped into a peaceful fantasy of his own, and the hack work of drafting the notes of protest to Britain was done by the Under Secretary, Robert Lansing. Him the President treated like a Princeton student, revising his homework, correcting a word here and there.

A new sort of fear began to haunt Woodrow Wilson. Madison, the only Princeton man ever elected President of the United States before himself, had been obliged to declare war on Great Britain in 1812 on this very same issue — contraband

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of war. At that time Britain was fighting Napoleon, and in his *History of the American People* Woodrow Wilson had condemned Madison's decision, holding that even George the Third was preferable to the French dictator. Yet now the compulsion of his country's tradition weighed heavily on him. No longer the dispassionate writer of history books, he was in Madison's place. Would he be forced to duplicate Madison's course and assert American rights by going to war against Britain?

He dreaded even the possibility of such a decision. He told Tumulty that Britain was fighting America's fight, and that he would not place obstacles in her way, and even in his controversies with the British Government we can detect this underlying sympathy, and almost deliberate intention that the issues shall be kept trivial in order not to disturb a fundamental understanding.

Ambassador Page had the uncongenial duty of presenting to Sir Edward Grey these irritated messages from his State Department. During his first few months Page's letters had expressed in the most vivid language his good-natured mockery of the quaint old-fashioned customs of post-Edwardian England, but soon he began to feel growing inside him an affinity with English ways such as few strangers have attained. He heard of families losing two and three sons in the trenches of Belgium, he saw the sacrifices accepted in darkened London, and the spirit of the ordinary man and woman, and the American Ambassador felt that in such a struggle neutrality was all wrong. His emotional sympathies began to flow strongly with the Allies. It was a strange situation for the mouthpiece of neutral America. Page softened dispatches, watered down the protests from his own State Department. On one occasion he actually helped Sir Edward Grey to draft a telling reply to a stern diplomatic missive which had been presented from Washington. Each night he would relieve his feelings on paper, pouring out his heart in letters to the President.

A German professor at Harvard and vociferous western

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Senators were charging the President that his ostensible neutrality was nothing but favour to Britain and France. With these guttural protests ringing in his ears Wilson would read those lively letters from Ambassador Page which even called into question his judgment about the war, and he began to be annoyed. Was the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James's losing touch with his own country? Once more he sent Colonel House to Europe to explore the possibilities of peace.

In Sir Edward Grey's study in London the Colonel talked without reserve, and when they had exhausted the war situation they spoke of song-birds and Wordsworth's poetry, and Colonel House wrote back that if every Foreign Minister had been like Grey there would have been no war. Then the Colonel went on to Berlin, where Foreign Minister Zimmermann put into his head the strange idea 'freedom of the seas'. But in the naive German language this meant nothing more than lifting the Allied blockade and allowing war material free entry into the German war industry.

On his way home Colonel House talked with King George the Fifth, who, with a prophetic flash inquired: 'Supposing the Germans were to sink the *Lusitania* with Americans on board? What would America do?'

That very evening came news that a German submarine had indeed torpedoed the liner *Lusitania* with heavy loss of American lives. House wrote to Washington: 'We are being weighed in the balance, and our position among the nations is being assessed by mankind.' And he told Ambassador Page that America would be at war with Germany inside a month. It was only May 1915. The United States did not declare war on Germany until April 1917. How was it that the astute Colonel and the friendly Page were so wrong in their calculations?

While contending on paper with the Germans for the rights of humanity the President seemed to have forgotten the bloody struggles of man.

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### 7

The *Lusitania* was torpedoed and a thousand lives were lost. True, the Germans had explicitly advised Americans not to sail on this doomed ship, but the shock of that torpedo and the horror of those drowned off southern Ireland reverberated inside the President's mind. He stiffened himself against the war hysteria around him and even refused to call the Cabinet. Like Abraham Lincoln in a situation on the brink of war, he desired to have no enmities, no deep division among his countrymen. He made a speech at Philadelphia containing the words: 'There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right.' That sentence sent agony and bewilderment around the world. What did this American mean about being right when others were dying for that very cause? The great Liberal became a music-hall joke.

No European could understand this Janus-like President. The British who reviled him did not know that all the time he was fighting hard against pro-German elements in America who clamoured for an embargo upon supplies to the Allies; and in proposing removal of the embargo on loans to the Allies he had said to the Cabinet: 'The Allies are standing with their backs to the wall, fighting wild beasts. I will permit nothing to be done by our country to hinder or embarrass them in the prosecution of the war unless admitted rights are grossly violated.'

But this emotional swing over to the possibility of war was soon followed by a rebound towards the neutral point. A stiff note was sent to Berlin asking the German Government to disavow the sinking of the *Lusitania*, but to please Secretary Bryan the President gave out a private press release hoping the Germans would respond 'in a spirit of accommodation'.

Never was a hope more justified. The German Government were perfectly ready to be accommodating to the spirit of the

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President's literary diplomacy. What they were not willing to do was to give up sinking American ships.

Still the President kept his neutral course between the ardent realism of Ambassador Page and the religious pacifism of Secretary Bryan. The members of his Cabinet were mostly of English or Scottish descent, two of them actually born under the British flag, yet even so they were irritated by the English policy of blockade. The President kept the balance even, but after the *Lusitania* was torpedoed there is evidence that he would have liked to break the deadlock. A mysterious discussion, known as the 'Sunrise Conference', took place in the White House, at which the President is believed to have told Democratic leaders in Congress that he proposed to bring the United States into the war at once on the side of Britain and France. But the politicians said NO. These men were thinking of the coming elections — for already the Democratic triumph of 1912 was growing old. Swinging America into war on the side of justice might mean disaster at the polls.

Woodrow Wilson, the ardent believer in peace, had failed to begin the fight which might have shortened the first World War by two years.

The Presidential notes to Berlin grew stronger in tone, and Assistant Secretary Lansing was accumulating a mass of cases enough to gladden the heart of an international lawyer. Both sides in the war were behaving with regrettable illegality. Previous experience in forensic arguing over the Alaska boundary had perhaps chilled Mr. Lansing's emotions, but this war in Europe was producing a magnificent crop of juridical problems, and like the conscientious lawyer he was, Mr. Lansing held the scales steadily as between England and Germany. But President Wilson's neutrality was of a different tempo. It had the apparent stillness of a dynamo.

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### 8

But now a very different sort of sensation swept over Washington which has the privilege of knowing high secrets. Ever since the war began the White House had been socially as quiet as a grave, and the widowed President, composing on his typewriter those messages that shook the world, lived in total seclusion from society.

The loneliness that followed Mrs. Wilson's death, just two days before the European war, had lasted only nine or ten months when everyone connected with the White House noticed that the President's looks were brighter. The unbelievable was happening before their eyes. This austere gentleman of fifty-eight with three grown-up daughters was behaving like a boy of twenty. A certain handsome lady, well known in Washington, was frequently seen golfing with the President.

She was Mrs. Edith Bolling Galt, a widow, of Virginian birth. Six years before she had witnessed the inauguration of the Governor of New Jersey and had watched a tall man wearing silk hat and frock coat ride awkwardly on a horse. That same man was now the lonely occupant of the White House, and Mrs. Galt was bringing back into his life that element he needed so badly, feminine atmosphere and admiring affection.

He writes love-letters each day. He has no time to see Ambassadors, and the clerks complain he does not read his papers promptly. One evening, as they stood on the porch overlooking the trees with the Potomac beyond, the President of the United States became once more the romantic youth from the South, and next day the engagement was announced.

A second marriage, they say, is a compliment to the first wife, and to the profoundly luxurious Woodrow Wilson the companionship of the home was a necessity. He had indeed great need of all his bodily and mental resources during that coming year 1916.



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Of course, Presidential matrimony did not please the Democratic party managers, and if they had dared they would have persuaded him to postpone it. They foretold that the puritanical Middle West would not approve of the President's becoming a husband once more, only fifteen months after the loss of his first wife, and in any case there was only six months left to build up a personality for the President's lady in the newspapers. But the stern features and heavy jaw of their master warned them to take no liberties, and his new smile and increasing zest for life made them more confident of the issue. No one ever dared to hint to Woodrow Wilson that his second marriage might be the end of his political career.

The second Mrs. Wilson had great social gifts, but she had no experience of official life, no knowledge whatever of world policies. She had not known her husband as a priggish youth, or moulded him from a pedantic teacher of history into a statesman. To Edith Bolling Wilson he was always the illustrious man, and now she absorbed herself in the great task of keeping him where his gifts belonged. Without her Woodrow Wilson could never have endured the strain of the next few years. He was again the husband of a gay wife whose charm flattered him, and the world which owes much to Woodrow Wilson can be grateful to the helpmate of his last strenuous years.

Even Colonel House laughingly admitted to the President's wife that she was a political asset to her husband. But Mrs. Wilson made him confess that he had been one of those opposed to the second marriage, and that knowledge remained and did not make her any more fond of her husband's intimate friend, the little Colonel.

When Henry Morgenthau senior, now U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, returned to Washington in 1916, leading Democrats

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told him it was absurd to dream of re-electing Woodrow Wilson. The Wilsonian triumph was wearing thin at home as well as abroad. Even so astute judge of politics as the Under Secretary of the Navy, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, took a gloomy view. No Democratic President had been elected for a second consecutive term in the last hundred years.

The Presidential campaign of 1916 opened. Wilson's campaign speeches were based on a strict and academic American neutrality; the party spokesman put him forth as 'the man who kept us out of war'. His opponents used every possible device to discredit him. Wilson's correspondence with Mrs. Peck was fished out once more, but the idea of presenting him as a college Casanova was too ridiculous even to serve as an election trick.

The little state of Maine holds her elections two months earlier than the rest of America, and the saying is that 'As Maine votes so votes the Union'. On this occasion Maine went Republican. The Democrats were more gloomy than ever.

The Republicans had chosen as his antagonist the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Charles Evans Hughes, a great judge, but this dignified lawyer did not make a good Presidential candidate. On a previous occasion Mr. Hughes had declared that a Supreme Court Judge who meddled in politics 'was fit neither for the office which he holds nor for the one to which he aspires'. But when the nomination came Mr. Hughes changed his mind and accepted the situation. He was presented to the people as a 'Progressive' — in order to counter-balance Wilson's radical following, but all through the campaign he merely echoed the President's views, with some extra cautious legal reservations of his own. When a reporter asked him point-blank how he would have dealt with Germany after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Mr. Hughes cleared his throat — but gave no categorical answer.

Much depended upon certain western States where the issue was very dubious. On one dramatic evening in November the

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big results began to come in, and they were uniformly Republican. New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Massachusetts, Indiana with their large totals had all gone for Mr. Hughes. The middle-western state of Minnesota had apparently voted Republican, and in New Jersey the bosses had regained control, and thrown in a big block of votes against him. The *New York World*, a strong supporter of Wilson, gave out that he was defeated. While dense crowds in Times Square celebrated the Republican victory, the Democratic Cabinet Ministers were sitting gloomily at the dinner intended as a victory celebration in the mood of men at a Belshazzar's feast.

Woodrow Wilson had privately decided that if Hughes were elected he would resign the Presidency at once, without waiting until the end of his legal term in March 1917. This was in the interests of the foreign policy of the United States. Yet in his soul he did not believe he was defeated: with paradoxical faith he asserted that the western States had yet to be heard from. Such faith was more than wishful thinking. We meet it at crises in Wilson's life. When others are depressed he seems to have some secret reassurance. On this occasion he had gauged the sentiment of America better than his advisers.

A spy at the Republican headquarters spoke to Tumulty on the phone, giving no name, but he had a very interesting story to tell. Although the Republicans might jubilate, said this well-informed watcher, they were really afraid of the West where the votes were still being counted. The Attorney General seized the danger of the situation. While the President was playing golf, quite detached from the drama of his own re-election, extra police were ordered to watch the enumeration of the votes in those scattered communities of California and Washington. That caution was entirely justified.

Ten days later the returns came in, and by a small majority the Western States had voted Democratic. California's thirteen votes in the Electoral College had made Wilson President once more. By a slender margin of only half a million votes he was

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re-elected, and Mr. Charles Evans Hughes, who had gone to bed as President, woke up to find himself only a defeated Republican.

For a second time by a hairbreadth of a few western votes, he has won the Presidential election and will be in power until 1920. He will now have to deal with those Germans one way or another. Can those oratorical thunderbolts he knows how to use call them to reason? He will try the verbal method, for words are his weapons, and words his armour.

Woodrow Wilson is now sixty years of age, and life and power have hardened his characteristics. A French observer in 1916 spoke about 'his thin lips with their bitterness and sense of disillusion, his looks expressing fatigue or an unutterable weariness, his attitude and appearance of keeping constant watch upon himself'. The old laughing professor was gone, and the grim Calvinist seems to have taken charge. The gay exuberance inherited from Doctor Joseph Wilson has been eclipsed by something older in the blood, the echo of the Scottish covenanters, of men wrathful in a righteous cause. Perpetual struggle with the demon of his own nature has hardened his features and he has succeeded in making peace in his own heart only at tremendous cost.

## CHAPTER VI

### A PRESIDENT GOES TO WAR

'WHEN the time comes I and my cousins George and Nicholas will make peace,' said the German Kaiser Wilhelm to Colonel House who was again on the European side of the Atlantic Ocean. Everything he heard in Germany, France and Switzerland pointed the same way, that the Germans would not listen to any peace proposal. Yet, as he passed through London, House broached to Sir Edward Grey an extraordinary plan. Suppose the President of the United States were to call upon all the contestants to lay down arms and enter a peace conference? The Germans would almost certainly refuse, and then Woodrow Wilson would have his excuse for swinging in America on the Allied side. The Colonel watched for the effect of his suggestion. His large eyes and soft Texan voice were hard to resist, and his subtle comprehension of the hopes and fears of those harassed war makers in Britain suggested an immense delegated authority from the President, and dangled before them the splendid prize of American support. In that frightful year the very word peace was like the dream of water to thirsty men travelling in a desert. But that dream had to be resisted.

The most sceptical man in the world was Ambassador Page. He flatly refused to believe that House had any authority to make such an offer from the President, and he declined to have any part in the discussions. The Colonel persisted nevertheless, and extracted from the British leaders an agreement that, some time in the future, upon a date to be agreed, the President would call a peace conference.

Sir Edward Grey said that this agreement was as momentous as the declaration which drew Britain into war in 1914, but

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that if the words Making Peace were to become known to the British public he expected stones through his windows. The result of the talks was a triumph for House, and back in Washington he laid it eagerly before the President, well aware that the way to influence his friend in the direction of war was paradoxically by an appeal to his love of peace.

But of what use was all this talk of peace when every day the relations between Britain and the United States were becoming more and more strained? The British blockade had made a farce of American neutrality. An ominous clamour began to arise that the only possible form of American reprisal was a stoppage of dollar loans and food supplies.

The main bulwark against such a danger was the influence of those wonderful letters which Ambassador Page wrote out of the fullness of his heart several times a week when all his family had gone to bed. Over and over the Ambassador repeated that appeasement of Germany would never pay. He prophesied that in a little while the Germans 'may be able to bombard New York and demand billions of dollars to refrain from destroying the city'. 'When the English say the Germans must give up their military system I doubt if the Germans really know what they mean. When this really does get into their heads I think they may so swell with the insult that they may break loose in one last desperate effort, ignoring the United States, defying the universe, running amuck.' So wrote the American Ambassador from within sound of the guns. But the President felt irritated. Walter Page needed a cold bath in American opinion, and in the summer of 1916 he was summoned to Washington.

He was distressed to find how isolation had sterilized American thought about the war. Vice-President Marshall confessed with pride that he had purposely not read any of the official documents of the Allied powers — lest he should cease to be neutral. Page met the members of the Cabinet, but they did not seem interested to hear about foreign relations

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and the talk was jocular and personal. Eventually the Ambassador was invited to the White House. The President was courteous, asked his Ambassador to lunch with his family and they had a pleasant social conversation, but to Page's horror the war was not mentioned. It was the dinner-table talk of a Princeton professor, and bitterly Page recalled his intimate communications in London with Asquith and Sir Edward Grey. How different from his relations with his own President.

Was he not to open his mind to Woodrow Wilson's mind? Page pressed for a private interview, and at last, after five weeks, he was allowed to meet his old friend alone.

Like a clever psychologist, Page took with him one of those medals which the Germans had struck to commemorate the sinking of the *Lusitania*. But even this seemed to make no impression on Woodrow Wilson; he gave Page a lecture about the root causes of war and the Ambassador was shocked to be told that this European tragedy was nothing but a squabble between haves and have-nots. England possessed the earth, while Germany wanted it. At last, when his moment came, Page put all his heart into an eloquent appeal. This man facing him who now possessed supreme authority he had known almost since they were boys, and their lives had been similar, their ambitions and dreams those of two adventurers from the backward South, and now, as a man inspired, Page put into fervent words all he had learned of England, the spirit behind the statesmen at Westminster, the bravery of those stately dowagers who were losing their sons and brothers, the tough resistance and loyalty of the British working man. Above all, he appealed to the idealistic leader, the man of conscience, the mind that saw the war as a problem of right and wrong, and he presented the case for the Allies as an unanswerable syllogism of justice.

He finished and looked into those grey eyes, saw that stubborn jaw and he knew this man was a scholar of the nineteenth century, whose immense learning stood in his own light, and

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as he came away he said: 'That is the loneliest man I have ever known.' The President was lonely indeed.

Washington never saw him at social gatherings, but watched his pleasures from a distance. People knew of his regular motor drives, his games of golf with his physician, and they saw him regularly at Keith's Theatre, but they knew as little of what was going on in the President's mind as any European people did of its ruler. The Ambassador to the Court of St. James's was not the only American to be baffled by the inscrutability of this lonely man in the executive mansion.

### 2

But Walter Page had builded better than he knew. He sent in his resignation which the President refused to accept, and the psychological circuit remained open between the Ambassador's bedroom and the study in the White House where the great neutral in the greatest neutral State on earth, still kept open his ears for every echo of a desire for peace. The Ambassador's words had made their impression.

Now began that series of diplomatic notes which form a step-ladder to American participation in the war. The first declared that as between the declared objects of the war stated both by the Allies and Germany, there was no real difference. Like an impartial historian the President weighed both sides in his scales — and found there was not much to choose between them. Colonel House had been shown the draft of this famous document beforehand, and he had tactfully proposed alterations. 'I have seldom seen anything he has written with so many changes,' he wrote. 'I deprecate one sentence which will give further impetus to the belief that he does not understand what the Allies are fighting for — I talked to him for ten minutes and got him to eliminate from the original draft a much more pronounced offence of the same character, but he has put it back in a modified form.'



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Words coming at the end of that terrible year, 1916, fell with a terribly depressing affect on the Allies, and King George the Fifth could not keep back tears when he spoke to House. The Germans answered with an arrogant snub, which had the effect of stiffening the President.

He prepared another communication, which contained the words 'Peace without Victory'. Once again the world poured out its scorn upon this academic ruler with his schoolmaster's style and again the Germans reacted with further violence. They announced that in future every ship in British waters, whether belligerent or neutral, would be liable to be sunk without warning. In vain did Bernstoff, the German Ambassador in Washington, try to persuade his emperor to countermand this policy of submarine frightfulness.

The more urgently did the President's inward voice tell him he must go to war, the sterner became his mask of neutrality. Even at the beginning of 1917 the President was saying to House: 'This country does not intend to become involved in the war. We are the only one of the great white nations not involved in war today, and it would be a crime against civilization for us to go in.' 'The President changes his mind often,' commented House.

But it was something different from a change of mind. It was the seesaw of an ambivalent personality in which opposite impulses wrestled without ceasing, and in his heart perhaps he hoped still that there would be a chance for him to settle the European war by arbitration.

Twenty U-boats put to sea, and twenty young commanders were thirsting for the Iron Cross. When the news was brought to him, the President remarked to Tumulty: 'This means war.' The sand castle of his pacifism was being washed away by succeeding waves of German aggression. He decided to give the German Ambassador his passports. He has made his decision.

As he waits to drive to Capitol Hill to make this momentous declaration there is a pause. Between peace and war there is

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a vacuum into which no other thoughts manage to fit, and, to quieten their nerves, Wilson and Colonel House sit down to play a game of cards while the entire world waits.

The President was more than three-quarters of the way to war, yet he still balked at preparing for the inevitable conflict. Members of Congress agitated that American merchant ships should be armed with guns to enable them to retaliate upon attacking submarines, but the President said NO. This would be an act of partisanship. He was very near to saying that America should be willing to lose her ships if she could preserve her neutrality. A deep fissure developed, the beginning of the split between the President and Congress which was to have such fateful consequences in the next two years. He turned and called certain Senators 'a group of wilful men', and Senators who have long memories, remembered.

### 3

President Wilson commenced his second term of office in March 1917, and it is symbolic that, at the ceremony of inauguration, for the first time amplifiers were used to carry his voice to a wider audience. One final shock was needed to beat down the President's neutrality, still outwardly intact.

The German Foreign Minister Zimmermann dispatched to the German Ambassador in Mexico City an extraordinary telegram. So important was this message that it was sent by no less than four different routes. One version went by Sweden and Buenos Aires; a second copy by direct wireless; a third by direct cable through the territory of the neutral United States; most cynical of all, the fourth version was actually allowed to pass in code and this upon the President's specific orders, through Bernstorff's embassy in Washington. All four repetitions were intercepted by the British Secret Service.

What was the purport of this communication to Mexico over which Zimmermann took these fourfold precautions?

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Nothing less than the offer of bribe to President Carranza, that former favourite of Woodrow Wilson, that if a war broke out between Germany and the U.S.A. Mexico should attack the United States and enter the war on the German side. In return for this Mexico would receive back from the gringos of the North, all her 'conquered provinces' — Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

This preposterous effort of the German imagination was the final cause of American intervention, it acted something like the Pearl Harbour treachery in the second World War. Max Harden, the great German editor, wrote afterwards: 'In modern history there is no example of a lack of knowledge of existing conditions to be compared to this.'

At first no one in the United States, not even the President, would believe that the Germans could have been so foolish. Members of Congress suspected a British hoax, and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge moved a resolution to inquire into the genuineness of the message. But Zimmermann himself supplied the answer by openly admitting that Germany desired an alliance with Mexico hostile to the United States. This telegram was Wilson's justification for throwing over neutrality, and abruptly the needle of his temperament swung over to war. Yet for a few agonized days more he fumbled with his typewriter, anxiously composing the piece of rhetoric that was to lead into war the nation which had made him President to avoid war. Already American opinion, which in its reactions has a Latin briskness, had gone ahead of him.

It had taken him three years to reach this decision, but now he was able to act with the great majority of the American people behind him. He said to Tumulty: 'From the very beginning I saw the end of this horrible thing: but I could not move faster than the great mass of our people would permit.' Mr. Lansing, who was watching calmly, wrote later: 'There is in his nature a strange mixture of positiveness and indecision which is almost paradoxical . . . Suddenness rather than prompt-

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ness has always marked his decisions.' The individual had to find his own individual way around to the most collective act in the world, that of going to war, and to do this he had to overcome his own resistances, those of an aggressive man who feels deeply the guilt of his own hatred. From now the whole vigour of his mind switched to the opposite pole, and he plunged into war with an energy impossible to a genuine lover of peace. He was no instinctive and genuine pacifist like William Jennings Bryan who had an easy tolerant love for the mass of his fellow men. Woodrow Wilson was 'a tiger by nature and an angel through grace', and he kept to peace through fear of what his own hatred might do, and now, in the last great climactic year of the first Great War, he is free to give rein to his nature. He can be a war leader like Lloyd George and Clemenceau.

But then once more when it is all over he may resume his role as a prophet of peace: thus he will allow each of his warring selves its full expression. With some such compromise to himself did Woodrow Wilson assuage his conscience on that great day when he delivered his war message to Congress.

On an April evening the President drove towards the lovely dome of the Capitol flooded in white light, and the Stars and Stripes waved triumphantly against a clear sky. In the lobby of the crowded chamber just before the sitting began the first warlike episode had taken place. The dignified Senator from Massachusetts, Henry Cabot Lodge, actually smote a pacifist agitator who had attacked his attitude in supporting the war.

The President spoke in an atmosphere of deep silence broken by bursts of excited cheering. He pitched his appeal high, rousing America to a sense of her moral duty towards civilization and denouncing the Germans, as the Reverend Joseph Wilson might have done from the Presbyterian pulpit in North Carolina. It was perhaps his greatest oration. In mentioning the causes of the war, the President drew a distinction between the guilt of the German Government and that of the German

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people, and this made it easier for the German-speaking Americans of St. Louis and Milwaukee. It was perhaps the first time in history that such a distinction had been made and differing degrees of responsibility established: it was a characteristic Wilsonian idea which was to have important consequences.

Woodrow Wilson had spoken to the whole of America. His time had come. A year later he would be addressing Europe, then the entire world. And after twenty, fifty, a hundred years, he would still be addressing history.

Yet the moment Woodrow Wilson had taken this momentous step of going to war, he was again troubled by conscience, and thinking of those crowds who cheered him on the way to the Capitol he said to Tumulty: 'My message today was a message of death for those young men. How strange it seems to applaud that.' He will sacrifice himself like an American soldier. Now he has been guilty in his own eyes of this tremendous crime of war, he will atone for it by even greater efforts for peace.

The young men of America saw the case differently; heroic acceptance of an idealism such as their President had so often placed before them came more naturally to them than the morbid shrinking of this passionate man whose whole soul called out for the conflict which his intellect so sternly rebuked.

Though for a few anxious hours the issue was in doubt, Congress voted for war by large majorities — in the Senate 82 to 6, and in the House of Representatives 373 to 50, and in this last minority voted the first woman ever to sit there.

### 4

Even when the great decision to go to war was made the President did not seem in a hurry to organize the American armies, and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge feared that having previously imagined 'Peace without Victory', Wilson might now propose a war without fighting. Perhaps in this Lodge was

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correct. Wilson may even have conceived himself as defeating Germany by words.

But American energy was now released from Presidential inhibitions. War legislation and war fever gathered, and the great liberal pacifist became a fanatical war maker, an apparent change in character which shocked his friends. War gave him the powers of a dictator over American life, and slowly the army of General Pershing was got ready and injected like a powerful stimulant into English, French and Belgian resistance on the Western Front. The Allies were in a desperate condition. The German submarine had almost isolated Britain and she was short of food and oil and money. Approved by Ludendorff, the celebrated journey of a handful of Russian pioneers through Germany from Zurich to St. Petersburg had taken place, and Russia had withdrawn from the fighting into the mesmerism of Lenin.

Pope Benedict the fifteenth, whose rule in the Church was embarrassed by conflict among his own cardinals corresponding to their differing national allegiance, made an appeal for peace on the basis of 'no annexations, no indemnities, and international arbitration'; but the Allies saw behind the Pope's pen the hand of Austria, and the Irish and Italian Catholics of America were more in sympathy with their Presbyterian President than with their Pope. The papal peace offer came to nothing. In the Austrian capital, so long the cultural centre of Europe, malnutrition and tuberculosis were completing the disintegration which the death of the old Emperor Franz Joseph had begun.

The *New York Sun* proposed to hold a journalistic debate with the *Berliner Tageblatt* as to the causes and objects of the war, and Colonel House rather favoured the idea, thinking it would induce the Allies to publicize their war aims. But the President vetoed the proposal, though he felt some statement of war aims was called for, especially as the Russian Bolsheviks had published the so-called 'secret treaties' between the Allies. It

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was this situation which made Woodrow Wilson and Edward House sit down together to draft the famous document of the 'Fourteen Points' out of which was born the League Covenant. The President loved such a task, for he had been making constitutions all his life. He had begun by reforming the debating society at Princeton, and now he was to make a set of rules for the whole world. These were the famous Fourteen Points which commence with the declaration in favour of open diplomacy, and running through the political problems which perplexed the world conclude with the guarded plea for a 'general association of nations' formed under specific covenants to afford mutual guarantees of independence and integrity to States great and small.

Even ex-President Theodore Roosevelt could not hold back his admiration. 'Today, as never before, the whole nation marches with the President, certain alike of the leader and the cause!'

Germany was not quite isolated from the rest of the world, and there was one German who in 1918 managed to keep his freedom of speech to a degree that would have been unthinkable to any similar man in 1944 when his country was again in the process of defeat. This was Max Harden who was proclaiming loudly in his paper that 'Europe's war guilt should be made a shrine of atonement', and who visualized a time when all nations would join together in community of interest. His articles were later recorded in the proceedings of the United States Senate.

Prince Max of Baden dispatched to Washington an offer to make peace on the basis of the President's Fourteen Points. The Kaiser was gone, the Generals were humiliated, and a handful of liberal Germans suddenly found themselves in the awkward position of having to seek peace terms, and they judged correctly in sending their proposal to the liberal across the Atlantic rather than to London or Paris. Breathlessly both sides waited for the answer of the Allies, and

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Woodrow Wilson climbed into his pulpit and faced the world.

His reply to Prince Max satisfied the most cautious critic in England and France. It demanded complete acceptance of the Fourteen Points, immediate evacuation of foreign territory by the Germans, and an assurance that the offer of peace came from the German people and not those responsible for the war. Already Count Andrassy had accepted the President's terms on behalf of Austria, but now the German General Ludendorff tried to bargain, wishing to keep his army still intact in order to exercise pressure later, but the President, once more rising magnificently to the situation, said NO.

Even the Fourteen Points themselves, now the implied conditions of the Armistice agreement, had to be clarified and explained, and the inevitable mental limitations of the two men and the method by which they had drafted them became obvious to the world. The tables of the law which Woodrow Wilson brought down from Sinai were found vague, defective and unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the Germans accepted them, and abruptly everything became quiet on the Western Front.

In that November of 1918, when the German plenipotentiaries faced Marshal Foch in the railway coach, a domestic event had taken place in the United States which, though it appears out of scale with the drama of Europe, is connected with the even greater tragedy of Woodrow Wilson's failure.

The mid-term elections to Congress were due, and all the House of Representatives, and one-third of the Senate fell to be chosen by popular vote. Once more Woodrow Wilson was beguiled by the conception of acting as an English Prime Minister, who needed a party majority behind him. In the elections of 1912 and 1916 the people had supported him, and his extraordinary power of appeal to the masses, over the heads of their party leaders, had been justified by results. But his tide was turning, and those mighty waves of progressivism which lifted him into power had become feeble.



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An appeal to the country was drafted. Stung by a challenge of Theodore Roosevelt, the President asked for a Democratic Congress, Democratic in both branches, and he claimed this on the ground that he must have Congress support for his approaching visit to Paris. Such a mishandling of the American Constitution by the man who had been its greatest interpreter is understandable only when we remember that Wilson's whole political philosophy and his practical success had been founded on personal leadership.

It was a disastrous move. As President Eliot of Harvard University wrote: 'I cannot but think that your appeal to the voters was an unnecessary and inexpedient departure from the position you have previously had, namely, that you are President of the United States claiming and having the support of the entire people.'

On the top of this miscalculation, the President again revealed his political rancour by declining to have as collaborator for the Peace Conference a single representative of the Republican party. To bring in some of those on the opposite who stood for the cause of Liberalism, and who had studied international affairs — such as ex-President Taft, or Elihu Root — would have been a magnanimous gesture. More than that, it would have been first-class political strategy.

But at this supreme moment Woodrow Wilson was incapable of rising above his own self-sufficiency, and his hatred of political foes and these two miscalculations, arranged by destiny in the nature of the qualities with which she endowed him, made failure inevitable.

## WOODROW WILSON—THE TRAGEDY

IN July 1919 the great east room of the White House was thrown open again. The Peace Conference is over, and the President is back home. After some years of closure due to the death of the first Mrs. Wilson and then the war, dust sheets were taken off the furniture, and the porcelain figures of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln who had silently witnessed great occasions in American history, now surveyed a scene momentous as any which those fathers of the constitution had ever known. It was a significant moment in the history of the United States, but from the point of view of the world this official gathering in the White House is a parting in the ways of history. President Wilson meets the Foreign Relations Committee and lays before them the Versailles Treaty, and he has appealed that it should be ratified as a whole, without change. Senators ask questions, make speeches, and withdraw, fully aware of their power. The Senate now contains a majority of Republicans who are out for blood, and its chairman is Henry Cabot Lodge, who thus becomes the nearest equivalent that the United States has to a parliamentary Foreign Minister. If the Senate refuses consent, then the labour of Woodrow Wilson at Paris will have been in vain, and the United States will be no party to the world settlement.

Down the steps of the White House came the Senators, boisterously debating the President's statement, and already they are divided into separate streams of opinion. He had appealed to them to pass it whole, and though he appeared willing to issue some explanation as to how the United States construed the document, he had hinted that if the Senate were to make changes, then Britain, France and other nations would

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demand the same privilege. Nevertheless, some Senators insisted upon reservations, that is alterations to safeguard the position of the United States. These 'Reservationists' were found both among Republicans and Democrats.

Throughout the conflicts of Woodrow Wilson's official life his habit was to occupy certain defensive positions and hold on until victory. Mexico, Federal Reserve, the battle of the quadrangles at Princeton — each episode in his exciting career has these strategic citadels, occupied grimly, and now in the fluctuating dispute over the treaty, his defensive strong point was 'no reservations'.

We have to admit that his previous experience of altering the clauses of the treaty to suit the Senators had not been propitious. To please some of them he had caused to be inserted an article expressly mentioning the Monroe Doctrine. This change had been carried out only after weary evenings of debate with Clemenceau, and the President had had to pay for it heavily in concessions. But now Senator Lodge declared that putting in the Monroe Doctrine had been worse than leaving it out altogether. The President dug himself in, and decided to admit no more reservations, either great or small.

Every lawyer on Capitol Hill joined in the debate. Senator Borah of Idaho, a ferocious isolationist, said the treaty was 'outside the pale of respectability even according to ancient standards, and founded on immorality and revolting injustice', and with similar language from many others dinning in their ears, the Foreign Relations Committee prepared to take evidence to help them to make up their minds. Everyone who had a grievance came to Washington. Congress Indians who hated the British Empire, Hungarians, Egyptians and even American negroes poured out their woes. If the Peace Conference at Paris had presumed to discuss the rights of minorities in the United States, Senators would have been outraged, but now everyone who had a debt against England, Lloyd George, French colonial policy, or hostile views on any question

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decided at Paris, came volubly before the Senate, and provided new ammunition for the assault on the President. Wherever he made a speech extolling the League of Nations, Mr. Eamon de Valera, who was on a lecturing tour of the United States, was sure to follow up with his cold denunciation of the British ideal.

Woodrow Wilson had to fight it out alone upon ground he had deliberately chosen. The weakness of his tactical position was due to the fact that no active leader of the Republican party had been at Paris. The President had chosen to market America's idealism in Europe: well, now he must sell it to Americans as well. Senator Lodge, Senator Borah and many others were not at all convinced; by temperament and political conviction they disliked Woodrow Wilson.

Their most powerful arguments were found ready made by John Maynard Keynes, that young economist from Cambridge who had jeopardized a promising career by denouncing the treaty, and woken up to find himself hailed as the apostle of true Liberalism in international affairs. His lucid prognostications and his stern defence of economic freedom were now the mainstay of the most reactionary forces in America. That book, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, had begun to undermine the foundations of the Treaty of Versailles long before that treaty came before the Senate for final ratification.

The President's faith that in searching for Utopia we make our finest discoveries was unshaken. From the solitude of his study in the White House through the trees he could see where the Potomac flowed; and looking towards the Democratic South, his own country, and with the support of millions there and in the far West, he could afford to ignore the envious clamour of a handful of narrow-minded Senators. He was sure that he had the power to dig down to the soul of America and liberate the spring of idealism he divined beneath the surface.

He has not much time. In less than a twelvemonth the

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party caucus will be choosing the candidate for the Presidential election of 1920, and Woodrow Wilson is on the last lap of the lease of power given him in the peace election of 1916. The ordinary routine of the President's office crescendoed as the country passed from war back to peace. A railroad strike, labour problems, appointments, pardons and the weighty mass of patronage, each a problem needing prolonged study, pressed on him with menacing urgency.

In the President's desk, presented to the White House by Queen Victoria, was a special drawer where files of papers needing immediate attention were placed. Tired after a day's appointments the President and Mrs. Wilson would open that drawer — to find it overflowing with documents which he must read and ponder before he can go to bed.

He had no longer the counsel of Colonel House. Though they have not met since June there had been no quarrel, no formal break in their friendship, and when House wrote, referring to Press rumours, 'our annual falling-out seems to have occurred', the President replied: 'Am deeply distressed by malicious story about break between us and thank you for whole message about it. The best way is to treat it with silent contempt.' Yet they did not come together, and the lonely President suffered through lack of the independent sense-data which only House knew how to give. The nature of their separation remains a mystery. Once before Wilson had suffered deeply in body and mind through the break with Professor Hibben. The same wounding of spirit now occurred once again.

Controversy over the League of Nations spread across America like a forest fire. A further meeting with the Foreign Relations Committee was not a success, even though followed by lunch at the White House. Woodrow Wilson realized the

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future was unsafe in the hands of men such as those and a new strategy formed in his mind.

Ten years before he had discovered the American West. There amongst less sophisticated, less traditional multitudes, his oratory possessed a revivalistic power denied to it in Eastern States. In the election of 1916 a handful of votes in California had made him President, and a deep sentimental affection and sympathy for the primitive mind of America made him confident that he could succeed in carrying the League of Nations, if only he could appeal directly to the people beyond the Mississippi. Woodrow Wilson's Calvinistic forebears believed they could reach the ear of the Almighty without the need for any priest. And now he was equally persuaded that he could reach the American soul without help of Senator or Congressman.

In August he began an evangelistic tour right across America, through the Middle West and North-West, to California and back to Washington. By every precedent in his career this would succeed in swinging round the mind of America, and compel those obstructive Senators to ratify the work of Paris.

The boy in South Carolina who was entranced by his father's sermons had now become the most effective orator in the world, and before the days of radio he drew the largest audiences any speaker had known. He had reached that omnipotent realm where the power of words gives birth to deeds. Woodrow Wilson never doubted that those who came to scoff would remain to pray; he never doubted that in championing the Covenant he was carrying the Lord's battle against wicked men.

A President crossing the United States does not go as other mortals, nor with the comparative immunity of crowned heads. He travels as a public exhibit whom everyone has the right to see and shake by the hand. Each Democratic committee man, every clergyman, the presidents of corporations and chambers of commerce feel that the President would be the better for

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knowing their personal opinions, and the vast crowds who cannot get near express their fellowship by interrupting his speech in applause for a quarter of an hour at a time. He started this tremendous feat of oratory with his art of presenting an intellectual problem in emotional terms to the mass mind fully matured through long practice. He had performed the miracle so often before.

But one little fact the President has tried to ignore — his physical organization. His nerves, his arteries, are no longer what they have been, witness: the writer's cramp at Princeton, the permanently blind eye, his nervous exhaustion after the quarrel with Professor Hibben and the trying bout of influenza at Paris, followed by that ominous uncontrollable twitching of the right side of the face. A prudent man who wished to complete his term of office in good health would have been more careful. But Woodrow Wilson is prudent no longer. He is a fantastic obsessed with martyrdom. If young Americans gave their lives in the war to save civilization cannot he give his life to save the peace?

### 3

The Eastern States were hard to arouse. The first meeting at Columbus (Ohio) seemed an anticlimax to his friends who remembered the worshipping crowds in the Champs-Élysées and the cheers of those usually undemonstrative British. America paid less attention than she had given the unknown professor ten years before. But as he moved west the temperature of his audiences rose and kindled his own emotional fervour. In Kansas City fifteen thousand came to listen; in Seattle on the Pacific Coast thirty thousand greeted him with 'a continuous and riotous uproar akin to fanaticism'.

At Omaha he uttered a warning: 'I can predict with absolute certainty that within another generation there will be another world war, if the nations of the world do not concert the method

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by which to prevent it,' and later, at San Diego, he completed the prophecy: 'The war we have just been through, though it was shot through with terror of every kind, is not to be compared to the war we would have to face next time,' and received rapturous applause. In the great round tabernacle of the Mormon church at Salt Lake City, which combined perfect acoustics with an appalling lack of ventilation, the President received an apostolic welcome. Reports came in that the country was coming round, and hostile Senators who kept their ears close to the ground were beginning to see that the League of Nations was good politics.

Yet Woodrow Wilson suffered agony. It was September, and the fiery summer heat had not passed away from the desert. Air-conditioning of Pullman cars had not yet been invented, he spent his nights to the sound of moving wheels, and splitting headaches and sleeplessness were dragging out the last forces of his vitality. The Irish pursued him malignantly, and the awful urgency of time was forbidding the slightest relaxation. At Cheyenne, Wyoming, where thousands were turned away from the auditorium, he began to regret that he had not taken the week's rest in the Grand Canyon as had been arranged for him but declined by his sense of duty.

In California he had received one more emotional affront, the sort of wound that is agonizing for a man who keeps all his memories and can feel over and over again the love that is passed. He met Mrs. Hubert Peck, that gay friend of the New Jersey and Bermuda days, the lovely woman to whom he had written those much rumoured letters. She was older, she had been through financial misfortune, and mutely wrapped up in her own troubles she appealed for help. It was agonizing that he could do nothing. The President had to pass on, for he was now past giving help to any human being. Though each encouragement from the pro-treaty forces raised his spirits, the headaches, the nervous prostration following the excitement of overwrought nerves, overmastered him at the end of the



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day, as rivers, crowds, forests and a glowing waste of desert moved past.

A great speech in Denver had been followed by an automobile drive, and he had reached Pueblo lying at the foot of Colorado's sierra. The President's voice seemed to lack its usual sonority as he told the huge crowd that those American boys who had died in France had perished for an ideal that vastly transcended the immediate and palpable objectives of the war. This speech was Woodrow Wilson's valedictory.

That same evening the headache returned with unbearable intensity. The train was stopped and the President and Mrs. Wilson walked for half an hour along the railroad track to get some fresh air. It gave him some relief but the pain would not go, and he was restless and all night as the train moved through the darkness he was unable to fall asleep, until at last, for a few hours after dawn, he managed to sink into a doze as the train moved into Wichita, Kansas, where crowds thronged the railroad station.

This was the end. The President knew inwardly. 'They will think me a quitter,' was his thought as painfully he struggled with the awful frustration of his tired body. In his heart he knew his pilgrimage was over.

As the train drew into that railroad depot at Wichita the crowds saw the blinds of the 'Mayflower' pulled down, where a broken man was on the edge of a bodily catastrophe. The local committee was told that the President could not speak. The cheering hushed, and the train began its return journey of 1700 miles back to Washington.

Those at the White House were relieved to find that the President looked his old self, except that he was a little more florid than usual. But that was the final respite. Only a few days later the collapse came.

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### 4

In the Senate Hall Vice-President Thomas R. Marshall, who had been Woodrow Wilson's faithful though undistinguished henchman in two campaigns, presided while fifty amendments to the peace treaty dragged along. Vice-President Marshall was the man who cracked a joke Wilson always remembered: 'Mr. President, I am your only *Vice*,' and now he watched from his chairman's seat the strange ebb of the tide which when he first sat there had flowed so strongly in favour of Woodrow Wilson. Democratic Senators were largely behind the President, Republicans were hostile, but between them was a fluctuating group made up of both persuasions.

The objections to the treaty, called 'reservations', were a series of self-contradicting opinions and American prejudices which, if all carried through, would have wrecked the League of Nations, or any other society invented by man. Some wished the United States to have the power to withdraw from the League at any time. Some Senators thundered against the possibility that the League would meddle in American home affairs. Senator Warren Gamaliel Harding, Republican (Ohio), declared that he was against the League of Nations, but in favour of a 'Society of Nations, or some international association which could develop a fraternity of action among civilized peoples'. Many of these senatorial utterances which have attained dreary immortality in the pages of the *Congressional Record* were mere assertions of the right to disagree, rather than practical contributions to the improvement of the treaty. Under the leadership of Henry Cabot Lodge the 'bitter-enders' pursued their malignant purpose of destroying the President.

With a Presidential election less than twelve months away many Republicans thought that to vote for the League was to vote for a Democratic victory in 1920. Persistent, and very effective in the extreme section of that party, was a certain person whose name has been mentioned before — George

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Harvey, he who far back in 1907 had invented the slogan 'Woodrow Wilson for President'. But now he has changed his party, and that early admiration for the President of Princeton has become cold hatred of the President of the United States. One more friend of Woodrow Wilson was now his inveterate foe. It was George Harvey who gathered the money for the Republicans' war chest effectively used in anti-Wilson propaganda.

Yet outside the walls of Congress powerful sections of public opinion favoured the treaty as it stood: the American Bar Association supported it and even two such opposite groups as the American Bankers Association and the American Federation of Labour passed resolutions of approval, while State Governors, business men and university professors petitioned the Senate to grant immediate ratification. Woodrow Wilson's appeal to the people had done its work, but, alas, the decision was now not theirs, but belonged to their representatives. A plebiscite of American citizens taken at this moment might have carried ratification, but America's choice depended on a handful of Senators.

While the debate in the Senate rolled on week after week Europe was falling to pieces. Most important of all, Europe was receiving a sharp lesson in the working of the American Constitution, and all those deplorable drawbacks which President Wilson had criticized in European diplomacy were found to flourish at Washington. The United States seemed to be ruled, not by the idealistic professor before whose picture the worshipping peasants had lit their candles, but by a very talkative body of Senators who openly called their President by names for which a European editor would have found himself before a Criminal Court if he had used them of his own ruler. Despairingly, in those autumn weeks, Europeans saw the balloon of American idealism slowly deflated.

One American did not despair. Having passed through so many crises with the President he had a reverent trust for the

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man in the White House, and felt he could help that over-worked crusader to accomplish his last political miracle. This was Colonel House, and on his return from Paris he wrote to Woodrow Wilson, making an ingenious suggestion. Why should the President not write to his Allies in Europe saying that he was prepared to accept the Senate reservations provided the Allies would accept them. This would have absolved the President from a charge of bad faith and would throw on the Senate the whole responsibility.

But to his letter Colonel House received no answer. Mystery was enthroned in the Executive Mansion.

### 5

Like some historical intrigue in a decadent European court, the incredible and un-American situation that the President was completely isolated in the White House dawned upon the American people. Unseen by anyone from the outside world, invisible even to members of his own Cabinet, remote from Senators, never receiving foreign ambassadors, the chief executive of the nation had become a mysterious Dalai Llama. As months passed an appalling possibility leaped to the mind of one Senator who happened to notice some iron bars fixed against an obscure window of the White House. What if the President were out of his mind?

Neither the President's friends nor his enemies could ever think of him as weak and frail. To the world he seemed omnipotent, and possessing sources of strength denied to the average man. But now the decline they were only too ready to imagine was the greater on account of this unnatural superiority attributed to him.

Only three people in the world knew the secret of the President's illness, and so fanatically devoted are they that no hint that might have given a more natural colour to the situation is allowed to leak out. Washington continues to believe

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the worst, while in the President's sick room Mrs. Wilson, Joseph Tumulty and Dr. Grayson do their best. Documents are taken into the bedchamber. They come out bearing his signature, yet despite illness the acute mind of Princeton functioned still. Certain proposals for the leasing of the Federal Oil Wells to private capitalists were put before him, but the cautious self refused to agree to the act that was to ruin his successor. Yet no one is allowed to see the sick man, and the atmosphere of the White House is that of a tomb.

Mrs. Edward House writes of her husband's sympathy, all the greater because he himself has been taken ill after his homecoming, and Mrs. Wilson replies thanking her. But there is no suggestion of a meeting between the two friends that might have achieved so much.

Naturally members of the Cabinet discussed the situation among themselves, but when they asked for information the loquacious Tumulty was strangely silent. One day Secretary of State Lansing produced a copy of *Jefferson's Manual*, the authoritative guidebook to the Constitution of the United States. Mr. Lansing was a lawyer who cared for strict procedure, and he had not forgotten the way the President had ignored him at the Peace Conference. He pointed out to Tumulty that *Jefferson* laid it down that if the President were unable to discharge his duties the Vice-President should assume office. Tumulty's Irish blood was up in a moment and he replied: 'I do not need any tutoring from you as to the Constitution. You may rest assured that while the President is lying on his back in the White House I will never be a party to ousting him, neither will Dr. Grayson.'

Since without some proof it was impossible to declare the President incapable of acting, there was evidently no way of removing Woodrow Wilson, and Mr. Lansing was obliged to retreat.

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### 6

On October 2nd, 1919, the President fell on the bathroom floor, the whole of his left side paralysed. While the struggle over the League of Nations went on, the sick man fought his way against this long deferred revolt of a body overworked in a lifetime of stress.

Often in those anxious evenings in the Palais Murat when the President had come home desperate after a meeting of the Big Four: yes, and the mornings in the 'Mayflower' Pullman as it passed through the mountains of California, and her husband's head seemed to be cleft in two by almost unbearable pain; many times when Mrs. Wilson watched him at the end of his physical strength, shaking hands with a boisterous committee of Congressmen, or more anxious still, beating out on his typewriter a reply to some misrepresentation of Senator Lodge. Her intuition had foreseen that no man's body could stand this month after month, even though that man's spirit was nearly omnipotent. And now her first thought was 'Can he live?'

To heal the man was the primary need, and Mrs. Wilson acted with the ancient resolution of her sex.

It was indeed a 'stroke' or 'cerebral thrombosis', the closure of a tiny artery deep inside the substance of the brain, that organ which had served Woodrow Wilson so well. That tiny artery's failure had played havoc with nerves and caused muscles to be paralysed. One of the doctors said: 'The President may live five minutes, five months or five years.' But strictly speaking the bleeding did not affect intellectual functions. One of his doctors gave Mrs. Wilson a copy of the *Life of Pasteur* in which it was shown that the great scientist had done some of his greatest research work after a similar stroke of paralysis. That was reassuring and Mrs. Wilson was buoyed up with the hope that one day, before long, her husband would get back his old brilliance and confound the Senators.

The danger to life had passed, but not the danger of a second

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attack, and now she dedicated herself to a single policy — how to protect him from strain until his nerves could recover. The doctors allowed her to hope that, once more, he would take up his regular duties and lead the country. She shielded him, kept back exciting and difficult problems, and above all refused admittance to those carping Senators who would have liked to take for themselves the measure of the President's breakdown. Never in all the ages has the wife of a great ruler had a political responsibility of greater magnitude. It was not in accordance with the American Constitution, but it is part of the aura of personal devotion and exclusiveness which makes Woodrow Wilson's whole life so strange a phenomenon in democratic America.

The illness which had overtaken him was a result of the strong passions falling upon the nervous system. Far back in 1906 the first warning came when his left eye and right hand were paralysed, but the determined man had ignored his body, disciplined himself, and he had managed to surmount the crisis at Princeton, he had borne the strain of New Jersey and two Presidential campaigns. With one eye, and a hand that threatened mutiny, he mastered the routine of documents that piled on the President's desk. All through those fatiguing conferences in the stuffy rooms at Paris he had kept the balance of his health. Like a mighty uncontrollable force of water, his sense of the moment's urgency for mankind strained upon his natural resources, until at last, in Wichita, Kansas, they yielded to the strain of twenty years' excessive labour.

The Senate sent two of its members to interview the President. They were Senators Alfred Hitchcock, and Albert Bacon Fall, afterwards to suffer imprisonment in connection with the teapot dome scandal. On entering the sick room he said: 'Mr. President, we are praying for you,' the semi-paralysed man in the bed replied: 'Which way, Senator?' and Mr. Fall laughed as though the joke had been his own. Woodrow Wilson had not lost his old incisive wit.

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During the worst period of the illness Secretary Lansing discussed the situation with his cabinet colleagues and they decided to hold regular informal meetings. Otherwise a popular clamour for the President's resignation might have become irresistible. So on twenty-five occasions the Cabinet conferred without informing the sick man, although it is impossible that Tumulty and Dr. Grayson could have been unaware.

When at length the President heard what Secretary Lansing had done, the semi-paralysed man became once more the martinet of the Princeton campus; spleen accumulated during the weeks at Paris burst on Mr. Lansing's head, and the President sternly informed him that he was relieved of his office.

Although a man of limited vision Robert Lansing showed greater magnanimity than Woodrow Wilson. He accepted his dismissal and wrote a temperate book about the Peace Conference. His presence of mind in keeping the administration busy during those dark months of the President's illness was an unappreciated act of friendship towards his chief.

Frantic last minute appeals were made to the President that he should accept the 'reservations' proposed by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Even the Democratic Senators saw that compromise was inevitable if the treaty were to go through. To Woodrow Wilson the slightest changes represented the nullification of all he had striven for at Paris and achieved at Versailles.

Alas, that very word Versailles had come to signify ineptitude and injustice. The brilliant book of Mr. John Maynard Keynes provided a ready-made set of arguments for the President's enemies. Even General Smuts who had given the idea of the book his blessing regretted its result. 'I did not expect him to turn Wilson into a figure of fun,' he wrote later. 'Those few pages about Wilson in Keynes's book made an Aunt Sally of the



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noblest figure — perhaps the only noble figure in the history of the war.’

Edward House, the master conciliator who knew politics as well as any American living, has left his opinion on record: ‘So far as the Lodge reservations made changes in the League, they were of a wholly minor character; they left its structure intact and they would have interfered with its working not at all.’ But the President’s sense of moral rectitude would not allow him to yield. He was out of touch. Something had gone wrong with that delicately balanced brain. The sensitive receiving apparatus of his friend Colonel House was not there to contribute wisdom, and when he wrote to the President: ‘Your willingness to accept reservations rather than have the treaty killed will be regarded as the act of a great man,’ he received no answer.

Since the zenith of their friendship, Woodrow Wilson had married again, and a nature of his intensity permitted only one intimate relationship at a time. Perhaps Mrs. Wilson’s solicitude that he should be guarded from the stress of the renewal of such a friendship was protective. To preserve the oneness of body and mind he must be sheltered from such emotional storms.

If America were to accept the League of Nations wholeheartedly, her economic power was so great that no action by the League could ever even be proposed in which the prior consent of the United States were not a foregone conclusion. That was Woodrow Wilson’s conviction, and it is hard to see any flaw. Yet to make that League possible he would agree to no compromise, and in this obstinate determination it is hard to find any wisdom.

In December 1919 a final vote was taken in the U.S. Senate. The normal arrangement of parties was split endwise. Republican voted against Republican, and a big section of Democrats voted against the treaty. An almost unbelievable alignment of political forces was revealed to a perplexed Europe, as they saw

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supporters of Henry Cabot Lodge vote in *favour* of the treaty plus the Lodge reservations, while Democratic Senators, the party of which Woodrow Wilson was the titular chief, voted with Republican isolationists *against* the treaty. Ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, including the Covenant, failed in the U.S. Senate to gain the necessary two-thirds vote: fifty-five votes for and thirty-nine against. 'They have shamed us in the eyes of the world,' was the President's heartfelt cry.

Thus Wilson's greatest achievement was defeated by his own friends, and against the efforts of his bitterest enemies who might have carried it through. Says William Allen White, the brilliant newspaperman of Kansas and Wilson's most sympathetic biographer: 'It was a strange freak of Wilsonian leadership that allowed the Covenant to be defeated by twenty-four votes of his own adherents.'

Yet Senator Borah proclaimed this decision: 'The greatest victory since Appomattox.' Senator Brandegee, the isolationist irreconcilable from Connecticut, said: 'We can always depend on Mr. Wilson. He has used all his power to defeat the treaty because we would not ratify it in the form he desired.'

This paradox of Wilsonian policy has to be explained. How came it that an experienced politician who understood the American Constitution so well was willing to allow his precious achievement to be lost because he would not yield on what good judges believed to be unessentials. Woodrow Wilson knew that a statesman must often compromise. When so much was at stake why would he not accept the Lodge reservations, and by so doing bring America into the League? Before trying to answer, we may allow ourselves to dream of the prize which was lost when the United States Senate rejected the treaty in 1920. A different world would have been possible if America had entered the League. American idealism might have made it easier for Europe to forget her hatreds, and American material power would have given confidence against the German menace. Gradually, as the United States came to exercise her

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full authority in the Council of the League, Mussolini might have been curbed, and Japan found it less easy to trespass on the mainland of Asia. With sanctions promptly applied to Germany when Hitler began his threats, the rise of military potential might have been prevented. Above all, the United States, herself not in danger of attack, would surely have favoured disarmament.

But the whole balance of advantage would not have been on the side of Europe. America herself would have gained through participation in the League of Nations. It would have restored that connection with Europe which was sundered in 1770, and only formed once again in 1942. That international technique practised so successfully by American business and philanthropies would surely have influenced her State Department. This is the easiest sort of day-dreaming, though it gives us a glimpse of the splendid prize which Woodrow Wilson threw away.

He had persuaded himself that accepting the Lodge reservations was a betrayal. But it was also human and personal. The whole force of the hatred which was Wilson's main dynamic took control and engaged with Henry Cabot Lodge. The one was a big man, the other a small man, but the current of enmity between them was intense, and through time and circumstances the small man won.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge thus congratulated himself upon his telepathic insight into his great enemy: 'As the strenuous days which were filled by the contest over the League of Nations passed by, almost every one bringing its difficulty or crucial question, I made no mistake in my estimate of what President Wilson would do under certain conditions.'

Woodrow Wilson's hatreds are seen all through his career: on each occasion they have the same corrosive and irreversible quality. Sight and sound of his foes aroused the party politician, and now that he was old and paralysed, the wiser and subtler Wilson was overcome. Dean West at Princeton, Huerta the Mexican bandit, Irish politicians, Republican Congressmen and

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political opponents of every degree experienced that school-master sternness, and now at last Henry Cabot Lodge had overmatched it with superior guile.

Wilson who dreamed idealistically at Princeton, who gave New Jersey a liberal constitution, who represented progress at the White House, who gave the world its first model of a world constitution, was one of the great haters of his generation and in the end his hatred was more powerful than his love. Had his young admirer Franklin Delano Roosevelt been in the White House just then the result might have been otherwise.

In the springs of Wilson's personality, at those depths which no one but his first wife ever understood, there was a voice crying out for vengeance for those young men who had died for the world in the Great War. With another six months of good health there is reason to believe that, single-handed and single-hearted, he would have aroused such strong idealism in the American people that the Senate would have bowed to the popular will.

But destiny intervened, not as a great event, but in a tiny blood vessel in the President's brain, that organ hitherto omnipotent. Headache, paralysis, convalescence, a broken man—in a few weeks the grand dream was over. Evidently the Lord was angry with his servant in the White House.

### 8

The year 1920 opened; it was the inexorable four-year anniversary of the Presidential election, and for the next eleven months foreign issues became irrelevant, while America passes into political schizophrenia over domestic questions.

Walking with the aid of a stick, his left leg dragging behind pathetically, he seems nothing but a broken casualty of statesmanship, yet the fires burn fiercely, and the spirit that defied Princeton now breathes scorn at the Senate of the United States. As always happens when the will-to-live has triumphed

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over a bodily catastrophe, the sick man seems to have discovered a new fountain of energy, and to the Jackson Day dinner on January 8th, he sends a message that he will not accept the decision of the Senate upon the League of Nations, but will call for a referendum to the whole American people. What a bombshell to throw among faithful Democrats in a Presidential year. The referendum itself was a political device which he had often praised in his lectures at Princeton, but it was used only in a few of the 48 states.

Appealing to the people was Wilson's sovereign method, and a referendum was his favourite remedy. The Wilsonian appeal to the mass was more like that of a great tenor than of a political leader.

But his hour was passing. The people were now no longer interested in Wilsonian solemnities. They wanted something less uplifting, less of a strain upon the mind. As Vice-President Marshall, the great joker of the administration expressed it, 'what this country needs is a good five-cent cigar', and the entire United States laughed agreement.

Since George Washington expressed the opinion that no President of the United States ought to aspire to more than two four-year terms of office, there had been an almost superstitious fear of one man appealing for re-election at the end of eight years in the White House, and we who have seen that tradition twice broken by Franklin Roosevelt should not underestimate its power over American minds in the summer of 1920, when the Presidential candidates were being chosen. By all convention, prejudice and human possibility, there was no chance of Woodrow Wilson being elected President again, but would he be adopted as the Democratic candidate? Ardently that hope burned inside him, though never admitted openly. He indulged this irrational fantasy during the summer, and while political America hustled through the obsequies of the League of Nations the lonely man in the White House dreamed of a resurrection.

The Democratic Convention met in San Francisco, and

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Woodrow Wilson waited anxiously for the call with something of his own calm confidence at the end of a telephone when expecting a similar summons from Baltimore. That was only eight years before. The Democratic wave had swept him into the White House. But now the Democratic tide was ebbing swiftly. The Democratic Convention ignored him; he was not even proposed for a complimentary nomination.

It would have been poetically just if the Republican candidate could have been Henry Cabot Lodge, but in a smoke-filled room in a Chicago hotel he too was passed over, and the party chose another of those Senators who were opposed to the treaty, the mild reservationist Warren Gamaliel Harding. Chief organizer of the anti-Wilson forces was still that George Harvey, the man who in the year 1906 had declared: 'It is with a sense almost of rapture that I contemplate even the remotest possibility of casting a ballot for the President of Princeton University to become President of the United States.' But now he followed another Presidential hope.

Senator Harding's speeches on the League of Nations had been feats of dexterity which could be read both as favouring the judgment of Paris and approving the jeremiads of Henry Cabot Lodge. Harding condemned the League on the ground that it was a world 'Super Government', but he also declared himself in favour of an 'Association of Nations', and made his famous diagnosis that what the American people wanted more than anything else was a 'return to normalcy'.

The Presidential election became virtually the referendum which Woodrow Wilson desired, and still kept to his belief that the Democrats would win and that the decision of the Senate would be reversed. The Democratic candidate for the Vice-Presidency was a young politician from New York who had been Under-Secretary for the Navy in Woodrow Wilson's administration. He was called Franklin D. Roosevelt, and still ten years away from his world fame he campaigned loyally for the Wilsonian League.

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One day during the height of the campaign when the sentiment of America was quivering in equilibrium, Private Secretary Tumulty burst into the President's room with great news: 'Governor,' he exclaimed, 'we've got them beaten,' and he produced newspaper reports alleging that Senator Harding had negro blood in his veins. But the secretary's face fell under the President's icy rebuke and schoolmaster stare: 'Tumulty, we must base our campaign on principles, not backstairs gossip,' and Mrs. Wilson thought Tumulty looked like a boy caught robbing a nest.

The accumulated bitterness of the war, mistakes in the military operations, all the regimentation of the civilians which had been necessary — in a word, war nerves — came to a crisis, and formed the anti-Wilson vote. Popular feeling was ready to jettison him as it had done Lloyd George, Clemenceau and other war leaders once the danger was over. The Italians of New York attacked him because of Fiume, Milwaukee Germans hated the man who had humbled the German Empire, and the Irish in Boston and everywhere else remembered that he had declined to promise Irish independence at the Peace Conference. Yet his obstinate confidence that the American people would reject Harding never deserted him.

The results of the election were a rude revelation that America's faith in the New Freedom which Woodrow Wilson had offered them had gone to sleep. Sixteen million voted the Republican ticket, as against nine million for the Democrats.

President Elect Harding addressed his fervent admirers from the front porch of his home in Marion, Ohio, and declared that the League of Nations was now 'deceased'. An 'Association of Nations' might be a good thing, but the 'League of Nations' was not to be entered by 'side-door, back-door, or cellar-door'.

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### 9

One week later the bells of every church in Geneva were ringing as the League of Nations which Harding condemned was formally inaugurated by thirty-three sovereign and independent states, but to Americans the ceremony was far distant. The Covenant had come into life. The tongues had sworn but, alas, the hearts remained unsworn, and nothing now remains of that occasion but the faith that inspired the semi-paralysed man in the White House. Woodrow Wilson admitted imperfections in the treaty — for instance over Shantung and Fiume — but he believed they would be set right through the League of Nations. But now, without the beating heart to keep it alive, slowly the massive framework became a corpse. In approving a peace treaty with Germany without an effective international machinery to preserve that peace, the American Senate performed an act of supreme negation. Psychological preparation had been made for that disintegrating assault which Adolf Hitler was to make upon the so-called *Diktat* of Versailles, the conscience of the world being half acquiescent and secretly troubled by remorse.

During those intimate discussions in the brocaded rooms at Paris one man had learned every secret that passed between the Big Four since he was the vehicle of their thoughts. His name was Paul Mantoux, the interpreter. His son, Etienne Mantoux, was to live to lose his life in the second World War, but not before he had written a book called *The Economic Consequences of Mr. Keynes*. He invented a word for this guilty introspection which swept over the world. Etienne Mantoux called it *Meaculpisme*.

At Versailles the German delegate had declared: 'Those who sign this treaty will sign the death sentence of millions of German men, women and children.' Etienne Mantoux pointed to those lusty German youths who twenty years later marched singing to war. Keynes had predicted a collapse of German



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economy, but Hitler managed to spend upon German rearmament a sum of money seven and a half times what Keynes had declared to be the utmost limit of what Germany could pay. One by one the provisions of the treaty were liquidated by Hitler, while part of the world felt uneasily that the dictator was perhaps only acting within his rights.

In this complete revolution of the wheel of historical judgment the weapons with which Senator Lodge and Senator Borah attacked Woodrow Wilson turn out to have been pop-guns, and after a second war against German aggression the world has an uneasy feeling, this time in reverse, that perhaps the Treaty of Versailles was to blame, not because of its severity, but on account of its leniency. *Meaculpisme* had distorted historical reality and woven its dark shadows over the lifetime of Woodrow Wilson.

### 10

For the last few months an American President who has lost the votes of the majority has responsibility, but no power, while everywhere he hears all around him the noisy preparations for his own political funeral. Woodrow Wilson had five months to live out his second four years of office, while the eager Republicans began to share out the spoils of victory.

Between 1913, when he took over the Presidency from William H. Taft, and 1921, when he was succeeded by Harding, the modern world had been born with an intense convulsion, a global war, a sudden acceleration in physical existence. During those eight years the automobile, the radio and the aeroplane were developed. Ships became faster, luxury more elaborate, life was lived in a more generalized and less local fashion, while the Federal power of the United States tended to become more prominent and the authority of the individual states less. Woodrow Wilson was the first President to use radio, and we can imagine what his power might have been if he had been

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able to exploit it fully, as Franklin Roosevelt did, to speak to every fireside. It is fitting that such a man as Woodrow Wilson, an agonist, a man at war with himself, should belong to the tremendous gestation period of the first World War. Like Napoleon, like Abraham Lincoln, like Oliver Cromwell, he sums up the characteristic unrest of the times in which he lived. Woodrow Wilson went to school by candlelight in a clergyman's house in a forgotten town of the South: his days finished in the most opulent city in the world, and his words had been heard in every part of the universe.

The story of these last years is the story of a failure, yet some men have the power of finding through failure the way to immortality. The battle with the trustees at Princeton had ended in ignominious defeat, decently concealed by Wilson's translation to the political sphere. His two years as Governor of New Jersey contained the essence of failure, but he did not stay there long enough to experience the reversal that inevitably followed unnatural orgy of idealism. His first few years in the White House were full of achievement, but had it not been for the war which diverted interest from domestic politics, the reaction against him would have been noticed sooner. Finally, that conquering odyssey to Europe which began in triumph with the landing at Brest, had ended in an ignominious pilgrimage homeward, and the wonderful power of words which mesmerized Europe was suddenly cut off by the thunderbolt of fate in the Pullman car. Woodrow Wilson could lift his admirers above themselves: he could inspire them, to an idealistic purpose that was emotional and quite beyond their understanding. The happy-go-lucky boys at Princeton, ward politicians in Jersey City, French peasants, they all surrendered, for the time, to the professor's spell. Yet presently this spell faded and died. That extraordinary sequence recurs at each phase in Woodrow Wilson's life: he rouses fanatical admiration, yet intense mistrust. His life is the story of superhuman courage and very human limitations.

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Says William Gibbs McAdoo, Wilson's son-in-law: 'He possessed vision and creative power, the two primary qualities of a great mind. There was no trace of intellectual squalor in his life. None of his ideas came from the slums and back alleys of thought.' Yet at the same time the aggressiveness and the stern intensity which comes out of every feature in that determined face and obstinate jaw was communicated to everyone who saw him, and roused in them the same intensities.

A hideous mental chasm separating love and hate is found in his personal friendships. Professor John Hibben, who had been 'Dearest Jack' for so long, committed the sin of voting against Woodrow Wilson at a faculty meeting and friendship was broken. The same thing happened with Edward House. Those who called Woodrow Wilson 'ingrate' had some justification. In his epic struggle to find peace in himself it was hard for him to do justice to other men. William Gibbs McAdoo said there were 'wide and fertile ranges of his spirit closed to everyone except the first Mrs. Wilson'. And perhaps only through her was there a complete synthesis of the two strongly antagonistic sides of his personality.

His conscience suffered deeply for his part in the first World War. It tortured him that he had been the means through which so many brave American boys had finished their lives in France. The picture of an even earlier tragedy — the Civil War — he remembered from the age of five, the memory of cotton being piled in the streets for burning and childhood tales of ruin and slaughter, those impressions were always fresh in his mind, and now he felt himself responsible for an even greater carnage. Like many hundreds of thousands he too had lost a limb in the Great War.

### I I

Great crowds lined the avenues of Washington to witness the carriage in which two men in silk hats pass to the Capitol

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on the day of the Inauguration. One of them, heavy in the jowl, bears the smile of triumph as he acknowledges the cheers. The other has now the long hawk-like face of an old and broken man though he is only sixty-four, and he leans heavily on his stick as he drags one paralysed limb up the steps. In the ornate President's room, near the Senate Chamber, Woodrow Wilson sits surrounded by a group of old political friends who crowd in to say goodbye, while he performs the final act of his political career as the hands of the clock move towards noon when his administration will be over.

This is their great chief who had led the Democratic party out of the wilderness where it now returns, but they are proud to be there, and they notice how outwardly calm and genial the President is, as though he were conscious that his last moment of power were his entrance into glory, and as if eight years, ten years, the whole sixty-four years of his life had been his preparation for this moment.

Then suddenly his geniality vanishes and a stern official look comes to his face, that schoolmaster look which erring Princeton boys and peccant politicians knew so well. The door opens, and a committee of both Houses of Congress comes to take formal leave of the President and ask if he has any further message. The reason for that cold expression on Woodrow Wilson's face becomes clear: the spokesman for the committee happens to be Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and the genial President, who has seemed so calm in saying farewell to his friends, now utters his last official words which seemed to cut the air with coldness and finality: 'I have no further communication; good morning, Sir.' With a look of proud hostility to his arch-enemy Woodrow Wilson waits till the clock strikes noon. A new and indescribable sense of expectation takes its place as he walks to the door, escorted by a few friends, and passes quietly out of notice. On the further side of the building the crowds are cheering President Harding as he takes oath.

Though a few faithfuls keep in touch there is nothing so out

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of date as an ex-President, and not even when he is released from office does Woodrow Wilson mellow into easy tolerance. His hatreds remain as sharply focused as ever. Edward House is never summoned to exchange reminiscences of the great days, and when he pays a call the ex-President is not at home. Secretary Tumulty never ceases to worship his master. He had been the favourite of the early Presidential years and the first Mrs. Wilson had always spoken of him as 'one of her boys'. But now the emotional Tumulty makes a minor slip and is sternly rebuked in public. Woodrow Wilson has lost his friends but he still has his books, his memories and his leisure. Now he will compose the great treatise on the philosophy of politics so long dreamed of, that rounded summary of scholarship and his life's experience of government. He begins, but never gets beyond the first page.

It does not matter. His whole life has been greater than any book. Martyrs are the soil of the Church, and his failure has manured the ground for later growth. Wilson's favourite doctrine of the 'New Freedom' is the spiritual ancestor of Franklin Roosevelt's 'Common Man', and those 'Four Freedoms' laid down in the Atlantic Charter are the same political faith in his disciple Roosevelt, who was to repeat Wilsonian triumphs.

A few months before his death, the ex-President was sitting with his daughter Margaret when suddenly he broke the silence:

'I think it was best that the United States did not join the League of Nations.'

'Why, Father darling?'

'Because our entrance into the League after I returned from Europe might have been only a personal victory. Now, when the American people join the League it will be because they are convinced it is the right thing to do, and this will be the only right time for them to do it.' Then the old Calvinist added a humorous smile: 'Perhaps God knew better than I did after all.'

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From such meek resignation the old schoolmaster would sometimes peep out as when he said, speaking of his successor in the White House: 'I look forward to the new administration with no unpleasant anticipations except those caused by Mr. Harding's literary style.'

The ex-President fades quietly away, reading poetry, occasionally visiting Keith's Theatre, playing solitaire, uncomplainingly accepting political oblivion and bodily decline.

He had tried to give mankind one precious gift. Political freedom is so far the possession of only a small part of the world.

Dreaming of this one great vision the paralysed ex-President lived on four years, whilst in the White House another Presidential hand signed away those oil leases which were national property, and the triumph of corruption which Woodrow Wilson had foreseen and repulsed dragged down that self-confident successor who had driven through the streets of Washington at his side on Inauguration Day.

President Coolidge was present at Wilson's funeral service, but neither Edward M. House nor Joseph Tumulty were invited to follow their friend to the grave, where the great Presbyterian of Princeton was laid to rest in the Episcopal Cathedral in Washington.

In 1924 the League of Nations seemed to be a healthy infant with plenty of promise, and its creator might die content. The actuality of the next twenty years was to be very different, but it would not even have strained his immense reserve of faith if he could have known that this League was not destined to be the heir of his promise, but only a feeble creature bearing responsibilities beyond its capacity. Woodrow Wilson's work survives today in his spiritual grandchild the United Nations through which, by the mysterious continuity of great ideas, like germ plasm that never dies, the Wilsonian notions of international right and wrong remain alive and full of tremendous hope. In the way of a man in a maze he had followed his own particular path towards the Federal idea, forced it upon

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mankind. One day a new sort of jurisprudence, a fresh method of combining large units with political responsibility will be created from that simple and living idea. Our generation which has witnessed the failure of the League of Nations, and which has uneasy feelings about the United Nations, has sore need of that Wilsonian faith.

His last public words on Armistice Day 1923 express his deepest belief: 'I have seen fools resist Providence before, and I have seen their destruction . . . That we shall prevail is as sure as that God reigns.'

Such was the faith of this immortal and illustrious but also very human President of the United States.

PART THREE

ANDREW CARNEGIE

*Steel Maker and Philanthropist*

Twin brethren dwell within me, twins of strife,  
And either fights to free him from the other;  
One grips the earth in savage lust of life,  
Clutches the ground and wallows in the mire;  
The other lifts himself and struggles free,  
Tearing the chain that binds him to his brother,  
Beating the air with wings of vast desire  
Toward the far realm of his great ancestry.

*Faust* — GOETHE



# ANDREW CARNEGIE

(1835-1919)

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## CHAPTER I

### THE EMIGRANTS—AND WHY

MUMBLING to himself the words of the old Scottish psalm,

*I to the hills will lift mine eyes  
From whence doth come mine aid,*

the little Scots boy with the flaxen hair walks solemnly to school, repeating the lines over and over again, and in three or four minutes he knows them off by heart. His memory is so good that he need not bother to learn at home. A few minutes of earnest repetition on the way to school and the psalm of David will be engraved in his fancy for ever.

*My safety cometh from the Lord  
Who heaven and earth hath made.*

Andrew lives among wonderful people. Father and mother, uncles and aunts, and of course there is in the family King Robert the Bruce, King Malcolm and Queen Margaret. He talks to them, he can see them quite clearly, he knows all about them, and every day on the way to school he is very excited as he passes near where they were buried a long time ago, before even his father and mother were there at all, and the bell is tolling for them still, a beautiful low haunting sound.

Little Andrew Carnegie was born among very fine folk, in a handsome house full of marvellous machinery. His father can make the grandest patterns with silver and white threads on the machine downstairs, and his mother can cut pieces of leather into wonderful shoes. Every day Andrew is proud to help her arrange candles, sugar and vinegar in the finest little shoppie in Scotland. Yes, and the town where he lives is the

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grandest place in Scotland, with a great church of blood-red stone, where those great kings sat on their thrones.

As he walks to school in such fine company he passes a certain high wall, with a closed and barred gate through which he can just see trees, hills and a lake of shaded water like a big paradise, with the top of the ruined tower built by King Malcolm. But little Andrew, however good he may be, will never be allowed to go inside there, never walk in those lovely gardens, never, never. The bell tolls all the way to school and it gives him comfort for that never-never.

Over the fireplace in the house is a map of America where Uncle Willie lives, the country that is, next to Scotland, the most wonderful place in the world, and in America it is grand because they have no lords.

Each night little Andrew Carnegie can hardly go to sleep for thinking about the kings and queens, and he lies awake listening to the great bell. It is whispering to him specially, telling him that someone in heaven is not angry because of Andrew's wicked sins, but is only sorry, and hoping tomorrow he will try to do better, and it goes on quietly and reassuringly sending him to sleep and echoing through his dreams.

This clever little boy, Andrew Carnegie, born in Scotland, had indeed a wonderful beginning, born among riches and splendid folk with every childhood luxury.

To a worldly eye those riches were not obvious. The cottage where Andrew Carnegie was born in 1835 was just the most primitive sort of dwelling, with four dampish walls dividing it into two rooms below, and attics beneath a sloping roof. Much of the living space was occupied by a wooden hand-loom, and the tablecloths his father made there were going out of fashion. His mother's adeptness at making shoes arose not from dilettante craftsmanship, but sheer economic necessity, and she had

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opened her little shop not to make a game for her little son, but to keep the wolf from the door. The town of Dunfermline was nothing but a decaying Scottish burgh, losing its trade, living on its past; and its glory, the ancient abbey with the tombs of kings, was falling rapidly into ruin.

Andrew Carnegie's lucky opportunities in the United States were small compared to the enormous hereditary good fortune of being born in Dunfermline. He started life with the inestimable advantage of a talent for making romance out of everything. His geese were all swans. His statements about himself may be taken with a sceptical pinch of salt, yet Carnegie's emotional grandeur is not mere boastfulness, it is the key to his achievement.

The little boy took his dreamy romantic ideas from his father, Thomas Carnegie, that decent, humorous and unambitious maker of tablecloths which no one wanted to buy. But from the hard and forthright mother, whose name was Margaret Morrison, Andrew acquired his practical shrewdness and driving power. Margaret Morrison Carnegie made the decisions, and governed the policy. She was very fond of the proverb 'Count your pence and the pounds will count themselves', and one day in school young Andrew when being catechized about the sayings of King Solomon, innocently attributed this homely saw of his mother's to the wise man of the Hebrews; the laugh which this brought to the schoolmaster's face saved Master Carnegie from due retribution. On another occasion Andrew's father carried him on his back and, feeling the burden rather heavy, suggested that his little son should now take a walk. But Andrew was ready for the occasion. He brought out one of his father's favourite aphorisms: 'Well, father,' said he, 'patience and perseverance make the man ye ken,' and Thomas Carnegie, who had a strong sense of humour, had to carry his cross a while longer, nonplussed by Andrew's ready tongue.

Little Andrew managed to work his will upon most people,

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but the relationship with his mother was different. That hard-bitten, sensible, practical Scotswoman ruled them all, including her husband, and her eldest little boy, ambitions for her love, kept his place at his mother's right hand by fierce childish competition. In that tiny Dunfermline cottage Andrew Carnegie took his first lessons in the acquisition of power.

### 3

All around the Carnegies the little world seemed to be striving with itself. Hungry radicals, angry preachers and philosophical scoffers were the great figures in the foreground of Andrew's childhood, while the town and its linen industry was evolving, or in the older Carnegie's opinion, going to the dogs. Steam power was slowly creeping and displacing those careful craftsmen like Thomas Carnegie, who made their tablecloths a few at a time. When Andrew was still a boy that tremendous event called 'The Disruption' took place, and for the sake of principle hundreds of parish ministers all over Scotland marched out of their manses into the wilderness and started an independent church rather than submit to the feudal power of the landlords and the evil dictation of 'the State'. Both Carnegies and Morrisons were desperate and cantankerous folk, perpetually disputing, always in revolt. One of these tough rebellious Morrisons, Andrew's uncle, carried on a lengthy battle with the Laird of Pittencrieff, a local notability who owned that private domain of trees and shaded walks in the centre of the town which Andrew passed longingly on his way to school. Uncle Morrison claimed a public right of way over the property. The Laird stubbornly resisted him, and after years of feud the Laird vowed that so long as he lived no one of the accursed Morrison blood should ever set foot inside his precious park. As Andrew was of Morrison blood the mighty curse applied to him. He too became a hater of lairds

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and kings. Like true Scotsmen they condemned society over drams of whisky, but they never rebelled against it. Hearing these domestic philosophers the wondering boy learned what it was to discuss the most fiery resistance, and then by some very logical way of escape to come to terms, though still objecting loudly. It was an art he practised later with supreme success.

Andrew's father was both a sceptic and a mystic, too decent to turn life into a commercial success, and as his worldly circumstances drifted in the direction of the poorhouse, Thomas Carnegie remained good-tempered but ineffective, but all the same a deeper, finer and more reflective nature than his bustling resourceful wife, the little woman with the round head, broad cheek-bones and blue eyes, who was so full of hard worldly wisdom.

### 4

Andrew Carnegie inherited his father's urge to mull over the mysteries of life and destiny, and saddled on the back of this gentle horse there was the rampageous driver, the practical Scotsman with his mother's sacred will-to-success. These conflicting personalities fought long and strong inside Andrew, but the dominating power was the mother's, and in his very strength as a developed man there was always a wayward, changeable, unpredictable element that was truly feminine. The relation between a mother and her eldest son is unfathomable, and Andrew's character and the colour of his achievements derives from powerful mother-love.

To the poverty-stricken cottage in Dunfermline letters came from Uncle Willie who painted a wonderful picture of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., and the idea of emigration grew in the Carnegies. Old Sir Walter Scott had died, and with him the conservative eighteenth century passed away. Queen Victoria was on the throne, Scotland had won her religious freedom, but

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the new industrial prosperity had not so far reached Dunfermline. Above all, hand-made tablecloths were as dead as Sir Walter. Margaret Carnegie decided the family must emigrate to America. Her husband is forty-three and herself over thirty: if they are going, they must move before it is too late. The weaver's looms were not worth much, but relations would lend a few pounds and there were relatives on the further shore, in a place called Allegheny, where cloth weaving flourished. Andrew and Tom were of an age to make their start in the new country. Little Tom is five years old, just big enough to travel, but Andrew is a determined young man of thirteen, with light flaxen hair, his mother's jutting eyebrows and her resolute mouth. Away then, from the disputations of the ministers and the weavers, goodbye to John Knox; William Wallace and oatmeal with whisky — goodbye to land-jealous lairds and kings, onward to the country of freedom, wealth and justice — to America! It was 1848, the year of revolutions, when hundreds of thousands in Scotland, Ireland, Russia and Germany dreamed the same dream. Like other lands Scotland poured out her best, her priceless racial stock, and in a Malthusian age with its nightmare of over-population, their country was relieved to see them go. Years afterwards this boy of thirteen was to write: 'The emigrant is the capable, energetic, ambitious, discontented man.' That was autobiographical.

The Carnegies were looked on more as failures than pioneers as they began, at a pace not much faster than walking, to move across Scotland to Glasgow. The sailing ship which conveyed them was only 800 tons, larger, it is true, than the frigate which Christopher Columbus steered to the New World 300 years before, but by modern standards not so much larger, and finally they reached Allegheny, the land of savages, as Dunfermline conceived it to be.

## THE EMIGRANTS—AND WHY

### 5

As the tower of his favourite Abbey dipped beneath the hilltop, young Andrew burst into tears, and when the ship was ready to sail from the Glasgow quay he had to be forcibly removed, sobbing loudly, from the arms of his uncle. Five minutes later his natural vitality and eagerness for life came back.

The raw, restless America of 1848 suited him perfectly. The Eastern States were a cauldron of violently bubbling life, immense optimism and crude strength. America possessed the vitality and the opportunity, but its culture, and the capital needed for its development came from Europe.

Yet this great transition at the age of thirteen, apparently so effortless, really accentuated the natural schism in Andrew Carnegie's nature. Henceforth, in the hot-house mental climate of America he grows prodigiously, but he does not change. With his incurably romantic tendency he puts it all down to his Scottish blood: 'Every Scotchman is two Scotchmen,' he says, 'as his land has the wild barren stern crags and mountain peaks, and also the smiling valleys where the mildest foxglove and the bluebell blossom, so the Scotsman with his rugged force and hard intellect has a heart capable of being touched to the finest issues.' Of course, mountains and bluebells are found nowhere but in Scotland. Hard intellects and hearts sensitive to the finest issues are idiosyncrasies of the Scottish race. Naturally. Those were Carnegie's foibles. We may smile at this conceit, and his complacent belief in the wonder of his own Scottish upbringing. It was more than sentimental patriotism, it was a source of psychological stability which gave him aggressive strength to face the world of America now with one side of his personality, now with the other, yet to compose their conflict. And the mother-drawn energy brought this synthesis to reality.

Not one man, but two, crossed the Atlantic inside the soul



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of that energetic boy, and twins of strife there were to fight one another for more than sixty years, the one stretching forth wings of vast desires, the other digging earth with savage lust of life. These two natures, the exaggerated images of Thomas and Margaret Carnegie, were never completely fused, and the wondering world was never able to understand the two opposite Andrews.

## CHAPTER II

### TELEGRAPHS AND RAILROADS

THE township of Allegheny was a collection of white wooden houses at the edge of a forest clearing, while across the river named by the Indians Monongahela, they saw a similar crude settlement of the name of Pittsburgh, called after an English Prime Minister. Father Carnegie in his black clothes and stovepipe hat surveys the scene, and the future, ruefully enough, but the most determined glance comes from young Andrew whose imagination undergoes a tremendous awakening.

Allegheny-Pittsburgh is in 1848 not connected by railroad with Philadelphia, and the great event of the day is the arrival of the boat from Cincinnati. What trade there is turns out to be even more primitive than Dunfermline, but Thomas Carnegie begins to hawk his tablecloths, mother makes her shoes, and after a dismal start in the basement of a cotton mill Andrew becomes a telegraph messenger boy.

If ever there was a romantic occupation for a lad this was it. To understand the pride of telegraph messengers in the eighteen-fifties we can think of a modern boy finding a job on radar or aeroplanes. The telegraph was a novel invention of marvellous technique, and the hot-heads in the profession were saying, as they do of modern physics, that no one over thirty could possibly comprehend its wonders. He learned the morse code, and was soon able to perform the feat of catching the dots and dashes as they flashed from the instrument and translating them at once into words, even before writing them down. And if he could not translate he could imagine. His guessing powers were phenomenal. By the age of seventeen he was earning a dollar a day, and already promising his mother that one day soon she should ride in her carriage. But

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the realistic Scotswoman was not to be taken in by romantic ideas of that kind. 'What would be the use of that,' she said scornfully, 'if the folks at home in Dunfermline couldna see me?'

Like her elder son she flourished on the transition to America. But her husband was of more delicate fibre. He wrote interesting letters home to Scotland, he exercised his new freedom by quitting the Presbyterian Church and joining the more flamboyant sect of the Swedenborgians, but it would not do. Before long he faded away, leaving Andrew at his mother's side and the guardian of brother Tom. To Andrew the American environment presented no problems. His brain was quicker than any telegraph instrument, and his power of feeling into people's minds developed prodigiously in an entirely new opening.

### 2

Only by an effort of imagination can we recapture the heroic atmosphere of those American railroads which, in the eighteenth-fifties were joining the American states together into one whole. A clanging bell and the low-pitched melancholy of the steam whistle was heard in the empty woods and trackless prairies, and the supremacy of those river boats such as Mark Twain piloted was challenged and overthrown. Our bureaucratic modern railways with their streamlined trains and fixed schedules give us no idea of those pioneer days when railroading was still adventure. When single lines of track had to be forced through virgin forest, when bridges made of local timber were improvised across rivers, and even though the stations were connected by telegraph frightful collisions and disastrous fires took place.

When the great Pennsylvania railroad reached Pittsburgh it was like the coming of the spring Nile to Egypt. The Superintendent, a remarkable man named Thomas A. Scott, took on Andrew Carnegie as his personal assistant, and now his job is

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to go out into the wilderness, an undersized boy of twenty, leading his gang of labourers to repair the Pennsylvania track. He manages them, like a pygmy controlling a band of giants, with his peculiar combination of toughness and good humour.

One day the main line is blocked following a train accident. The passenger express is moving forward, and on sidelines the freight trains are piling up. Prompt decision and rapid execution is needed to remove this paralysis that has come over the Pennsylvania: but Mr. Thomas A. Scott is away and cannot be found.

Andrew takes the situation firmly in hand. He sends telegraph messages signed 'Thomas A. Scott' to each separate train, ordering them when to move, and slowly the Pennsylvania comes to life again. This method of 'telegraph operating' was still new in railroad practice and the men not yet trained to it. But Andrew Carnegie's gamble came off, and when the Superintendent returned to the office, all he could do was to give a sigh of relief and tell his friends that 'his white-haired Scotch devil had operated the whole division without the vestige of an order from me'.

The youthful railroad man became a personage on the Pennsylvania, and one day a stranger approached him and pulled out of a green bag a schoolboy's model of a railroad carriage. It was something entirely novel — the inside made up of small alcoves like stalls in a cowshed, and at night each of these spaces was transformed into a private sleeping berth behind curtains. Andrew persuaded his chief that one of these carriages would be a wonderful acquisition for the Pennsylvania. Soon a separate corporation was required to manufacture them. Thomas A. Scott let Andrew in 'on the ground floor', and a small nucleus of borrowed money invested in sleeping cars turns him into a capitalist. In Chicago an ingenious carpenter who made a specialty of transporting wooden houses from place to place turned his talent to the railroad, and built an even more successful sleeping car. The

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carpenter's name was George Pullman, which now became the symbol of luxurious locomotion, and Andrew Carnegie managed to secure a large financial interest in his company also.

Henceforth, borrowing money to buy stock becomes a habit, and in those frontier days of rapidly expanding transportation a youth possessing advance information from the railroad kings could hardly go wrong. When your dividend is fifty per cent of the figure marked on the share certificate it is not hard to pay back the loan which enabled you to buy those shares. Two years of easy pulling himself up by his own bootlaces made Andrew Carnegie undisputed owner of much profitable stock, and what he once acquired he never let go.

He was not above making people pay him for favours received on the railroad. What today would be called bribery and corruption was regarded tolerantly in the America of eighty years ago, when railroading was a trade in which individual energy counted for more than rules. So with his private commissions, his early information and his loans, Andrew Carnegie began to grow rich, and his thrifty mother saw to it that every cent was tucked away.

### 3

Then comes the national crisis. As Americans these immigrant Carnegies must now bear a part in the tragedy of their new land. That 'maddened crusader', John Brown, made his fateful attempt to free the slaves, he was hanged, and his soul went marching on in the terrible war between the states which was drawn across the life history of each American like a scar. Abraham Lincoln became President and the fighting began.

His old chief Thomas A. Scott summoned Andrew to Washington where with a telegraph key, he moved to their military destinations trainloads of Northern soldiers, and his talent for repairing track and bridges came in useful. As the

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war went on Andrew's enthusiasm cooled. He had enjoyed the excitement of working in the capital, he loved moving trains with a boy's fascination, and he even saw some of the fighting at Bull Run where the Northern armies suffered their early reverse. But this youth was no romantic soldier, and after two years of war his health broke down. His role in the national tragedy had been brief, yet when the war was all over his never-failing flair for publicity managed to get it recorded in bronze. Today on the Soldiers' Memorial in Pittsburgh there is a separate plaque dedicated to the men of the Telegraph Corps, and there in the most prominent position is the silhouette of Andrew Carnegie's face.

To recover his health Andrew takes a trip back to Scotland, and on reaching the sacred land he behaved like one possessed. He kisses the soil, he puts up his hand and finds he can now touch the eaves of his father's cottage. The town of Dunfermline has become Lilliputian, and as he smiles at their provincial ways he realizes how much he himself has grown in the last fourteen years. His aunt remarks complacently that now he is a rich man she supposes he will open a shop in the High Street and thus be among the great folk of the town, and even though the railroad prince laughs at such a notion he feels Scotland weaving around him her old spell.

But he tears himself away. This time there is no record of an outburst of weeping as he sailed for America, but the parting was hard to bear. He was emotionally attached to Scotland as to a mother, and each visit meant the same painful separation.

Back in the bracing adventurous air of Pittsburgh he is glad to be an American once more, and it is still more exciting to contemplate an entirely new phenomenon in his life. Andrew Carnegie is now a dollar millionaire, with an annual income of fifty thousand. These Carnegies were the thriftiest family in a frugal race, and Andrew's bits of advance information, his favours from clients of the Pennsylvania, soon became capital-

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ized in this golden age of expansion, and now at the age of twenty-seven he had become a new phenomenon in the story of man's conquest of the fruits of the earth. In the previous history of mankind economic growth was limited to the tempo of increase of a farm, a vineyard or a mine, or a money-lending Jew in a European ghetto. But now, manufacturing and the insatiable demand of the geometrically advancing American population accelerated everything, and a youth under thirty could amass a million dollars as a mere sideline from the pursuit in which he made his living. Andrew put it all down to his personal qualities, and to a large extent he was correct.

Trying to gauge his progress towards wealth in the days before steel is like watching some primitive embryo grow under the microscope. The cells divide and increase under some stimulus we cannot perceive; they obey a mysterious architectural plan, and presently the whole organism is complete. This uncouth Scots boy is mature at the age of thirty, not only a man, but a capitalist, with the mysterious power of aggression which makes him long to outstrip every competitor. Even among the tough railroad men of Pittsburgh his egotistical and grasping energy was outstanding. In such economic environment a talent like Andrew Carnegie's might have swelled to monstrous size, and become one of those terrible giants who crush life beneath them.

But aggression was not the only power in Carnegie. And now the other side of his divided nature began to develop out of very humble beginnings.

## CHAPTER III

### CULTURE

As young men become at home in the world, the common experience is that they desire to become even more rich and powerful, and their humanity tends to wither. But with Andrew Carnegie it is different. The wealthier he grows the stronger is his conviction that the spiritual side of life is the finest. These twin tendencies run incongruously side by side, ruthless competitive energy, and instinct for enlightenment. The power which produced this transformation out of his human material was culture. And Carnegie's culture originates in the commonplace desire of an uneducated man to mix in superior society.

Once they were out of debt the Carnegies followed the social law of Pittsburgh by moving into a larger house quite ready to imitate the corresponding fashions and manners. But Andrew's individuality took a different turn. Already while still a telegraph messenger boy he formed the desire to cultivate his mind. A certain bookish gentleman named Colonel Anderson used to allow the working boys of Pittsburgh to come to his house on Saturday evenings and borrow one volume each from his shelves. As the demands for this privilege became heavy rules had to be made to limit somewhat the aspirants for this much prized opportunity. Andrew was informed he was not eligible as not being a 'working boy' since he was not apprenticed to a trade, but was employed for wages in the telegraph office.

He was not to have culture dashed from his lips by any such absurd discrimination. All his Scottish sense of equality was outraged and he addressed a letter to the Pittsburgh evening newspaper pointing out the injustice that was fencing him off



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from the Colonel's bookshelves. The authorities capitulated, and Andrew marched boldly into the Colonel's library, and was for ever afterwards a freeman of the printed word.

He read every play of Shakespeare, memorizing whole scenes and quoting lines on every possible occasion. He immersed himself in Macaulay's essays, and became an admirer of Charles Lamb. He read with the voracious appetite of a boy who feels he has missed education, and who has the priceless advantage that his mind has never been fitted into a compulsory groove by teachers.

After the first intoxication of reading he saw that books were not everything. His animal senses needed refinement but his judgment was so keen that a certain width of conception came to him naturally. That childish ear which had been so thrilled by overtones of the Dunfermline Abbey bell he now educated by choir practice in the Allegheny Swedenborgian church, and the rumbling diapasons of the organ went to his very marrow bones. His raw sensibility was powerful, and a natural aesthetic faculty told him what was right and wrong.

Over a shoemaker's shop in Pittsburgh a juvenile debating society held its sessions, and Andrew Carnegie's Scottish tones were heard very frequently. Later on he joined a more exclusive circle called 'The Webster', and took full value out of his subscription, practising assiduously on his fellow members. He discovered by the light of nature that there are only two rules for effective speaking: firstly, to be intimate, to become at home with the audience rather than to speak *at* them; and secondly, the rule of sincerity — to be oneself and not to pose. The members of these societies were obliged to listen to this irrepressible Scots boy and nothing shakes the self-confidence of that raw brogue, though his rough clothes and large boots are those of the Pennsylvania railroad operative, and his manners belong still to the breakdown gangs.

One day Andrew is invited to the home of a wealthy lawyer, a handsomely furnished mansion standing among trees, and it

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was as though the gates of Pittencrieff Park in Dunfermline had been opened. He was inside a paradise of civilized refinement. As he entered a large room called 'The Library', he saw over the marble fireplace words carved in stone that became a turning point in his mental life.

He that cannot reason is a fool,  
He that will not reason is a bigot,  
He that dare not reason is a slave.

What a gold nugget of human wisdom! It seemed to Andrew Carnegie the profoundest piece of philosophy he had ever encountered, and as he looked round the lawyer's books, he resolved to possess a library of his own, a shrine dedicated to culture and high thoughts, and in that room should be a fireplace, and carved upon it would be those splendid lines of inspiration.

Carnegie was never a bashful man, and he did not lack words to clothe the impulses which came into his mind. Nor was he wanting in conceit. Yet as those drawing-rooms of the Pittsburgh gentry became familiar he realized that there were means of culture more subtle than books, and that certain gracious influences found in such places could civilize a crude railway worker even more agreeably than debating societies.

There were elegant ladies with wasp waists and billowing trains, and they showed pleasant alarm when this rugged small figure with heavy boots and unbrushed hair appeared. They found he could be led on very easily, though his vanity made him clumsy when in conflict with their nimbler wits. His masculine accomplishments on the railroad, his tough speech roused feminine raillery and its echo sounded in his ears as a disquieting novelty, while his pedantic learning and Shakespearian quotations seemed a feeble weapon of male retaliation. He passed through the form of emancipation which refines appetite, and he began to feel the exquisite variety which

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tender feelings give to an ambitious young man. He fell in love with the influence.

There was one divinity, Miss Leila Anderson, who floated above his imagination, for she seemed to have all the graces and all the perfections and she spoke fluently in three languages. Her refinement fascinated him, and when she pointed out gently that those robust turns of speech proper to the railroad yards were not the highest proof of virility, he listened. The heavy boots disappeared, the curling fringe beneath his chin grew into an elegant Van Dyke beard, and Andrew woke to the fact that he possessed a delicate frame, with neat hands and small feet. Now he was more at home in those ornamented parlours, and he could make a telling reply to female badinage. When they showed sparks of interest in his warm smiles he could hold the flicker in his hands, fan it to a flame or, at will, he could extinguish it relentlessly. He became adept at party conversation, he loved acting in charades, he was ready for any amount of amusing flirtation. But the young ladies learned that he had an abrupt power of coming to a stop. He could even have the heartlessness to quit the salon altogether, and exchange more serious thoughts in the smoking-room. He was now meeting men who had not only travelled Europe, but had rubbed shoulders with the great men there. At last Andrew discovered the mysterious link which lies between history in books and its raw material in human events and personal contacts. There was a certain Pittsburgh judge who greatly impressed him by the casual remark: 'I told the Duke of Wellington . . .' At last Andrew felt himself a spectator of history in the making. He formed the habit of wanting to know celebrities himself.

In this zest for refined society the prudent little Scots boy had not altered. He was the egotist who did not allow himself any entangling alliances with beauty, or any surrender to elegance. The handsome Miss Leila had taught her pupil too successfully, and she was to remain only a perfumed memory.



ANDREW CARNEGIE AS A RAILROAD WORKER



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This small responsive man remained a great favourite, but if he fell in love he did not indulge his passion long.

Other belles of Pittsburgh who had found that adventurer of the drawing-room rather amusing, learned that in the background there was a possessive little Scotswoman who guarded her son's heart like a dragon, and never permitted any other form of worship to supplant that stern duty of getting on in the world which was the religion of the Carnegies. Andrew was not mother-dominated, he was mother-identified, and always that practical woman represented female intuition, ready to deflect his footsteps into paths less permanent than those of premature marriage.

Andrew set out with a party of fellow bachelors on a tramping tour through Europe. Now that his million dollars was working for him day and night in Pittsburgh he could afford further education, and the young men marched through museums and picture galleries, they attended opera and glutted their eyes with the ancient culture of Europe. When they came to the great hall in Venice where the Doges held their court Andrew Carnegie was not inhibited in the least, but seating himself in the marble throne he recited a whole speech from *Othello*.

In saying that he would not exchange his knowledge of the plays for a million dollars Andrew Carnegie spoke out of his heart, that emotional centre where poetry and money were so blended that no analysis could ever separate them.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE IRON AGE

THE metal iron is a very appropriate symbol for Andrew Carnegie. No other element possesses his common earthy nature with such potentiality of refinement. Iron is of humble birth among the ores, yet through craftsmanship it becomes the strongest metal in the world. Iron is nature's gift, but steel is the fabrication of man.

Andrew Carnegie's own qualities resemble the humble and earthy properties of the iron ore, and he possesses too the supreme blazing heat. For eighty years his furnaces were never banked down, and his passionate nature melted and fused those earthy parts, and created out of them something as tough and strong and shining as pure steel.

By the age of thirty this process of self-refinement was well begun. He quitted the service of the Pennsylvania to use his gifts in a wider sphere, and knowing well what customers wanted, he branched out into profitable sidelines. New railroads pushing their way all over America needed engines, axles and especially bridges. Those crude products of logs and carpentry which had spanned the rivers ever since the dawn of wheeled transport were at the mercy of every casual spark from a locomotive, and a fashion began for iron bridges.

A German immigrant blacksmith named Kloman had invented a labour-saving contrivance known as a 'trip-hammer' which could deliver enormous blows on a red-hot bar of pig-iron without expenditure of human muscle. Kloman was a splendid practical workman, but no hand at business. He quarrelled with his partners, and Andrew Carnegie, called in to make peace, performed this office in such a way that he himself and his brother Tom Carnegie entered Klo-

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man's firm. When the next quarrel occurred Andrew put still more capital into the concern, and eventually Kloman was eliminated. This technique of the ejection of unsatisfactory partners will be seen again as the Carnegie enterprises grew. When Kloman was gone his business developed prodigiously, and before long an offshoot called the Keystone Bridge Company was started, Andrew Carnegie very much in control. Business morality in the 1860s was looser, and every large corporation was surrounded by a penumbra of clandestine borrowings and secret commission, and with his friendly railroads on one hand and his practical craftsmen on the other Andrew began to thrive as an iron manufacturer.

Those great rivers of the continent — Potomac, Ohio, Mississippi — their very names express the poetry of an age when their streams were the only highways of traffic between state and state. Cumbersome ferry boats held up the traveller at each of these large arteries, but now they were to be crossed with delicate filigrees of iron. Andrew and his partners studied maps to find those crossings where new bridges were strategically required. Andrew would hurry to the place and flatter the president of the corporation with his nimble salesmanship, intuitively knowing when to be as tough as iron, and when it was expedient to be as yielding as Mississippi sand. No one could escape this obtrusive little man who had behind him the ingenuity of those toiling blacksmiths of Pittsburgh.

They threw a span across the Mississippi at St. Louis, joined the two banks of the Missouri by a pair of trusses at Plattsmouth. They led the railroad over the Ohio at Cincinnati. A thousand men were on the company's pay-roll, and it was equipped with the best machinery for manufacturing those romantic lattices from pig-iron, and lacing them high above deep gullies filled with moving eddies, and Andrew Carnegie, who had learned as a youth to repair their wooden forerunners, came to love these bridges more than anything he made throughout his life. Now he was ready to cross a bridge in his own career.



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Brother Tom, his mother's favourite, having married and settled down, the unity of the Carnegie family group was broken, but Andrew kept at his mother's side. That fierce compact of accomplishment with her was not fully performed, and they decided that though bridges were made in Pittsburgh, money was made in New York. There mother and son moved, to live in a fashionable hotel near Broadway. The partners in Pittsburgh could see to the manufacture of iron bars; his own function was to generate the will to build.

### 2

Though American business was good after the Civil War American capital was short. In those far off days Europe possessed unlimited liquid wealth, and when four million dollars were wanted to throw a bridge over the Mississippi Andrew volunteered to cross the Atlantic to find the money, and on the liner he prepared a glowing prospectus. This gigantic span was to be the greatest thing in the century, a gateway to the west, a drawbridge to a glorious future. Those crossing it were infallibly destined for wealth in the wonderful hinterland west of the Mississippi, the greatest river in the world: and those farseeing investors of Europe who put their money into its building would reap a magnificent harvest. Carnegie wrote of this bridge as he spoke of Dunfermline or Shakespeare, and on reaching London he took a cab for the office of the renowned American banker Junius Spencer Morgan.

This cautious man of wealth (the father of the better-known Pierpoint Morgan) listened to the loquacious little Scotsman. He was impressed with the prospects of the new company, but there had been mares' nests in America before, and perhaps with the object of securing delay, he suggested certain changes in the form of the corporation. Carnegie was on his way to

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fish for salmon in Scotland, and Mr. Morgan said the details could wait over until his return to London. But Andrew was too canny to allow such a splendid fish to slip from his hook in Leadenhall Street, and he cabled to New York asking approval for the alterations. Next day he turned up once more at the banker's office, announced a favourable reply from America and Morgan took over the issue of Bridge bonds. Whereat the nimble Andrew talked up their value five per cent by an interview with *The Times* financial correspondent, and departed to Scotland.

The performer of this adroit financial legerdemain was no longer the uncouth and hairy vulcan of the Pennsylvania. Carnegie was now a man of the world, dressed in a Prince Albert frock-coat, shepherd's plaid trousers and elegant beaver hat, and his well-groomed beard gave the impression of a refinement which was not the real nature of this irresistible hustler. A wind of elemental power had blown through those counting houses in Leadenhall Street, and the bankers there detected the infallible marks of a money-maker. It suited Andrew Carnegie to personify Mercury, passing to and fro across the Atlantic selling American dreams of bridges and railroads, and bearing back to Wall Street the potent hoard of funds.

The great railroads — Pennsylvania, Baltimore and Ohio, Illinois Central these were the names which represented civilization to the growing cities in the mid-west, and gold from the old civilized and happy Europe flowed in a fertilizing river behind her emigrants who were laying the iron rails and driving the iron locomotives across the new-born continent. Yet money, more and ever more, was needed.

Today, when the flow of capital is in a reverse direction, back from the New World to the Old, Europe need have no self-reproach, remembering that it was her own money that made possible the building of American industry.

Carnegie used to boast that all the bonds which he marketed

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in Europe increased in value, and that none ever failed to pay interest. Others entitled to know declare that on this point Andrew's recollection is faulty, and that his enthusiastic campaigns of salesmanship managed to foist upon the City of London many a railroad whose capital vanished into the waters of the Mississippi. It may well be so. The early history of many American railroads is like their English counterparts in the earlier days of speculation. But Andrew Carnegie had the magic gift of making himself believe what he wished to believe. Jauntily he went on gathering a handsome profit on every transaction, and making sure he was taken in on the ground floor. All was prospering in the career which Margaret Carnegie hoped for her son. Yet at this moment his conscience tells him of a surprising discovery.

### 3

Where was all this money-gathering to lead? Was he to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Where would he be in another ten years time, when wealth had closed the portals of understanding? The philosophers, music, his artistic intuitions brought the realization that spiritually he was a man stricken with poverty.

Perhaps behind this attack of depression was the sharp sting of conscience over some of his enterprises, the harsh accusations of rivals he had pushed out of the way, or the reproaches of an old Scottish sense of sin. Face to face he had met his own aggressiveness, and to him the answer was plain. He who could not reason it out was a fool. He that dare not was a slave. He was no longer innocent like those crude primitives the industrial captains of Pittsburgh. Self-culture had given Andrew Carnegie the gift of self-knowledge, and now at the age of thirty-three he put on paper a programme for the spending of his life. Like Micawber he balanced income and expenditure, but like Andrew Carnegie he put down some purely spiritual

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items in the account. Annual income — fifty thousand dollars, enough for any man, and promised to strive not to go beyond it. But to make it balance properly he must put in a figure for culture — on the other side of the ledger. This iron master of Pittsburgh would forsake America, retire to England, and get a thorough education at Oxford. In two years he would be ready to begin, and then once he was properly educated he would renounce business and purchase a newspaper and devote himself to the improvement of the lower classes. Meanwhile, for the next two years he would spend each afternoon in systematic reading of history, science and literature. All this the meditative ironmaster wrote carefully on paper. Then he put down his pen and locked up the revealing document in his safe.

A few years after, another business man in South Africa, also young and successful, was to pass through a similar crisis, and was to resolve to educate himself before it became too late. This man had discovered diamonds in the earth, turned them into money, and each year he packed up his tent and settled down for a few terms at the university of his visions.

Andrew Carnegie locked his charter of self-emancipation in his safe. Two years — before he could carry out his plan — time to make a little more money. Not to a soul did he mention his secret, not even to that watchful mother who shared his thoughts and perhaps suspected more than he knew of the programme he thought safe from prying eyes. Two years more, and he will have earned the price of his ransom. Looking over his shoulder as he wrote there was a certain individuality whom Andrew had forgotten to take into his calculation, the alternative Carnegie, that masterful egotist who was Margaret Carnegie's true son.

The dreamer of the diamond fields, Cecil John Rhodes, walked an Oxford quadrangle wearing an undergraduate's gown, and his dream materialized like a clear-cut gem with many faces.

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But Andrew the idealist, who had locked the promise in his safe, allowed himself the fatal interval of two years, and Carnegie the realist got to know of it. Abruptly a soft call came from an entirely new direction, and that second self inside this divided man heard the summons clearly.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CLANK OF METAL

WAGNER's music drama *Rheingold* contains one of the most exciting episodes in music. Wotan, the overlord of Heaven, and Loge, the magician, go down together through the swirling waters of the Rhine into the dim and soulless place where Alberic's dwarfs carry on their brutish labour in dark smithies. Waves of water music eddy around the god and his guide as they move downwards, sounds and memories of the upper world grow more faint, the rhythm of the shadows becomes more excited, then suddenly in a crescendo of sound the waves draw back, and there before them is the infernal scene. The descriptive music ceases, and nothing is heard but the monotonous clank, clank, clank of hammers beating their hideous tattoo upon anvils of iron with infra-human mechanical persistence. This terrible realism of the underworld is enough for them, and Wotan and Loge ascend once more, as the music takes up its descriptive sway and drowns the horrible clank of iron upon iron, leaving its echoes still in their minds.

Andrew Carnegie descended often into the shades, and now his alert ear caught there a new and peculiar overtone in the clanking of metal, and from that moment its echo never left him. At times it would fade in his soul, away from earshot among the moving waters of idealism, then once more the harsh clank would return and compel him to force others to toil.

Steel had become commercially practicable. Steel, that aristocratic relative of plebeian iron, could now be manufactured on a large scale following the invention of a Franco-Englishman Henry Bessemer. On a visit to England, selling bonds for a bridge in Iowa, Andrew Carnegie had watched steel being

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made in Bessemer's new crucible. It was an enormous iron mixing bowl, named a convertor, in which molten pig-iron was swung whilst a blast of air was driven through it. With a terrible crescendo moaning to a shriek and a rain of flame and sparks, this current of air carried away impurities and left behind a creamy mass of dazzling liquid whiteness which could be poured into any shape and then moulded into bars possessing many times the toughness of wrought iron. This was steel, the symbol of the twentieth century.

In this flashing metal, more brilliant than gold, more luminous than silver, lies the symbolism of the sword, and the hard reality of the howitzer. Steel never broke into pieces like iron, it was seemingly indestructible until new atomic powers made it a toy. Andrew Carnegie could have found no substance so emblematic of himself. He watched the pyrotechnic display of the convertor: he saw steel rails used by an English railway for fifteen years without replacement, and as that fiery milk from Bessemer's goblet, thousands of degrees hot, gave off its aurora of fire, a chemical change took place in Carnegie's soul. Bessemer had converted him to steel.

### 2

Self-education, Oxford and the secret ideal for the improvement of the working classes remained buried but not dead in the recesses of his heart, and the two years interval he had allowed himself became a lifetime as gradually he acquired the remarkable technique of combining steel with culture. Locking the door of his safe seemed so simple a way of putting out of mind the thought of retirement. But that thought remained with him and would not be stilled.

But now Andrew himself took dynamic control. His autobiography tells us that one morning in bed he had an inspiration that his steel works must be placed at a place called Braddock near Pittsburgh: the prosaic fact is that Tom

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Carnegie had already secured an option on this site which was on the banks of the Monongahela river.

On one side of Braddock ran the Pennsylvania railroad, and on another the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. Andrew knew well the cunning of playing off one railroad against another, but he named his new plant after J. Edgar Thomson, president of the Pennsylvania, thereby hoping to guarantee large orders for steel rails. Costing a million dollars, the new steel works rose on the Monongahela during a financial slump, and his new enterprise was ready to start operations the moment the depression had passed. Pittsburgh was the natural meeting place for Pennsylvania coal and iron ore brought down the great lakes from Minnesota.

As the Bessemer convertors began to shriek at Braddock Andrew put aside all thoughts of retiring from business. He gathered together his financial resources, gave up selling bonds and devoted himself henceforth to steel. 'I put all my eggs in one basket,' he said, 'and watch the basket.' So persistently did he carry out this precept that those eggs became ova of gold.

### 3

The greatest piece of good fortune in the whole of Carnegie's business career came when the Edgar Thomson works were still building between a river and two railroads. A strike had occurred at a neighbouring steel plant, and Carnegie came to hear that the men's leader was an unusual personality named William R. Jones. He was promptly engaged with a whole group of experienced workmen and kept on wages until the new works were completed. This man Jones, always affectionately known as 'Captain Bill', was a Pennsylvanian Welshman possessing the Celtic genius with metals. He was above all a born leader of men, a genial, persuasive and profane talker, worshipped by those tough creatures who served the Bessemer convertors.



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This new manufacturing required not only iron ore and coking coal, it needed men, and in this sphere Captain Jones was at home. He cherished his workers like a father. He organized them into competitive teams, and drove them on to greater and greater production by his special mixture of eloquence, threats and blasphemies. Each day the furnace which turned out most pig-iron was allowed to hoist a broom to the top of its tower, and for the next twenty-four hours that coveted prize stung each of the other teams to emulation. Promotion in the Edgar Thomson works was from the ranks of the workers, and if they passed the severe test of the Captain's judgment they might become bosses, and presently managers. The tempo was terrible but the wages were princely. The heat of the furnaces and the terrific blast of competition burned up men as well as coke. When Andrew offered to make Jones a Carnegie partner the Captain declined the honour: 'But you might give me a hell of a big salary,' he said, and Andrew Carnegie replied: 'You shall receive as much as the President of the United States,' and so, drawing his twenty-five thousand dollars, Bill Jones became the highest paid workman in America.

Carnegie's principal customers were the railroads, and when a new line was promoted he was certain to hear of it, and by persistently shameless importuning of the executives he would secure contracts. He gave the railroads cheap steel and expected cheap transport in return. His method was war, unrelenting and fierce. When the early partners whose capital helped to build the Edgar Thomson works became nervous over the terrible momentum, Andrew Carnegie was glad to let them go, and soon he held the majority interest. Other partners who were unsatisfactory were ejected as old Andrew Kloman had been, and Andrew came to occupy the only position where he was at home, that of absolute master.

Pig-iron poured out like a river of incandescent milk into a train of ladles and was conveyed to a curious box made of iron

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and lined with firebrick, known as a 'Jones mixer', a clever invention of the redoubtable Captain. Here the molten metal was trundled to and fro like butter milk in a churn, giving with each movement a shower of silver sparks, then to be taken to the Bessemer convertor where powerful jets of air raised it to an unimaginable heat, and iron became steel. Then it was poured out into moulds, rolled red hot into long bars, and finally shot through a machine something like a domestic wringer, to grow into a length of rail or a flat stanchion, each bearing the name Carnegie, and destined to carry Pullman cars across America, or form the skeleton of a skyscraper in New York. Rails issued from Braddock in quantities never before heard of, and by the year 1880 the Edgar Thomson works was producing one-seventh of all the Bessemer steel in the United States.

Andrew Carnegie gave up all thought of retirement to an Oxford quadrangle and no tears need be shed that those college plans remained a dream, for Andrew became an educated man of an original variety.

He formed the habit of passing half the year in Europe. He had discovered an unusual way of spending a holiday which caused as much sensation in the eighteen-eighties as a private aeroplane cruise today. With a party of friends of both sexes this American hustler dashed from one end of Great Britain to the other in a stage coach, and their saga was industriously written up by Andrew in a book which some day will be one of the curiosities of literature — *An American four-in-hand in Britain*. Well did he understand the meaning of publicity. 'To do things is not half the battle. Carlyle is all wrong about this. To be able to tell the world what you have done, that is the greater accomplishment,' he wrote, yearning for self-expression. Should any of the lady guests, fascinated by her host's sprightly conversation, try to take a place beside him on the box seat, she would soon feel Margaret Carnegie's stern disapproval. But one member of the party did receive the old

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lady's approbation, for he was connected with business. While steering his horses through the English lanes Andrew talked to a young Englishman named Sydney Gilchrist Thomas who made his living as clerk in a London police court.

But his hobby and his private passion was metallurgy. Andrew heard enthralled the tale of the home-made laboratory where Thomas had found a new way to remove phosphorus from iron ore. In a flash Carnegie saw that this method was something the steel-makers had dreamed of, and before the four-in-hand reached John o' Groats he had decided to purchase the patent rights of Thomas's idea which became known as the 'basic open hearth process' and revolutionized steel manufacture. The amateur metallurgist died of tuberculosis, but his invention greatly enriched Andrew Carnegie.

### 4

Among the low hills of western Pennsylvania a peculiar industry had been begotten out of the steel-producing activities of Pittsburgh. They needed abundant supplies of a hard grey gritty substance known as coke, baked from coal. It was the fuel of the steel furnaces, and a steady market was guaranteed so long as the steel works kept open at Pittsburgh.

A serious young man with a beard perceived the economic importance of this fact, and he invested all his savings in coal properties, and when he had money over he would build a few more ovens; and then upon the security of these he would borrow still more dollars to buy more properties and further ovens. This pertinacious fellow was of Swiss extraction, and was called Henry Clay Frick. His success can be illustrated by a fable.

A Pennsylvania farmer borrowed a hen and twelve eggs from a neighbour. When the hen had hatched the eggs it was returned with thanks, and soon the eggs produced chickens which presently laid more eggs. Before long the farmer was



ANDREW CARNEGIE AND HIS MOTHER WITH THEIR COACHING PARTY, 1881



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able to pay back the loan of the dozen eggs, and in a short time he possessed a whole chicken farm of his own, all out of twelve borrowed eggs and the use of a neighbour's fowl. This is the story of the coke business which Frick created. His borrowed money was soundly invested in coke-producing lands which themselves were security for further loans, and soon people were calling him 'the king of coke'.

Carnegie had noticed this new figure upon the horizon and one evening he entertained the young man to dinner in his New York house. Andrew was in great spirits, and at the end of the dinner he raised his glass with the toast: 'Henry Clay Frick — my new partner.'

A rasping Scottish voice rang out: 'Surely Andra, that will be a fine thing for Mr. Frick, but where's the gain for us.' Everyone smiled at the old lady's plain speaking. Andrew's mother was a privileged person, and like a child she might say aloud what others must only think. A danger signal sounded in her breast at the hint of competition with her beloved son. Andrew laughed it off, and boasted of his splendid new partner, who not only possessed unlimited coke but unique managerial ability.

Andrew invested more heavily in the Frick Coke Companies, and Frick was adopted into the Carnegie family of partners to the extent of eleven per cent of the capital. Frick was much more than a king of coke. His was an industrial talent of surpassing ability, with a Teutonic flair for method and orderly progress. Where Andrew Carnegie decided by intuition, Frick moved coldly with calculating thoroughness, and he lived laborious days at Pittsburgh throughout the whole year, and outside business his only thought was for painting. Never popular, and admired more than loved, he pursued his solitary objectives with self-absorbed fanaticism. Certainly, nature had created an absolute contrast to the ebullient Carnegie.

But Andrew was delighted. He could now afford to spend more time across the Atlantic, coaching in Britain and enjoying

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metaphysical arguments with his friends, while those eggs in the basket he watched from afar multiplied prodigiously.

The success of Carnegie aroused emulation and a rival steel mill was built at a place called Homestead on the Monongahela a few miles away, and equipped with modern machinery. But it possessed no Captain Jones, and its manager had the sinister reputation of being a strike breaker. Homestead of the beautiful name became a hotbed of racial feuds. In one department the Irish were supreme, and no man would find employment unless his name was something like O'Flanagan or O'Flaherty. In the rail mill, the Welsh were in command, and elsewhere Poles, Hungarians and Russians behaved as though the Homestead works were a territory of middle Europe, and strikes, sympathy strikes and lock-outs frequently paralysed the whole plant, until one day Homestead was closed down. At this moment Carnegie stepped in. He had watched the tribulations of his rival, and now he was able to purchase the whole business at a knockout price. A similar episode occurred at another competing steel works at Duquesne.

A magic wand was needed to assemble these haphazard parts into one organic whole. Henry Clay Frick harmonized and rationalized them, built a private railroad connecting the different works, so that presently the Carnegie Company possessed a magnificent plant which embodied everything required to make steel more cheaply than ever.

Carnegie was still the majority owner and he boasted frequently of his wonderful new manager, though sometimes he had private doubts. Were Frick methods with labour rather severe perhaps? Was Mr. Frick rather too stern and unyielding? A trade union called the Amalgamated Association was gathering steel workers into its membership, and there had been a strike accompanied by ugly episodes in the Frick coke fields, where Carnegie was now a partner. At the worst moment of the strike Carnegie cabled from Scotland pre-emptorily ordering Frick to agree to the men's demands and settle

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the dispute. Frick promptly sent in his resignation as manager of the Carnegie Company. Whereat the subtle master of managerial psychology applied a policy of appeasement. 'You can't possibly estimate what a tremendously big man you are,' Carnegie wrote from his highland home and Frick withdrew his resignation.

The next time trouble broke out in the Frick coke fields Andrew was content with showering effusive letters upon the manager, while devoting himself to the ethical aspect of business.

While the furnace men at Braddock and Homestead worked twelve hours per day, round the clock, once a fortnight, with sweat pouring down their boots, Andrew Carnegie was preaching to the aristocrats he met on the moors in Scotland: 'The lot of a skilled workman is far better than that of an heir to an hereditary title who is very likely to lead an unhappy wicked life.' The district around Pittsburgh was squalid, the streets were sticky with yellow mud, and those frame houses indescribably sordid, yet Andrew believed these things were of secondary importance as he preached the beauty of toil and the harmony of reconciliation.

His views upon strikes, however, were more liberal than those of Henry Clay Frick. Carnegie believed that whatever the provocation, no fresh workers should ever be brought in to replace those who were on strike. His strategy was to close down the works and wait: but never to take in outsiders, for he was correct in thinking that this was what the men resented most, and his motto for the workers was: 'Thou shalt not take thy neighbour's job.'

Between Carnegie the aggressive capitalist praising the status of work, and Carnegie the sentimentalist who had a genuine sympathy with the toilers of the world, there was the same paradoxical inconsistency as in every other part of his nature. For the time, however, all was well. Frick was in command at Pittsburgh, while Andrew faced the most difficult and rewarding enterprise that falls to man's lot.



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### 5

For forty years since the little family group of the Carnegies crossed to America, Margaret had been the shrewd Scottish peasant, ruling her sons and taking great interest in social life in New York. Tom, her favourite boy, had died young, and now she needed Andrew, and he needed her. She had given him her impulsive intuition, her arrant sentimentality and power to please. His mind worked in a feminine way, with sudden affections and quick enmities, and his easy ascendancy over stronger men — such as Bill Jones and Henry Clay Frick — was a legacy of his mother's power over him. From Margaret Carnegie came his ruthlessness, his love of money, his crafty unconquerable will. And now the old lady died and this strong affinity was broken. But Andrew was over fifty, and he was free to make a change that would have been unthinkable while she was still alive.

There were several eligible ladies on his list, but only one possessed all the attributes which this shrewd bachelor had decided his wife must have, and proposed while riding horseback in Central Park, New York, with appropriate Shakespearian quotations. There were twenty-one years between them, and cynical friends must have predicted an early end to the romances of this conceited cavalier. When Carnegie took his bride to see the old folks at Dunfermline, his uncles and cousins, with their usual Scottish outspokenness, expressed surprise that such a fascinating young lady had ever consented to marry the like of Andrew: and privately they concluded that it must have been on account of his money.

But it turned out harmonious, and Mrs. Carnegie had to perfection the difficult art of managing her rumbustious laird. While he loved the limelight, she preferred the shadow, and above all, she enjoyed the background of the Scottish highlands where he could indulge all his romantic sentiment going back to King Robert the Bruce, and Mary, Queen of Scots. He began

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to search for a place to build a permanent house, and at last, after years of searching, he found a beautiful place almost hidden among heather-covered hills and birch trees, upon the Kyle of Sutherland, and there he built a palace, a truly American monster of granite, incongruous in this forgotten corner, and began to think once again of retiring altogether.

His moods alternated swiftly from the blazing heat of the Pittsburgh crucibles, to the utter peace of the Scottish highlands, but he would continually catch the clank of the metal and feel the call of his primitive self compelling him to the old thirst for profit. Many times he considered selling his business, but each time the monster held on to him.

### 6

Henry Clay Frick, in charge of the partners at Pittsburgh, had become the greatest industrial organizer in America. Andrew read with satisfaction reports of vastly increased earnings. All parts of the business were flourishing: from armour plate for the American Navy down to steel girders for skyscrapers.

Yet upon this bright horizon there was one dark cloud: the Homestead mill was not making money so fast as the other parts of the plant, and it had a bad reputation for labour troubles, even before Carnegie's purchase, though it was the best equipped. The Amalgamated Association was composed of a small aristocracy of the highest paid rollers and heaters who earned five times as much as the mechanics who had actually erected the machines with which they worked. These high wages were due to the improved mechanization and superior planning of Homestead. One new machine costing a million dollars enabled double the number of plates to be turned out in a given time, and the Amalgamated Association claimed the full benefit for its members. Each process, each workman, each hour of labour was ruled by a mass of strict agreements

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between the company and the union. How much heat might be used, how much scrap iron per worker, the use of pig-iron and puddler's clay. One workman might not teach another nor lend his tools except according to the rules. Under these rigid trade practices the skilled aristocrats of Homestead, those Welsh and Irish and Scots, earned handsome wages, and some were driven up to the gate in their own carriages. But the unskilled Hungarian, Polish and Czech labourers were badly paid and they were not eligible for membership of the Amalgamated Association, yet they formed the highly inflammable centre of resistance to the firm's authority. Negotiations were going on to tie wages to the price of steel by a sliding scale.

Some conditions of work were shocking. In parts of the mill the men worked a twelve-hour shift, culminating once a fortnight in twenty-four hours at a stretch. Although this cruel spell of labour was partly spent in watching and waiting, punctuated by brief periods of intense physical work in torrid conditions, it was popular with the men because of the high wages it made possible, and attempts to break it had failed.

All through the summer the temper of Homestead bubbled like molten metal in the hearths of that gigantic steel kitchen. On top were the twelve hundred skilled members of the Amalgamated: below their unskilled helpers, a horde of Slavs, recent immigrants and ready to behave as though they were revolutionaries in central Europe.

The workers had their committee, under the chairmanship of a steel operative named O'Donnell, who earned 144 dollars per month, and they began to organize resistance to the company.

Three thousand miles away Andrew Carnegie read reports, and tried to be detached from the disagreeable situation. He blew hot and cold, sometimes urging Frick on to battle with the Amalgamated, and then swinging round to sympathy with the men.

But the manager of the Carnegie Company was determined

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Labour Union, yet sympathetic to the men. But Frick, unlike himself, personified all the unyielding Bourbonism of American capital.

A few days after the beginning of the strike Andrew Carnegie received a terrible shock as he opened a telegram from Pittsburgh.

### 7

On a quiet misty dawn of July 6th a small tugboat hauling two barges appeared on the Monongahela and drew opposite the steel plant, now entirely cut off from the outside. Both management and men were ready for war. In the saloons of Homestead the matter had been discussed for weeks and prying newspapermen were hustled away. Yet everything in the steel works was quiet in the early summer morning, as the tugboat, quaintly named the *Little Bill*, approached the wharf belonging to the steel plant. Then suddenly hell broke out.

A steam whistle shrieked above the roofs, and with an ugly roar the township came to life, as men crowded the narrow streets down towards the river. Through the mist O'Donnell's men could see the little tug towing a line of barges now at short range, and along the Monongahela a dense crowd of excited men made the river a battleground. A shower of bullets rained upon the steamer and the closed barges, which hesitated miserably in mid stream.

Inside the tugboat a furious argument was going on. The captain of three hundred Pinkertons with orders to occupy Homestead, was disputing with the Deputy Sheriff, and while the men demanded to be given their rifles their captain insisted that they be sworn in as Sheriff's assistants, and a hail of bullets, stones and iron bars showered over their heads. But the Deputy Sheriff refused point-blank to administer the legal oath until the Pinkertons had set foot on land inside the steel works. Meanwhile, he forbade them to use their rifles, and they

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were obliged to lie in the hold of the barges inactive under the murderous fusillade from the river bank where O'Donnell's men had made a barricade of steel plates, and behind which they poured out sticks of dynamite on the barges.

The Pinkertons began to break open the cases containing their rifles. The Deputy Sheriff was obliged to yield but he still refused to swear in the guards. The fire from the bank grew heavier, and the shower of stones and iron bars never ceased and the Pinkertons began to use their rifles. The tug-boat cast the barges adrift and steamed away to get help, leaving the guards in the middle of the Monongahela exposed to the fury of O'Donnell's men.

All day this insane fight went on. Burning oil was thrown on the water, gas mains set on fire to make a wall of flame along the river bank, while the desperate Pinkertons crouched miserably in the barges, firing their rifles whenever they could. At last, when the hideous combat had gone on till evening, the Pinkertons hauled up the white flag. O'Donnell agreed to accept their surrender and allow them to be escorted through the steel works and away from the town. One by one the Pinkertons landed at the wharf.

But the leaders of the strike had inflamed passions beyond their control, and as their handful of enemies touched land the crowd of Hungarians and Slavs, men and women, saw red. The most horrible act of this tragedy now took place. A steel-worker named McLuckie, who at the time was Mayor of Homestead, yelled an order which precipitated the final orgy of violence. The unfortunate Pinkertons were compelled to run the gauntlet for nearly a mile, through a bloodthirsty mob of workers and their wives who pelted them with sticks and stones. The guards staggered along, beaten, kicked and robbed. Not one of the three hundred Pinkertons escaped injury, and one was killed.

By the end of this frightful day, after ten lives had been lost and over sixty were wounded, the Carnegie steel works at

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Homestead was completely in the control of O'Donnell and his committee. The civil power was entirely impotent. Meanwhile an unseemly wrangle went on between the Governor of Pennsylvania and the County Sheriff as to which arm of civil authority was responsible for bringing back order to Homestead, and when the Governor's representative came to inspect he was three times ejected.

This was revolution. The United States recognized it with horror, and one man now received the full weight of blame, as the wretched Pinkertons had taken the fusillade of bullets and dynamite.

### 8

Far from the theatre of tragedy this man was reading the cables from America, and presently the newspaper articles that unsparingly condemned him as the real criminal of Homestead. His first impulse had been to rush to Pittsburgh and settle the strike himself. But his partners dissuaded him, and Andrew Carnegie was obliged to wait further bulletins, bowing his head. He wired encouragingly to Frick: 'All anxiety gone since you stand firm. Never employ one of these rioters. Let grass grow over works. Must not fail now. You will win easily next trial only stand firm law and order wish I could support you in any form.' This does not sound like an apology.

Andrew Carnegie indeed wavered painfully between his desire to vanquish the Amalgamated Association, and his longing for decency and peace. From Homestead the strikers cabled him: 'Kind master tell us what to do and we will do it.' A child's appeal to an indulgent father after mother has laid down the law. It was natural for Andrew Carnegie to personify the kindly master when he was three thousand miles away from dynamite and barricades. But it is certain that if he had been there there would have been no bloodshed. Carnegie understood the temperament of American workmen better than

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Frick, and they recognized in this talkative Scotsman a man like themselves, perhaps more cunning and articulate, but still essentially the same. Intellectuals might sneer at his sentimentalities about the dignity of labour and the sanctity of an employer's relation to his men, but the workers admired him. Had Carnegie been in control at Pittsburgh during the summer of 1892 there would have been hard bargaining, some bellicose speeches mixed with jocularities. But there would have been no barricading of the steel works, and above all, no Pinkertons brought to Homestead with a ridiculous attempt at secrecy.

The chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company now pursued his inflexible routine. Frick declared to the Press that he would never give in to the strikers, no, not if the dispute went on all summer, and the following winter, and the summer after that, yes for ever to the end of his life. Never would he yield to the Amalgamated.

One morning, after he had taken the street car to his work as usual, Frick sat in his Pittsburgh office dictating letters when a stranger walked in and fired three bullets at point-blank range, and in the scuffle which followed the man produced a knife and stabbed Frick three times in the leg. Pouring blood from his wounds the chairman allowed the bullets to be probed for. No vital organ was injured. Then, after calmly signing his letters, he was carried home.

The would-be murderer turned out to be a Russian anarchist named Berkman, who had formed in his crazy mind the idea that to liquidate Henry Clay Frick would be a victory for the workers. When questioned, Berkman had volunteered: 'Carnegie is thousands of miles away and would never dare to oppose the workers as Frick has done.' Berkman was sent to the penitentiary for thirty years, but, as chairman O'Donnell put it, 'Frick's bullet passed through the heart of the strike.'

From the shores of Loch Rannoch Carnegie cabled to Frick: 'Too glad at your escape to think of anything else. Never fear brave and dear friend my appearing on the scene as long as you

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are able to direct matters from the house or until partners call.'

Homestead was now a helplessly paralysed monster controlled still by O'Donnell's committee until, at last, the slow machinery of Civil Government began to move. Stung by criticism the Governor of Pennsylvania took a house near the steel works, and announced he would use up the entire resources of the state if necessary to take possession of Homestead. Two days later this was achieved with the aid of eight thousand regular soldiers, and once more the Carnegie partners were masters of their plant. The bloody tragedy of Homestead had cost the workmen and the state of Pennsylvania a million dollars each, and the Carnegie Company two million. This discreditable dispute was no case of starving or underpaid men struggling against economic exploitation: it was a clash between well-armed antagonists, an episode of industrial feudalism now happily out of date.

The man who is master of a satanic spell must bear responsibility when the infernal powers with which he has meddled explode dangerously. Not merely had Carnegie aroused the crucibles of steel, but he had interfered with even more momentous social forces. He had preached the sublimest reconciliation along with the most ruthless competition. While urging Frick never to recognize the Amalgamated Carnegie had written: 'The gage of battle or the duel is not more senseless as a means of establishing what is just and fair than an industrial strike or lock-out.' He could follow both aims simultaneously without sense of his own inconsistency. Such a contrast between aggressive words and peaceable deeds looks like hypocrisy, but that is the Carnegie paradox. Whatever opinion we have of his part in the Homestead affair, he is not to be blamed for deliberate double-dealing. The workmen of Homestead had their violent instincts roused by Frick's example, but they would have allowed Carnegie to handle them. As one workman put the matter to him: 'It wasn't a question of dollars. The men



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would have let you trick them, but they wouldn't let that other man stroke their hair.'

1892 was the year of a Presidential election, and the continuing strike, together with news of the massacre of Homestead, was bad propoganda for the Republican party who had favoured steel manufacturers. But Andrew was not the man to cry over spilt blood and he could be as ruthless with his friends as with his foes. He gave the Republicans no comfort at all, and when Frick proposed to donate twenty-five thousand dollars to the party war chest Carnegie reduced the figure to ten thousand.

One strange aftermath of Homestead's tragedy: McLuckie, the fiery Mayor of Homestead, who had given the order to stone the Pinkertons as they landed under the protection of the white flag, had fled from the United States to avoid arrest, and eventually settled in Mexico. His life was in pieces. This ex-steel worker, said to have owned property in Homestead worth thirty thousand dollars, was now almost penniless, when a friend of Andrew Carnegie ran across him and reported this turn of fortune which had come to the ex-mayor of the steel township. Back came a cable from Carnegie: 'Give McLuckie all the money he needs.'

'That was damned white of Andrew,' exclaimed the outlawed McLuckie when told that his proposed benefactor was none other than the head of the Carnegie Steel Company. That same sentimental Scotsman, who loved to epitomize life in dramatic flashes, wrote in his autobiography that he would rather have those words engraved upon his tombstone than all the theological dogmas invented by man.

His volatile fancy and truly American resolve to face the future made him impatient with what was past and done with. He made a journey to Egypt, and there received from the great stone sphinx a paradoxical lesson in progress. As the eternally sleeping beast turned its back upon the weary waste of desert and looked towards the life-giving Nile, it whispered to Andrew

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Carnegie: 'This is your lesson: let the dead past bury its dead: look forward only on that which has life and grows forward steadily towards perfection. It is only on the bright things of life we must fix our gaze if we are to be of use in our day and generation.' Only Andrew was capable of learning such a message of change and hopefulness from those unchanging lips of stone.

Such unbounded optimism was the organic secret of Andrew Carnegie's life force. His worldly prosperity continued to increase as though the bloody battle of Homestead were nothing but a tale from Shakespeare.

## CHAPTER VI

### CULTURE INCORPORATED

CARNEGIE's highly original germ of self-cultivation had sprouted prodigiously out of his sense of social inferiority in Pittsburgh drawing-rooms into a bizarre growth. It was no conservatory flower nurtured in a millionaire's leisure, but the bloom of the desert, produced by intensive mental irrigation and assiduous enthusiasm. What he dreamed of receiving from Oxford, he administered to himself with all the power of that organizing gift which built up the steel empire. The raw young man from the railroad who had stared in oafish wonderment at the inspired commonplace of a few lines carved over a library fireside, now possessed his own library where those very same lines were graven and read aloud reverently to visitors.

Just as he had means of knowledge other than reason, this giver of libraries possessed vast resources of education besides books. Travellers on Atlantic steamships, dwellers in uptown New York, Scottish ghillies and highland ministers, professors and lawyers were astonished by this assertive little man whose desire for an exchange of Shakespearian quotations they could not quite square with ironmongering in a place called Pittsburgh.

One day he read in a newspaper the old saying: 'The Gods send threads for a web begun', and these words seemed specially meant for him. His web was well begun, and the weaver's son saw the shadowy pattern of a vast design spreading out before his imagination. He announced his desire to give money for public libraries, and with naive surprise he noted: 'Lo, and behold, scores of applications came in.' Andrew Carnegie had found the outlet where his name was to live more abundantly than when embossed on bars of steel.

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On presenting a library to his native Dunfermline, he found he had been anticipated. Years before some working men in the town had made a collection of books and loaned them to one another. One of these bookish weavers had been his own father; that innately refined man who never made a living out of his tablecloths had made his own web of culture.

He had been forestalled too with his library idea in Allegheny. Colonel Anderson had placed his books at the disposal of the working boys, and the ambitious telegraph messenger lad who had fought for the privilege, now presented to the township a magnificent library which was formally opened by the President of the United States.

Across the river the rival Pittsburgh looked askance at Carnegie's offer to present a similar building, but Carnegie persisted, and Pittsburgh repented, whereupon the donor of libraries, ever liking to score over his enemies, withdrew his original gift and exclaimed in revengeful triumph: 'What I offered was not enough for Pittsburgh. I'll quadruple it.' Today the Art Gallery and Technical College which he gave forms a cultural centre of vast magnificence.

Any place in the English speaking countries might have a library free of cost, but only upon one condition. Andrew presented the building, but the town must provide for the upkeep and development of the bookshelves. Even New York received its gift only after a promise to appropriate half a million dollars annually. The library was to be a vital seed, not merely bricks and mortar and the community had to learn to cultivate it.

In different styles of architecture all over the world, these free libraries showed in many outward forms Andrew Carnegie's cultural aspiration. In Washington a classical façade welcomes readers. In Allegheny a huge bronze figure, a half-naked blacksmith wearing a wide-brimmed hat, keeps his eyes fixed upon a book moulded in bronze. Dunfermline library was opened by Margaret Carnegie herself. Beside bloody

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Homestead's square citadel of reading there is a bandstand and bowling alley, and at Braddock the steel workers have a club as well as bookshelves.

Today the tradition of public libraries, taken for granted in English speaking lands, bears the stamp of Carnegie's mind. His libraries for ordinary folk are the counterpart of Rhodes Scholarships for the exceptional man, and in many a barren town the name Carnegie has symbolized a sort of proletarian university, where dreamers find solace among masterpieces, but in all those hundreds of reading-rooms through England and America there has never been a more reverent and imaginative reader than the eternal student who founded them.

### 2

But his culture was not limited to books. Carnegie pursued anyone with a reputation. He hunted the celebrity with the intensity of a mother seeking a husband for her daughter, and he had some surprising successes. There was that rather prim gentleman with Dundreary whiskers, the poet Matthew Arnold, whom Andrew persuaded to cross the Atlantic for a lecture tour. He was a dull and nervous speaker, and he never pretended to enjoy America, but Andrew and his mother took the poet into protective custody, shepherded him around New York and they sat attentively in the front row while Matthew Arnold began his highly polished discourse. Never did an audience receive less value from a paid lecturer. Soon there were ominous cries of 'Speak up', and as the creator of majestic verse treated his hearers as though they were a few Dons in an Oxford Common Room, a part of the impatient crowd left in disgust.

The situation was discussed in Carnegie's drawing-room, and when the lecturer asked Margaret's opinion of his address she pronounced it as 'Too Ministerial'. It was agreed that a course of elocution lessons from a Boston professor would greatly

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improve that golden, but inaudible voice. The lecture tour was resumed with greater success, and Matthew Arnold was even coaxed into perceiving beauties in the American countryside. Through Pennsylvanian woods walked his sedate clerical figure, and at his side, the bearded Andrew, eager and irrepressible as a child. Two extremes met, English nineteenth-century scholarship mingled with American vitality. Matthew Arnold happened to mention that he had been salmon fishing with a duke; this provoked an explosion from Andrew whose snobbery took an aggressively inverted form. He always ranted upon the worthlessness of dukes and earls, especially in their presence, and he used their acquaintance to prove his own personal superiority to their long lineage. He attacked their ancestors to emphasize that Andrew Carnegie's ancestor was Andrew Carnegie. But Matthew Arnold smiled: 'A duke is always a personage with us,' he said, and Andrew had to hold his peace.

More fundamentally in sympathy was the Lancashire man John Morley. Today his books are unread, but in the late Victorian epoch he was a great literary figure, and as a member of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet burst into political fame.

'Honest John', as Morley was called in political circles, had actually published Carnegie's first literary article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and that was enough to earn his lifelong reverence. As the years grew on, they came to love one another's company, arguing, disputing, quarrelling, but always friendly. For Morley was an intellectual pessimist, whose philosophical view of life goaded Andrew into voluble disagreement. 'Morley is seldom if ever wild about anything,' he wrote. 'His eyes are always seeing spots on the sun.' Each year Morley was the favoured guest at the Scottish castle where Andrew now dispensed his hospitality on the scale of an English nobleman. Honest John, that genial, stuffy bachelor, became what he called 'an old shoe', a familiar in the household, part of the library furniture, and when they were apart the two friends wrote letters to one another each Sunday morning. Morley

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introduced Carnegie to Gladstone himself who invited him to stay at Hawarden Castle.

The eager Carnegie was soon in the library rummaging among the books, and he called down from the top of a ladder that he had found a book written by a Dunfermline man. Like a flash came Gladstone's answer: 'And next to it you will find a book by another Dunfermline man,' and his organ voice was heard declaiming: 'What Mecca is to the Mohammedan, Benares is to the Hindu, Jerusalem is to the Christian, all that, Dunfermline is to me.' Carnegie was immensely flattered to hear these lines quoted from his own book describing the stage-coach tour.

But, unlike Matthew Arnold, the Grand Old Man never allowed Carnegie to persuade him to visit the United States, a fact which lovers of both countries must regret.

### 3

But the greatest intellectual influence upon Andrew Carnegie was the philosopher who made a system out of Darwin's idea of evolution, Herbert Spencer. His mixture of science and agnosticism greatly appealed to daring spirits of the late Victorian era, and Andrew always regarded his own career as a practical demonstration of Spencerian evolution at work. A penniless boy had evolved into a millionaire: an illiterate railway worker had become a connoisseur of libraries: surely this was the most convincing proof of Spencer's axiom that all things follow their laws of growth and progress. Andrew was not content until he had made himself Spencer's friend and correspondent, and the neurotic philosopher whose books never attained a circulation corresponding to his vast influence, must have been electrified to receive this consolation from his new disciple: 'When have prophets not been stoned — from Christ to Wagner?' Carnegie began to think of writing a book himself.

Compared with a successful manufacturer of Pittsburgh, Mr.

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Gladstone was an amateur at economics. That living organism on the Monongahela was an object lesson in industrial evolution. When disputing with John Morley Andrew often discovered that his own illustrations were the more original. As for Matthew Arnold, was there not poetry enough in the American scene? Those lurid flames at Braddock playing upon naked torsos of sweating Vulcans, those eternal steel rails meeting in the infinity of endless American prairies, those polyglot crowds pouring through Ellis Island into the racial melting pot — were there not greater potentialities in American life than in the tame situations of sleepy England which inspired the verses of the Victorian poet? Andrew never lacked conceit in his own achievements, and now with the tremendous gusto and child-like vanity of a self-made man praising his creator he sat down to write a book meant to rival those who had been his monitors. The result is called *Triumphant Democracy* and is surely one of the strangest productions to which an intelligent man ever put his name.

Carnegie had locked himself in his study and placed himself under the spell of statistics, entirely forgetful of the passage of time. So great was his concentration over weeks and months that often it was evening when he thought it was only midday, and when the orgy was over his effort and his desire to surpass every prophet living and dead had so exhausted him that he had a serious illness. Never again, he promised himself, would he surrender to those opium dreams of figures.

The result of this passionate witchcraft is twenty-four chapters of monomania. The theme is the rise of the United States and the material progress, prodigious resources and future marvels of America flash before us, crescendo, fortissimo, prestissimo — the splendid cities, growing wealth of individual families, the ascending scale of manufacturing efficiency, high wages and higher standards of living, the absence of pauperism and crime. American prisons are wholesome, American bookselling is wonderful, her symphony orchestras surpass those of Europe,



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her picture galleries eclipse the Louvre and the Uffizi. So far, he thanks God, American literature is 'pure' having escaped the 'Frenchy' degeneration observable on the banks of the Seine. American agriculture, manufacture, mining and commerce are in a state of tremendous expansion, while American railroads are outstripping Europe every mile and every day. Like a brass band blaring a march of Sousa, Andrew Carnegie shouts the saga of America to her people, and even more insistently to incredulous Europeans. Each of the 500 pages of *Triumphant Democracy* shrieks with percentages, proportions, comparisons, and we soon realize that all these American marvels spring from one central and self-sufficient cause.

The moment Americans threw off effete monarchs and sterile aristocracies they discovered minerals, natural gas, railroads and wealth. Carnegie's apocalyptic message tells us that republicanism is a good thing because it brings progress and riches. He described materialism and named it democracy.

The moral grandeur of the American way of life finds no place in Carnegie's gospel. This is not the oversoul of Lincoln and Emerson and Whitman, but a cheap and vainglorious rationalization of the career of a successful immigrant named Andrew Carnegie who had suddenly discovered that the Scottish radicalism of his forebears could find prosperity which they never found at home.

One of his friends inquired: 'Where are the Shadows?' To which the ingenious author replied '*Triumphant Democracy* was written at high noon, and the sun overhead casts no shadows.'

High noon indeed. Andrew Carnegie's mental vision was afflicted with night-blindness. He saw no negro problem, no housing inadequacies, no strikes and lock-outs, lynching, Molly Maguires or economic exploitation, but what he saw had the perfect brilliance of an artificial photograph.

From this noonday elevation he proceeds to an even more revolutionary idea. George the Third and George Washington must shake hands, and once more the great schism of the centuries

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must be healed in a unification of America with Britain. Andrew Carnegie has the knack of mixing wisdom with his grotesque exaggerations, and this plea for Anglo-American unity has a more modern ring than his economic fantasia depicting America as she never was.

The United States and Britain, he says, are made up as to three-quarters of men of the same race, and an Anglo-American confederation would come to be regarded by other nations as a supreme tribunal of appeal. But to form this glorious alliance Great Britain must be ready to pay the price — a stiff one. She must give up her Royal Family, peerage, upper House, and abolish all privilege whatsoever. Then only could this union be completed and the century of separation between mother and child be finally at an end.

So the Carnegie theorem that democracy equals materialism leads us to the even greater paradox that democracy means Anglo-American union, yet half a century after he wrote the words such a notion does not startle us any more.

But alas, Carnegie's glorification of commerce was accepted. His panegyric of commercial progress obscured the genuine political idea. This plan for Anglo-American union was ignored until Mr. Winston Churchill presented the idea later in the form of a fraternal linkage between the countries. But when Carnegie's book appeared, if anyone thought of such a notion it was only to make a joke, as Mark Twain did in his *Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, supposed to have been directly inspired by reading Carnegie's book.

Carnegie's acquaintances found him highly amusing, especially those much criticized aristocrats for whom he had warm tenderness. It was rumoured that although no guest was supposed to smoke in the sacred precincts of his Scottish castle, this privilege was allowed to the Duke of Sutherland. One day King Edward the Seventh was visiting the place, and he saw a peculiar flag flapping on the main turret. In all his experience of heraldry the king had never seen such a composition, and on

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close examination it turned out to be the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes sewn together to make one flag. King Edward laughed. Another of Mr. Carnegie's freaks!

This star-spangled Scotsman had carried his idea of Anglo-American federation into the realm of symbolism, but that is where perhaps such a notion ought to come to birth.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FURNACES OF HELL

WHILE Carnegie philosophized half the year in Scotland and half in America, Henry Clay Frick kept that wonderful organization going smoothly at Pittsburgh. The troubles had been forgotten, and the Homestead works were running again under the persuasive control of a new superintendent, Charles Michael Schwab. He had been a pupil of the great Captain Bill Jones, but Schwab, though possessing all the Jones methods of leadership, was a more 'modern' type, more educated, more flexible, with no objection to being promoted a Carnegie partner.

The Bessemer convertors were replaced by the 'basic open hearth process' in which the steel was slowly cooked in rows of cauldrons as though it had been nothing but jam. There was no noise, hardly any excitement, yet the new steel was stronger than ever.

In the last ten years of the nineteenth century the greatest romance in the wonder house of Carnegie marvels occurred. Iron ore, which is as necessary for steel as flour is for bread, had originally been mined near Pittsburgh, but now a veritable mountain of iron had been discovered a thousand miles away in Michigan from where it could be transported easily by barge over the Great Lakes. A family of pioneers, the brothers Merritt, had searched among the Mesabi Hills of Northern Michigan prospecting for rocks of iron ore. But all the while the iron lay beneath their feet in the form of powder. As one of them said later: 'If we had gone mad and dug our heel into the soil we should have found the treasure.' Eventually they found it there, incredibly pure, waiting to be spooned out, with no mining, drilling or blasting, a potential gold mine in the form of iron powder.

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The Merritt brothers had dreams and fortitude but no capital, and eventually the mountain of iron passed into the hands of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, the oil magnate.

As he walked among the birch trees of his Scottish home Andrew Carnegie read glowing reports of these wonderful fields of iron, but he was sceptical. It was well known that iron was 'a ticklish witch' who had led astray many a capitalist and taken his money in return for her fleeting smile. Fortunately, as he himself said: 'I woke up in time.' He allowed himself to be persuaded.

The Carnegie Company leased the iron fields from Mr. Rockefeller, and thus possessed an inexhaustible supply of three raw materials — fuel, ore and human talent. With Frick coke, Mesabi iron and the brains of Charles Michael Schwab there was no danger now of being supplanted by a rival firm.

Andrew Carnegie was still the majority partner whose will controlled everything. His portrait by Frank O. Salisbury, a painter renowned for the fidelity of his likenesses, hung in the Board Room at Pittsburgh, revealing that Andrew the steel-makers knew, the hard and fanatical master, a sprite of devilish magic able to fuse iron ore by the very heat of his will. Yet all the time the other Carnegie meditated upon retiring permanently from competition.

He tried more than once to sell his business, but it had become too large and too expensive for anyone to buy. The monster he had created was now too powerful for anyone to handle except himself, and even Henry Clay Frick, whom he meant to be his successor, was a broken reed.

Frick indeed had tried to form a syndicate of friends to purchase the Carnegie Corporation, having first paid to Carnegie a million dollars as an option on the property. But Frick failed to bring it off, and without the least squeamishness Andrew declared that the option was forfeit. When someone admired his Scottish castle which was completed about this time at a cost of a million dollars, he remarked with malicious

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enjoyment: 'Just a nice little present from Frick.' A smart, ultra-business-like way to treat his colleague, one would think, but we forget that the steel trade was a haunt of primitive instincts.

Others in that gigantic combination were growing restive • besides himself — those older partners who had watched the tiny nucleus of Kloman's forge expand into the complex of Braddock, Homestead and Duquesne, with miles of railroad, docks and the wonderful deposit of Mesabi iron ore pouring in from the Minnesota hills. They were content with their life's work, and now they desired nothing but to cut up this rich cake of Carnegie capital and enjoy their shares.

But now some very curious facts about the constitution of the business became forced on their attention. Its earning power was colossal, but its capital was very small. Not only that. The company was a private partnership and not a public corporation. None of its shares could ever be bought or sold on the Stock Exchange. Each member of the Carnegie Company was personally engaged in the manufacture of steel. There were no deadheads, no bank directors, no 'guinea pigs' or retired Valetudinarians. Each part-owner had graduated from the steel works and was expert in some branch of manufacture. Henry Clay Frick had managed the coke ovens, Charles Michael Schwab had begun his life as a labourer under Captain Jones. Andrew Carnegie himself, the presiding genius, though he might be in Scotland, was always at the end of a telegraph wire.

How did these men who rose from the ranks have the money to become owners? When they joined the partnership they were credited with a fraction of the capital, say one-sixteenth of one per cent — small perhaps, but capable of producing enormous dividends: and when they retired or died the company purchased back this interest and kept it for some future favourite of fortune who deserved promotion.

There was another very obvious difficulty. Andrew Carnegie

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owned fifty-one per cent of the capital, and supposing he were to be bought out? How could any business survive an evisceration of so large a portion of its vitals? To fetch in outside owners would destroy at one stroke that magic freemasonry of the partners, and open their doors to stock-jobbers of all sorts. This dilemma haunted Andrew Carnegie and he insisted that the nominal value of the company must be kept at a low figure, so that a paradoxical situation developed such as can have occurred in few businesses before. The annual profits nearly equalled the capital. The Carnegie Company was an absolute opposite of a 'watered' enterprise. In fact it had become so dessicated and dehydrated as to be unmanageable when a large partner had to be bought out. Its real assets were enormous, but its book capital was tiny. It was a monstrous exaggeration of financial prudence.

The partners did not possess Andrew Carnegie's sentimentalism towards the concern which bore his name. If they were to sell out it mattered a great deal what the valuation of their holdings was, and these brother craftsmen of steel showed they were hard men of business.

Henry Clay Frick had displeased Andrew Carnegie. Their quarrels made it plain they were temperamentally incompatible, and Andrew seemed to be pushing his heir-apparent away from the throne in favour of his new bright favourite, Charles Michael Schwab. But Frick had been 'king of coke', and it was he who joined the sections of the Carnegie business together into one splendid whole. It was hardly to be expected that he would allow his share of his life's work to go at a bargain price. In the year 1900 the profits were sixty million dollars.

There came a few anxious months, a short tussle between the partners, and capitulation by the majority owner: but it was the strangest sort of capitulation. Andrew was forced, through pressure from his colleagues, to do what most corporation directors are only too anxious to do. He pumped into the capital

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of the company some of its own hoarded gold and multiplied its nominal value ten times.

Yet in spite of all these changes Andrew Carnegie still owned most of the capital. By yielding to the wishes of his fellow-partners his share had grown, at a stroke of the pen, from a mere bagatelle of forty million dollars to a nest egg of a hundred and twenty-five millions. But it was none the less a load on his back, a steel collar which he could not shake off. In a person of a less optimistic temperament this money might have been called a curse. But he was not yet beaten by it. Schemes were still buzzing in his head.

### 2

Often he had told the world that a millionaire who ended his life without having given away his money died disgraced, but now he was in the early sixties, and his colossal business worth a hundred and twenty-five million dollars did not cease expanding. For just at the moment when the desire to give up business became a passion he was compelled to go back to the *Nebelheim* of Pittsburgh where competition in a new and challenging form had entered the steel trade.

Junius Spencer Morgan, the great American banker of the city of London who had financed the building of Andrew Carnegie's first bridge away back in the 'sixties, had a son, Pierpont Morgan, who was now the greatest banker in Wall Street. At the beginning of the twentieth century this Jupiter, who had long been king of railroads, saw the chance of profits in steel. Before long he had acquired a collection of steel plants making out of raw steel all sorts of objects, from barbed wire to herd cattle, and smooth wire to bale cotton, up to the sinews of a skyscraper. To aid him he had a hard-working Methodist, Elbert H. Gary, who had become a power in steel manufacture. In this new threat to his supremacy Andrew smelled the blood of conflict. Then came a declaration of war against him.



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Some of Morgan's firms who had been good customers of the Carnegie Company for their raw material of steel ingots, now stopped orders and began to manufacture steel on their own.

Here was the greatest challenge of Carnegie's whole career, just at the moment when he longed to retire altogether. But the old militant Andrew was not dead, only sleeping. This was exactly the sort of opposition that sharpened all his faculties, and after thirty years' experience he knew the steel trade better than Morgan or Elbert H. Gary. Since Morgan's companies would not buy his raw steel, he would retaliate by entering their field and begin manufacturing those articles in which the Morgan Companies specialized.

All that summer bellicose cables flashed to Pittsburgh from Carnegie's home in Scotland. 'First all means to conciliate; failing that all means to crush,' was the advice he gave his partners: 'I like the revised edition of the Scriptures. If a man strikes you on one cheek turn the other, but if he strikes you on that, go for him,' and he fished for salmon, his mind full of warlike metaphors. He told his colleagues in Pittsburgh to spend freely upon technical improvements; salesmen must not worry about low prices, but only how to keep the mills full of orders. That ruthless competition which the older steel firms back in the 'seventies had called 'Carnegie cattle work on the border', was now experienced by Mr. Morgan and Mr. Elbert H. Gary in its most aggressive form.

On Lake Erie there was a small harbour, at Conneaut, through which the iron dust from Mesabi was unloaded from barges to Carnegie's private railroad which conveyed it two hundred miles to Pittsburgh. Here at Conneaut he planned to build an entirely new manufacturing plant for steel products which would produce many dollars a ton cheaper than Mr. Morgan's competing articles. All Mr. Morgan's scattered possessions, a miscellaneous group of steel plants, were less powerful than Carnegie's compact and concentrated force.

Mr. Elbert H. Gary reported to his chief that this threat of

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Carnegie competition was serious, and tried to persuade him to buy up the Carnegie firm outright. But Pierpont Morgan was cold: 'I don't believe I could raise the money,' growled the richest banker in the world.

But there were two Andrew Carnegies at work, each pulling him in the opposite direction, and while he breathed threats of aggression he used the technique of a spider drawing Morgan into his web. The intermediary between the two was Charles Michael Schwab who had learned from Captain Jones the art of tactful conciliation. What Morgan wanted was not warfare, but profitable planning, and eventually he asked Schwab to find out what price Mr. Carnegie would take for his company. Back came Carnegie's answer: four hundred million dollars, or nearly a hundred million pounds.

As soon as he had made this offer Andrew Carnegie regretted it. His soul was still warmed by the thought of those steel ovens and the red-hot bars moving through the mills. He was emotionally bound up in the strenuous life which went on among the flames of Braddock and Homestead.

Yet in that active lifetime his soul had broadened beyond steel manufacture, and he was still the eager student who had resolved to give up money making and school himself at Oxford. The years had slipped by without formal education, yet his spirit was fresh and his vision undimmed, and the conflict between the two halves of Andrew Carnegie was never so much a matter of life and death as at this moment. He might go on with business and eventually swallow up the entire steel trade of the United States. Or he might make the great renunciation.

Mr. Pierpont Morgan looked at Carnegie's figure of four hundred millions and decided it was a fair price. Carnegie's spiritual struggle was over when Morgan accepted it, and afterwards he admitted that if he had been asked a hundred million more he would have paid up cheerfully.

Mr. Carnegie shuffles out of his life's work with over three

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hundred millions as his personal share of those golden eggs which he had watched so carefully for thirty years in the Pittsburgh egg basket, and which were now converted into bonds bearing five per cent. Elbert H. Gary said that if Andrew Carnegie had remained in business he would have driven out every other steel manufacturer in the United States.

But now Andrew has exchanged a lifelong bondage for the exciting trade of a professional philanthropist. 'When I get down to new conditions,' he wrote, 'I shall become a wiser and more useful man, and besides live a dignified old age as long as life is granted, something few reach.'

But he is sixty-six, and if he does not wish to die a millionaire, disgraced with three hundred millions, he must make haste.

### 3

In the far north of the Scottish highlands a beautiful arm of the sea curves gracefully inland between heather-covered moorlands jewelled with lochs and salmon-haunted streams gliding down from the mountainside through forests of birch. In a very private corner of this remote paradise called Skibo, Andrew Carnegie had built his baronial keep made of granite with a structure of steel inside.

The landscape gave him a narcissus picture of his own personal qualities which he admired so intensely. 'The very streams are Scotch with a character all their own, portraying the stern features of the race, torn and twisted by endless ages of struggle with the rocks which impeded their passage, triumphantly clearing their pathway to the sea at last, by untiring persistent endeavour.'

To this magical atmosphere he retired with his golden bonds. Here he entertained his strangely assorted guests who were confronted each moment of the day with evidence of his tastes and his whims. A certain noted American educationist

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wrote home to his wife: 'The Castle is like a luxurious hotel. Some twenty or twenty-five persons sit down to every meal. The list of guests while I was there was, so far as I can recall it: Lord Morley (i.e. Mr. John Morley translated to the House of Lords, and an old goose for accepting the translation). There was everything to do that you can think of: hunting, fishing, golfing, sailing, swimming (in the most beautiful swimming pool I ever saw — the water tempered to about 70 degrees), driving, motoring, billiards, tennis, croquet; and there was perfect freedom to do as you pleased . . . It was an interesting experience, of which I shall have many things to tell you not suitable to be written down. My opinion of my host, in particular, had better be reserved for the modulations of the voice, rather than of the pen.' The writer's name was Woodrow Wilson, and no doubt Mrs. Wilson received in due course a confidential word picture of the steel millionaire.

Having been awakened by the strains of the piper marching in Carnegie tartan around the battlements, the guests at Skibo would breakfast to the sound of the pipe organ which Mr. Carnegie had pronounced to be more theologically reliable than the pulpit. Around them stained-glass windows portrayed the striking events in the life of the great steel manufacturer, self-canonized into an industrial saint. In the library they would marvel at a certain quotation prominently carved over the mantelpiece, their host's favourite sentiment about fools, bigots and slaves. The day passed in a round of sport organized by him. Guests discovered that they could best entertain their host by listening, as he argued and explained, reciting Scottish ballads and telling vernacular stories with a flash of his blue eyes and a smile on those rosy apple cheeks. Mr. Carnegie preferred to catch the largest fish, and could not bear to lose a game of golf, and when the schoolchildren had their sports it was he who fired the pistol for the races to start. With childlike absence of modesty, either true or false, he loved the centre of the stage. As Burton Hendrick, the prince of biographers says,

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describing those conversations at Skibo Castle: 'The aristocracy would be denounced in the face of a duke or an earl, and the presence of a bishop did not forestall a frank expression of opinion on theological points of difference. Members of Parliament would hear from his lips criticisms of the Parliamentary system and professors of Greek were entertained with dissertations on the absurdity of classical scholarship.'

Andrew Carnegie was over sixty years old when his only child, a little girl, was born, and as she grew up her father seemed to grow younger in her company, until the eager little boy of Dunfermline came back again. His daughter was called Margaret, after his own mother, and she brought out the qualities of the eternal child that he had never really ceased to be. For her, he would forget to worry about the disbursement of his wealth, and would become more interested in telling stories or singing a Scottish song. For Margaret, this little sprite of a man would practise the art of calling the fairies by a special whistle all his own, and commanding them to put into his pocket little gifts which the delighted child would find there. As the guests watched them playing together on the terrace, the bearded child of sixty and his absorbed little daughter, they knew these were the sweetest moments in that strange man's life. This favourite of his old age was brought up simply and sanely, and he was resolved that one danger should be kept away from her, the curse of very great wealth. For her happiness, he was more than ever resolved to get rid of his oppressive millions.

In the evenings at Skibo the host would arrange a lantern lecture upon the marvels of the New World, not the world of America but the astronomical universe with its millions of globes, stars and flashes of light. The great hall of the castle would be darkened, and on the lighted screen new planets swam into view. Many of them had been discovered by a gigantic telescope on Mount Wilson, California, the largest in the world, which Andrew Carnegie had paid for, and in

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the presence of those immensities a great peace came over him.

If it happened to be the Sabbath the guests learned that, while Mr. Carnegie disapproved of churches, he loved Scottish hymns, so that same company who had enjoyed the starry heavens would join in with the organ in singing his favourite numbers.

Next morning they would find their host had departed, though their own pleasures at Skibo went on. He had gone to receive the freedom of some Scottish burgh, or English city, and in the newspapers the following day they would read a sensational pronouncement, probably about greedy millionaires, with which Andrew had captured his audience as easily as in the Webster Debating Society at Pittsburgh forty years before. He loved these civic ceremonies, and boasted he was freeman of more towns even than Gladstone. Or perhaps his guests at Skibo would learn that he had been away at some university receiving his tenth honorary degree, and in the papers they would see his photograph obviously enjoying the experience of wearing a gown and hood and grasping his academic parchment as proudly as any graduate of twenty-one. No film star today, or in his day no statesman or popular preacher, ever had so many photographs or headlines.

Then he would return to Skibo as proud as Punch, and while wading in some deep salmon pool would think out ideas for giving away a few more millions. Hardly anyone seemed to have the really large conception for which he was seeking, and he had to fall back upon petty gifts for this and that, a few hundred thousand for a library here, a church organ somewhere, an endowment to the Scottish universities to help to educate boys who struggled for culture. At his side in the salmon pool some nervous guest who had earnest schemes of his own would be obliged to listen to the sad tale of Mr. Carnegie's perplexity over the slow disbursement of his millions, but at the end of the day the old man would relent



ANDREW CARNEGIE HOLDING HIS  
ACADEMIC PARCHMENT





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and hand out a trifle of a million dollars for which the guest had circumspectly waited during his stay at Skibo.

Andrew Carnegie, the shrewd organizer, was not happy about such casual and unplanned generosity. He expected large dividends to flow from his gifts, dividends in human enlightenment, and the utmost possible growth of the human faculties. He offered prizes for the best idea as to how to give away three hundred million. W. T. Stead gave up a whole issue of the *Review of Reviews* to Mr. Carnegie's dilemma, and contrasted his Christian generosity with the meanness of most millionaires. Mr. Gladstone and Cardinal Manning approved the Carnegie Gospel of wealth, and Stead himself quoted the words of John Wesley: 'If I leave behind me more than £10 over my debts, bear in mind I am a thief and a robber.'

But Carnegie was not less puzzled. The great conception eluded him. He disliked giving to privileged institutions, so that when Woodrow Wilson asked him for an endowment for Princeton University, Carnegie refused, but gave a lake, at which President Wilson remarked: 'We asked for bread, but you gave a stone.' The Lord loves a cheerful giver, but the world will criticize a bountiful millionaire. Andrew Carnegie's intensely personal self-culture led him to a definite conception of what gifts would be most fruitful, and he was nearing seventy before he could put his ideas into final shape.

### 4

Carnegie had written a lively biography of a fellow Scotsman, into whom as usual he projected his own mental traits — James Watt the inventor of the steam engine. One passage from this little book deserves reproduction, for it shows how ultra-sensitive, almost prophetic, Carnegie could be on the theme of any sort of power — whether physical or psychological.

He predicts that some future James Watt 'would discover other sources of power, or perchance succeed in utilizing the

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superabundant power known to exist in the heat of the sun, or discover the latent force employed by nature in animals which converts chemical energy directly into dynamic force and giving greater efficiency than any thermodynamic machine has today, or probably can ever have'.

How happy Andrew Carnegie would have been on the threshold of the atomic age. What a stimulus his own dynamic temperament would find in exploiting the energy of the nucleus and harnessing new and terrific vitalities so like those of his own heart. Of such an age he dreamed; to us the reality is terrible, and he would have recognized that the devil of atomic power can be conquered only by calling in the angels of culture.

Carnegie yearned to make his money work to raise the level of human understanding and widen the scope of our knowledge. Realizing so acutely the destructive power inside himself, and its fearful potentiality, he held on to the belief that man can improve himself if he only will pursue sweetness and light.

Research he believed to be a fundamental need of humanity. But not everyone in the world could make discoveries for themselves. Chosen and dedicated individuals must do it on mankind's behalf. His own commercial life had proved that what appeared madly romantic was the most plainly practical thing to do.

He founded and endowed with thirty million dollars the Carnegie Institution in Washington. It was a corporation of learned men, and he gave them a mandate to find out those brains capable of making discoveries, and to endow them with money for their work. The first results pleased even the eager donor of the millions who was much more prepared to expect miracles than those sober scientists at his institution.

A gigantic telescope was built on the slopes of Mount Wilson in California. Fifty thousand unexpected planets came into view, and the optimistic Carnegie began to hope he would live long enough to hear the fundamental secret of the universe revealed by that wonderful mechanism. An entirely non-

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magnetic ship was built and sent round the world to check magnetic variations of the nautical compass in different parts of the seas. It was named *Carnegie*, but unlike its creator possessed no steel in its composition, and it picked up those minute fluctuations which render the mariner's compass unsafe.

The Carnegie Institution pursued researches into lost civilizations in Central America. Another of the Carnegie scientists found the skeleton of a mammoth, of a species which had doubtless perished because its brain was insufficient for its vital responsibilities. The size and the decline of the creature amused and fascinated Andrew, and it was named after him *Diplodoccus Carnegie*. Each year these trustees for science turn over the income from Andrew Carnegie's endowment to plans for the encouragement of intellectual enterprise, and while he lived there was no one who enjoyed the reports of his corporation so much as he. Carnegie preferred that the researches should be abstract and fundamental, rather than devoted to some immediate practical end, and there is no doubt of the soundness of his judgment.

The present fashion in scientific research approves such large impersonal organizations, but we have yet to learn whether Andrew Carnegie's belief in the value of a Trust, was truth or only a dream. In spite of the body of knowledge accumulated by such research foundations in the last fifty years, it may be that in the end this method of acquiring control over nature is to result in stultifying human experience of the world. We do not know. But he had the faith, the energy and resources which had enabled this form of scientific venturing to be taken to the utmost limit of what it is capable of accomplishing.

Slowly during the first ten years of the twentieth century Carnegie eased the load of wealth from off his own shoulders.

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He believed more in the aristocracy of culture than in privileges for his own family, and he showed common sense by alienating practically his entire fortune, leaving to his widow only a few of those hundred of millions which had been hatched out of the Pittsburgh egg basket.

One curious point has to be made on the subject of his largesse. Andrew Carnegie was in the end frankly puzzled by his wealth. His despairing search for uses to which it might be put reveals a strange situation for such a practical man who had never been at a loss in steel manufacture. Libraries and organs — these were easy gifts because they symbolized his own personal tastes, but outside the range of what he had felt deeply in his own heart Carnegie was a child-man. He fell back upon metaphysical speculation. He wanted to force money to produce sweetness and light, but he did not know the way. He begged others to help him out with ideas. He faltered, he worried over his gigantic task, and for the first time in his life this ingenious spirit, which had never failed in any achievement, suddenly felt a lapse in his creative powers.

We may draw a comparison, solely from the point of view of creativeness, between Andrew Carnegie and the other millionaire described in this book, the first Viscount Leverhulme. Carnegie's talent for money making fell short when it came to distribution; but Leverhulme would cheerfully have taken on the wise spending of all the money that existed in the world. His resourcefulness would never have required any prize competitions to give him ideas.

Andrew Carnegie had to give in his own way, and when his vision grew dim he invented for himself the paradoxical role of the spendthrift millionaire, thereby hiding the secret fear that in the end his money had mastered him. The clank of the metal at Pittsburgh, though transmuted into golden chords, was still harsh music in his soul.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LAST INFIRMITY

THE first sixty years of Carnegie's life represent his militant struggle to gain victory over his own competitive nature, and to smelt that coarse ore of his being into faculties as fine as steel. Of course, he did not completely succeed: no human being ever does. The utmost he achieved was a rough balance between opposing impulses. He was always demanding peace, peace, while the alternative Carnegie flashed a sharp sword, and now, towards the end of his full life, he transfers the conflict away from his own mind to the sphere of international politics.

Even before 1914, when the first World War came as a surprise to a comfortable generation, there was a passionate minority who foresaw its dangers and tried sincerely to remove its causes. Long before the League of Nations there were peace societies, peace conventions and organizations to promote arbitration. Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, offered his prizes annually for the best idea for world peace. For similar reasons of psychology Andrew Carnegie, who had profited out of the armour plating and steel guns of the American Navy, felt an urgent desire that war should for ever cease. Among these organized enthusiasts for concord Carnegie now became a never-silent body of one. In this there was no shallow repentance for the money which he had made out of weapons of war which formed only a sideline at Pittsburgh. The Carnegie firm did not, like the Krupps, Zaharoffs and Nordenfeldts, exist chiefly by the traffic in arms.

To find Carnegie's personal peace motive we must search more deeply. He needed peace because of the stresses of his mind, and he would have been interested in international concord even though his business had not been in steel. His peace idea was the desire of an innately aggressive man.

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The geographical centre of peace propaganda was in the small land of Holland where, three hundred years before, Hugo Grotius had founded the science of International Law, and now a tribunal was to be established for judging disputes between countries. The arbitrating body possessed no permanent headquarters and Carnegie was persuaded to promise money to house it. So the renowned Peace Palace was created in the Dutch capital.

The actual building did not please him. It was designed after the tradition of a Flanders Town Hall, with a steep-pitched roof and a tower of bells, the whole thing much too ornate to satisfy his Scottish desire for simplicity. Carnegie paid the bill, but he was not satisfied merely to give money. His longing was to make a great individual gesture, and he had the true American faith in negotiation. If only European states would get together around a table, surely something would come of it. Like Woodrow Wilson, he sadly underestimated the complexity of European entanglements.

### 2

A most grandiose idea came into his head, that of making a personal appeal to the emperor of Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm the Second, on whose lips the word peace was heard very frequently.

After two wars in which Germany played the aggressor we may be startled at this naive idea. To consult a German ruler about peace appears like inviting the lion to set an example of vegetarianism. But before 1914 the emperor was greatly admired as the new species of executive monarch who had shaken off the tradition of kingly mediocrity. His superficial brilliance and talent for publicity caused the twentieth century to take him seriously. Carnegie was not the only man to be captivated by this restless egotist so ready to reform the world, yet far from being the real master of his own nation.

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On being told that the Kaiser had read his speeches and expressed a wish to meet him, Carnegie pretended indifference but was greatly flattered. He allowed the invitation to be repeated several times, and meanwhile went on maturing his private peace scheme.

Everything on both shores of the Atlantic seemed to Carnegie propitious for his audacious plan which was this: the American President must cross to Europe for a peace talk with emperor Wilhelm. We may smile at the thought of a private citizen attempting to interfere in the mysteries of diplomacy, but that was Carnegie's way, the American way. He was restrained by no inhibitions.

Thirty years later it does not seem to us so very revolutionary that heads of states should meet to regulate the world: but in 1906 the idea was against every tradition of good government and proper procedure. Publicity and personality were subordinate to the cautious feeler, the *démarche* and the *démenti*. Woodrow Wilson's European odyssey was twelve years away in the future, and it was unthinkable that an American President should leave his country during his term of office. Besides, Europe had enjoyed peace so long, and war belonged to by-gone ages. Only the sleepless aggressive natures like Andrew Carnegie in each country perceived the risks.

When he realized there was no chance of bringing President Roosevelt and the Kaiser face to face, Carnegie decided to undertake this peace mission on his own.

He was never abashed when talking to crowned heads. An American citizen may speak to anyone. Carnegie the eternal child behaved like a village boy in a story of Hans Andersen, and before setting out on his glorious adventure the histrionic Laird of Skibo Castle prepares carefully what he means to say. Not only that. He must needs write out in advance what the emperor is supposed to answer, and putting his own secret thoughts into a flamboyant speech meant to be spoken by the man he hopes to persuade, he sends it in advance to the Ameri-

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can Ambassador in Berlin, trusting that the emperor will understand the splendid role which Carnegie has cast for him and will learn off by heart those stirring lines.

In this pseudo-Shakespearian rhodomontade which he composed, Carnegie invents an imaginary peacemaker who despises military glory, and is anxious 'to remove earth's foulest stain, the killing of men by men. Thank God', says this stage emperor in Carnegie's speech, 'my hands are as yet guiltless of human blood. What part then can I play, worthy of my power and ambition? It must be, it shall be, in the direction of peace on earth . . . I am the only man who can bring peace on earth. Can it be that God has destined me to work his glory and so benefit the world?' So speaks the story-book emperor, and we see a little gnomish figure speaking sentiments picked up from those radical weavers in Dunfermline sixty years before, and now dressing himself up in an emperor's uniform to give a lesson how a ruler ought to behave.

William the Second may have laughed heartily upon reading this Faustian and fustian appeal to his better nature; or he may have been irritated by American impudence. More likely, Carnegie's effusion never reached his eye. The emperor was an even greater egotist than Andrew himself, and we have no evidence that he was ready to make the slightest practical effort to secure peace. So Carnegie travelled to Germany in the same spirit as twenty-five years later other distinguished persons made a similar journey, convinced of the pacific intentions of Adolf Hitler.

On the deck of the yacht, where only seven years later the news of the murder of Sarajevo was to reach imperial ears, the unconventional little man was waiting when the Kaiser appeared unexpectedly, and scorning etiquette Carnegie took the initiative. Without waiting to be presented he addressed the emperor as readily as he might have done a new boss at Homestead. 'This has happened just as I could have wished, with no ceremony, and the man of destiny dropped from the



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clouds. Your majesty, I have travelled two nights to accept your generous invitation, and never did so before to meet a crowned head.' His blue eyes sparkled with their childlike gift of pleasing.

'Yes — I have read your books. You do not like kings,' replied the Kaiser, with practised tact, but he failed to recover the lead he had lost in this strange conversation.

'No, I do not like kings, but I like a man behind a king when I find him,' and in a moment, with immense self-possession, he was relating that Dunfermline was the birth-place of King Robert the Bruce, and issuing a hearty invitation for the Kaiser to come to Scotland and be shown over the abbey.

'The Scotch are much quicker and cleverer than the Germans,' quoth the Kaiser, trying vainly to stem this spate of Caledonian folk-lore.

'Your majesty, where anything Scotch is concerned, I must decline to accept you as an impartial judge.' Impervious to irony on the subject of Scotland, Carnegie was well on his prepared course, inviting the emperor to meet the American President. When reminded that the German people needed their ruler at home, Carnegie replied with his well-worn story of how once on leaving Pittsburgh he had expressed his own thankfulness to be rid of business worries, and Captain Bill Jones had answered: 'Oh Lord, Andy, think of the relief it is to us.' Addressing the all-highest emperor as man to man Carnegie added: 'It might be the same with your people, your majesty.'

The admirals and generals standing around must have gasped. What would this outrageous American say next? But like many another unwilling sharer of Carnegie's drolleries the emperor had to yield to his persistence. When the hint of a meeting with the President came up once again he decided to treat this little man as a joke.

'You wish to drive us together. Well, if you make Roosevelt first horse, I shall follow.'

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'Oh, no. I understand horse flesh better than to attempt to drive such gay colts tandem. I must yoke you both in the shafts neck and neck, so I can hold you in.' Carnegie pressed his point.

If by some revolution of status the German could have been transported to Pittsburgh as an immigrant steel worker, Carnegie would have humoured him as he had done with that German blacksmith, Andrew Kloman. But between them was the gulf of tradition. The Kaiser had no glimmering of insight into the seriousness behind Carnegie's puerility; and Carnegie himself had no real understanding of the showy figure wearing medals, with a withered hand on his ineffectual sword. Each was ostentatiously misleading the other. At heart, perhaps this pair of egotists had mutual comprehension of the other's love of display. Yet we cannot doubt that Andrew Carnegie's love of peace was sincere and genuine.

### 3

The German visit came to nothing. President Theodore Roosevelt never visited Europe as President, and left the White House without having been able to achieve much in the cause of peace.

It was in 1912, when Woodrow Wilson was elected President and destiny had completed her plans for the European War, that Carnegie met the German emperor a second time on a deputation of congratulation on twenty-five years of a peaceful reign. The Kaiser greeted Carnegie with outstretched hand and, knowing his man, said with theatrical assertiveness that deceived not only Carnegie but the entire world: 'Twenty-five years of peace and we hope for many more.'

Carnegie responded emotionally: 'In this noblest of missions, you are our chief ally.' His conversion of William the Second into a pious Quaker was complete.

What actors they both were! Carnegie could feel himself

## THE LAST INFIRMITY

into a role, his whole being thrilled with delicious make-believe.

Even after the first World War began Carnegie, the manufacturer of steel guns, confidently predicted that battleships would never be used again. He announced that the Kaiser was guiltless of desire for war but merely the tool of designing soldiers. The people of Dunfermline greeted this opinion with a shower of stones directed at the bronze statue of Andrew Carnegie in the centre of their town. The eager hero worshipper of peace protagonists was in America and he had found a new object for his admiration. 'Watch President Woodrow Wilson,' he wrote, 'nothing is impossible to genius. He has Scotch blood in his veins.'

The outbreak of the first World War was too much for Andrew's combative nature, and he became suddenly an old man. It was a bitter disappointment beyond understanding, that the German Kaiser should not desire to fulfil that splendid role of the other Carnegie, and be the peacemaker among the nations. Memories of Andrew's own aggressive ways in the steel trade were forgotten, but this war was real. What had been impossible in Pittsburgh seemed now so easy in Europe, and he never saw the connection between Carnegie armour plate rolled at Homestead and the tragic trial of strength now opening in Belgium and destined to be unfinished even thirty years later, but gradually he recovered his optimism, and gave his hero worship to Woodrow Wilson. And with a final flash of inspiration, Carnegie was one of the first men in the world to use the phrase 'A League of Nations'.

In spite of the work of the Carnegie Peace Foundation which he endowed, we have not yet discovered the formula of peace. It lies more in ethics and psychology rather than in economics, and perhaps after all Andrew Carnegie's moral transformation from aggression into enlightenment is a real and valid achievement, and not merely a feat of self-deception. Perhaps there is something valuable in his naive discovery of the way in which

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hatred may be transmuted into reconciliation. An old and sacred transformation, one would think, yet apparently one which each generation has to achieve for itself. That the world must still undergo, and one day mankind will have so successfully wrestled with the idea of physical conflict that war shall be defeated and buried among dead ideas. The secret may turn out to be simpler than we think.

## CHAPTER IX

### PEACE AND GOODWILL TO ALL

TIME and age were gaining on him, and the Niebelung hoard of millions was heavy still. The past was forgotten, even the dark shadow of Homestead, and Carnegie the ironmaster and bond salesman had been transformed into Andrew the great philanthropist. Yet life, or rather death, was catching up with the speed of his generosity, and he must make haste.

Each Fall he would return to America and at an old-fashioned rolltop desk in a small room off his New York library he would plan new philanthropies. In front of him was a pair of crossed flags, the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes; on the wall a composite photograph of the Carnegie veterans and the portrait of Captain Bill Jones, his greatest discovery. Andrew Carnegie's optimism about the future had come back. Surely he could conquer the spirit of war as he had mastered steel.

Libraries were still his most constant, and to himself, the most satisfying of his gifts, but church organs had been favourite benefaction ever since he had felt the tears running down his cheeks at the great swelling diapason in the Swedeborgian church at Allegheny. Heartfelt were his words: 'You can believe more of what the organ tells you than what you hear from the pulpit.' How wonderful then, to place in as many churches as possible the means of producing that concord of soul which came from the whispering organ pipes, and before he died eight thousand congregations were hearing the music he believed an infallible guide to truth. But Andrew Carnegie never went to church himself.

He had other ways of reaching spiritual experience. Captain Bill Jones, not meaning flattery, had once remarked: 'Andrew

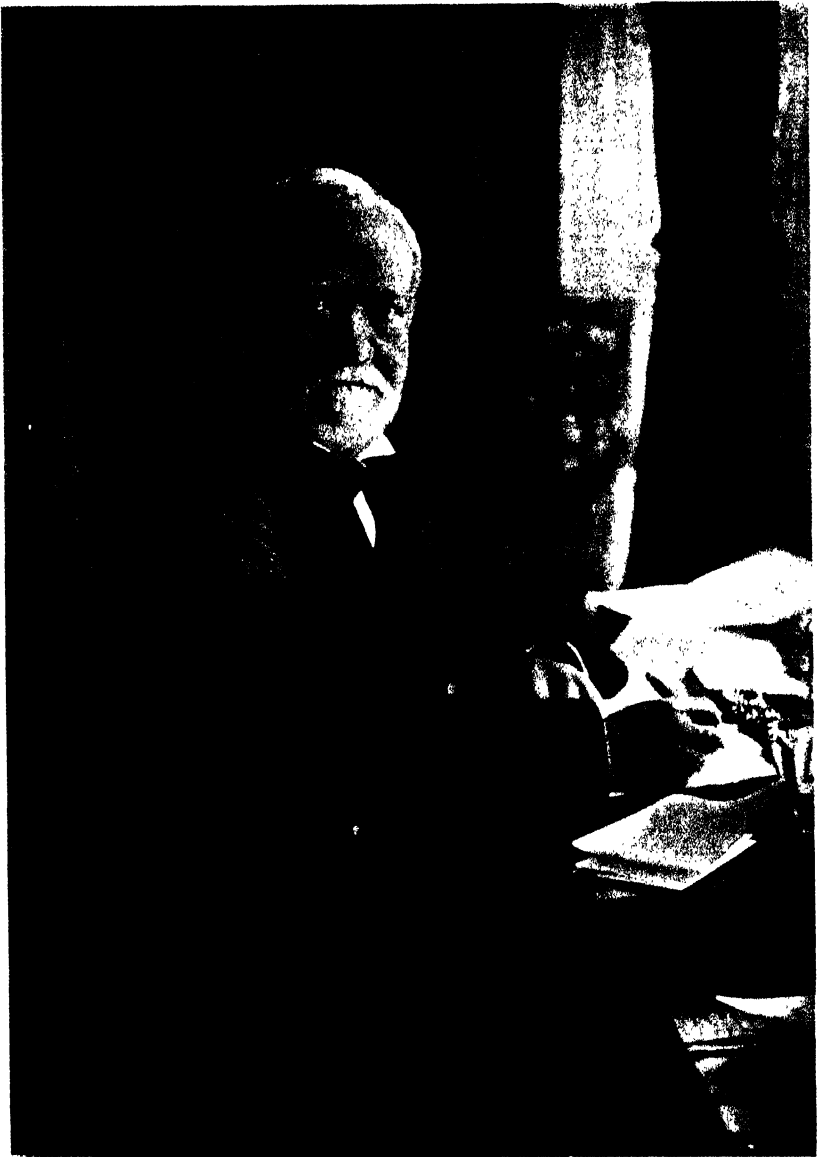
## ANDREW CARNEGIE

has two rows of teeth and holes punched for more.' Yet the same insatiable appetite was applied to every sort of human experience. Andrew never ceased to use his teeth upon the raw material of life itself.

One day he read the story of a coalmine manager who at a pit explosion had rushed into danger and saved several lives, but only at the cost of his own. Such heroism is commonplace in coalmines, but this particular instance of reckless courage thrilled Andrew. It was the kind of act he would have liked to do himself. He lived each moment, from the sharp enjoyment of danger, to the imaginary applause that followed success, and he felt he must do something practical to recognize such valour. The result was the Carnegie Hero Fund, which provides medals and pensions for exceptional acts of bravery in civilian life, and in a sense each of those awards went to himself, and his own share in the pleasure conveyed by the gift was greater than his conceit in his merits as the giver. Possession of millions was small satisfaction to him once he had been through the stress of achieving them. 'Any fair Committee sitting on my case,' he said, 'would take away from me more than half the blessings already bestowed,' and he never claimed, as John D. Rockefeller did, that God gave him his money.

Carnegie never apologized for his own wealth, and remained the individualist, convinced of his biological role. 'The bees of the hive,' he said, 'do not destroy the honey-making bees, but the drones. It would be a great mistake for the community to shoot the millionaires, for they are the bees that make the most honey, and contribute most to the hive after they have gorged themselves full.'

He held firm to his belief that fortunes should be dissipated within a generation and not handed over to family heirs, but since the millions did not melt away fast enough he had to make provision for part of his responsibility, and haunted more than ever by time and dissolution, the ageing man now formed a super-trust, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and



ANDREW CARNEGIE THE PHILANTHROPIST





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endowed it with twenty-five millions. Since he had no belief in the infallibility of his own and other people's wisdom, he gave his trustees power to change the objects of the trust if, in the future, they thought it desirable. He tried to endow this trust with a soul, for he dreaded the impersonality of most philanthropies. 'An endowed institution is liable to become the prey of a cheque. The public ceases to take an interest in it, or rather, never acquires an interest in it.'

While he lived the trust was his own will under another name, and its affairs were conducted by an ideal executive committee consisting of three persons, Andrew Carnegie and his two secretaries.

At Pittsburgh the partners had met for lunch each Tuesday, and their talk was of the price of coke, new blooming mills for finishing steel bars, and the most ruthless pursuit of cheapness in which men's lives counted for nothing.

Carnegie loved to think of these conclaves managing his business. He chuckled in describing those glorious occasions when the partners met together: 'We never have any differences,' he said, 'we are always unanimous.' To which the sardonic Captain Bill Jones had replied: 'God help the one who is not unanimous.'

How different was that committee of steel men from the sitting of three which now met in Mr. Carnegie's library to administer the cultural purposes of the Carnegie Foundation. Solemnly do the chairman and small executive committee go about their agenda. Question before the meeting: twenty-five thousand for a library. Very desirable object. Particulars all in order. The chairman moves approval, and looks at the two secretaries: Any opposition? No. Proposition carried unanimously.

Still, at the age of 75, Andrew Carnegie arranges to have around him men who have the sense to be unanimous.

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### 2

It is easy for those not millionaires to condemn great wealth, but how can we explain the abnormal hunger for money which possessed Andrew Carnegie's youth, and how can we interpret its later transformation? We can dismiss any idea of childhood poverty, because that, in the real sense, he never knew. Carnegie's desire for wealth was not the ordinary compensation for hungry beginnings.

What has heredity to say on this point? Andrew was Margaret's eldest son, and for the first eight years of his life her only child, enjoying her exclusive devotion. But the indomitable little Scotswoman was not only tender, she was tough, and she was possessive. Around the magic of her name centred his struggles. While she was alive he did not marry, and when his own child was born he named her Margaret. His childish fear of dying was founded on the thought of leaving his mother. It was she who taught him to count the pennies, to be thrifty, canny and cautious, and we may take it that this abnormal love for money making was the childlike tribute of his mother love returned. What was her parsimony became his romance. Likewise, the fondness of this aggressive man for giving away his money was a sort of maternal gesture to the world from the feminine nature he had inherited from her.

Mother love and the maternal desire to be surrounded by an adoring family of associates were the primary motives. Imagine those instincts intensified thousands of degrees hotter than the average, place them in the unique productivity of Pittsburgh, translate love into power, and power into steel, and you have the formula for Andrew Carnegie.

Yet alongside this aggressive love thirst there lies the gentler and more tender side of love, the softer emotions of Carnegie, his desire for peace, his fondness for organ music and books; and as the aggressive mother love is generalized into commercial competition, so the tender mother love is universalized. Andrew

## PEACE AND GOODWILL TO ALL

loved his fellow men and longed to give them what he desired for himself, culture, music and peace.

The partnership of the steel men at Pittsburgh reproduced a family for Andrew to govern. Bill Jones and Charles Michael Schwab were younger sons, there to be patronized, or reprovved whenever the chief partner thought it was for their good. When Henry Clay Frick became the naughty boy who revolted he was expelled from the close-knit business family, and indeed it was Andrew's own mother who first sounded at the dinner party the warning about this man.

Andrew Carnegie is often compared with his great contemporary, the millionaire of oil, John D. Rockefeller, but in popular estimation their two characters have been reversed. Carnegie has been made virtuous, while Rockefeller came to personify commercial devilry. On one occasion the two of them happened to be crossing the Atlantic by the same steamer, and the contrast in the way the two men went on board was very expressive. Carnegie sprang up the gangway with a number of friends, chatted with the newspapermen about his opinions, philosophy and future plans, and next morning two nations read the latest which the spendthrift millionaire wished known about himself. But Mr. Rockefeller was already on board, waiting quietly in his cabin under an assumed name, so deep was his sense of his own unpopularity.

Yet his business methods were no more ruthless than those of Carnegie. In commerce they both followed the ethics of their time, and Carnegie deserved most of the abuse showered on Rockefeller, but he had made for himself a halo and wore it so constantly in public that the mass mind had caught the glitter.

John D. Rockefeller gave away seven hundred million dollars to philanthropies connected with education and public health, and the world received it grudgingly. But Carnegie's three hundred million made him beloved among millionaires. The real difference lies in the degree of heat in the two men. Rockefeller was cold, quiet and reserved, but in Andrew all the world

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recognized itself on a large scale, human, changeable and fallible, and liked him the better for it.

His nature comes out in his later pictures. The face belongs to that round-headed stock of early Scotland which might have sprung from a race of Kobolds. The high cheekbones, fleshy nose and eyes that go back into slits, the mouth that enlarges to a predatory gape. The wrinkled, sensitive hands make lively gestures, the vibrating voice which Sir Henry Irving said was good enough for a tragedian, express the ageless and cunning peasant. In that kindly yet ruthless face, there is never hopelessness, nor the chaotic recesses of despair. Contrast it with the humourless mask of John D. Rockefeller, whom John Singer Sargent the painter likened to Saint Francis of Assisi. No one ever called Andrew Carnegie a saint. His pretensions in that direction were all of his own manufacture.

## CHAPTER X

### NIGHT FALLS ON THE GODS OF STEEL

WHEN Andrew Carnegie retired from steel, the lesser gods laboured on in Pittsburgh, now as creatures of Mr. Morgan's new billion dollar corporation, but there were dark days ahead. Steel which had been so often a fairy prince, became pauper once again and profits fell. Tears were seen on Morgan's face at the prospect of having to pass the annual dividend, while in his Scottish retreat Carnegie, whose philanthropies now depended solely on those five per cent gold bonds, feared he might have to return to business to protect his fortune. Never, it seemed, was he to find repose.

The directors of Morgan's billion dollar corporation were merchant adventurers rather than makers of steel. Their fee for attending a board meeting was a gold five dollar coin, and when some members were not present, those who sat round the table would solemnly gamble for the gold pieces forfeit by their absent colleagues. That was the sort of men they were, and now honoured among them was the man Carnegie had eliminated from Pittsburgh, Henry Clay Frick. He was too big to be kept out of the largest steel-producing concern in the world, but he was no longer the king of coke. He had abdicated that throne, and now his passion in life was to sit silently for hours among the masterpieces gathered in his palace on Fifth Avenue, New York.

There were portraits by Titian and Reynolds, a Cardinal by El Greco, a Velasquez, Philip the Fourth of Spain in a superb scarlet jacket, and several Rembrandts. Henry Clay Frick had chosen them all, and they solaced him for a lifetime's effort in the dirt of the coke fields and steel foundries, and for his expulsion by Carnegie. Beyond all other painters,

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indeed surpassing all other men who had ever lived, there was one whom the inscrutable Frick worshipped. This was Rembrandt, and Frick said that if he could have been allowed to choose one single gift in life he would have chosen to possess the Dutch painter's talent.

Occasionally this lofty side of Frick would mix incongruously with his commercial nature. Once, when searching for a metaphor to illustrate the merits of railroad stock as a repository for an American investor's money, he remarked solemnly: 'Railroads are the Rembrandts of investment.' Apart from his genuine love of art Henry Clay Frick was a characteristic industrial Bourbon.

In 1919 when the 'irreconcilables' who were bent on destroying Woodrow Wilson needed money they came to Frick and asked his help. Sententiously, he inquired whether the League of Nations did not represent a surrender of American independence, and when the answer given him was affirmative he said: 'Then I am against it. I don't see how any business man could fail to be.' Thereafter the 'irreconcilables' had no need to worry about their war chest.

The old gods of steel were passing away to Valhalla, but Andrew Carnegie was still in his heaven on earth. Brother Tom had long disappeared from the Pittsburgh scene, Captain Bill Jones had been killed by an accident in one of the furnaces at Braddock, but his portrait hung above Andrew's desk. Charles Michael Schwab, the favourite son, had built himself a château on Riverside Drive, New York, but his exuberance was too volatile for Mr. Morgan, and Schwab had left the billion dollar combine to restart steel making on his own. And now the great Pierpont Morgan himself was no more than a memory. His big red nose would be seen no longer in his glass office, and his gruff voice would not be heard any more singing the hymns in the little church near Wall Street.

The heroic days were past, steel manufacture had become all business and little romance. Elbert H. Gary, the Methodist

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lawyer, was now its king. He put an end to the gambling for gold pieces, and his steady hand guided the corporation back to prosperity.

Of all the treasure manufactured in Nebelheim, the first fruits went still to those cultural enterprises Andrew Carnegie founded — libraries, trusts and foundations, the non-magnetic ship, the church organs, the prodigious astronomical telescope and the old universities of Scotland.

### 2

The little boy muttering his psalm as he goes to school to the tolling of the abbey bell had often glanced wistfully into that paradise known as Pittencrieff Glen, where he could see just the top of the magic ruin of King Malcolm's tower. Within a stone's throw from his father's house, those unknown precincts were yet as forbidden to Andrew as the inside of Tibet, because of the guardian devil who kept out everyone of Morrison blood. Now the longing of early childhood and his bitter resentment of old Pittencrieff was to be assuaged.

He buys from the successor of that jealous old man the entire property including King Malcolm's tower. By that act he himself, Andrew Carnegie, has become Laird of Pittencrieff and master of that splendid estate in the kingdom of romance. Now he has power to keep out as he wills all the little boys of the future who may dream Scottish history on the way to school. Andrew rubs his eyes and wakens to reality. What is he thinking of?

He is old, and he has not much longer to live inside the Glen. Of course he will not keep out anyone who wishes to go and walk there. He will bring them all inside, he will make that place free and open for ever, as old Uncle Morrison the radical had tried to do.

Today the Pittencrieff Glen is a public park for the people of Dunfermline, and the old linen town is the headquarters of one

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other Carnegie enterprise, for the advancement of learning and culture. Andrew Carnegie had always been so proud of his native place. That peculiar conceit had been the source of his self-confidence. Years after he made his fortune in steel he discovered that the man who gave to the infant settlement of Pittsburgh its name was actually born in that manor house in the centre of Pittencrieff Glen, and so the thread of destiny which lead him to the steel city had now brought him back to the home which he shared with the creator of Pittsburgh.

The last event in those strenuous eighty-four years was the marriage of his little girl Margaret, named after the tough old lady who used to tell him the tolling of the abbey bell meant God was not angry but sorry for his sins. In childhood years that low sweet whisper had become his better self promising to make amends. He had tried to atone for his share of human badness, and he died with unquenchable optimism, believing that 'All is well since all grows better'.



PART FOUR

WILLIAM HESKETH LEVER

*First Baron Leverhulme of Bolton-le-Moors in the County of Lancashire, and  
first Viscount Leverhulme of the Western Isles in the Counties of Inverness-shire  
and Ross and Cromarty*

Such a City exists only in the ideal, and is to be found nowhere on earth. But there is a plan of it in Heaven, and he who wishes may become a citizen thereof. And whether there is such a place on earth or ever will be, does not matter. He who has once understood its design will belong to that City and to none other.

PLATO

# WILLIAM HESKETH LEVER

(1851-1925)

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## CHAPTER I

### A MISPLACED ELIZABETHAN

HE was the sort of man who, if shipwrecked, would be likely to land upon an island with his hands full of edible seaweed. The luck of this lucky man was really innate resourcefulness that is properly an almost perfect self-adaptation to environment. All through his life this quality never failed Lever. Only in one respect has his good fortune lapsed, and that is in his reputation since his death. His name survives as that of a prodigiously successful soap maker, and the world thinks that is all he was. Yet his business was the least part of his greatness. His mental qualities are self-sufficient to make him one of the most interesting men of the century, but they have become submerged in his works — Port Sunlight, Lever Brothers Limited, Art Galleries — and the true personality of the creator has been lost. William Hesketh Lever is much larger than his prestige, just as the true Carnegie is smaller.

Lever was born in the age of Victoria, but what he needed for fullest development was the age of Queen Elizabeth. In that luxuriant time, when the merchant adventurers were creating modern England, Lever would certainly have attained a different sort of immortality. His daring would have been accepted without distortions. His spirit would have soared in the lyric poetry of adventure, perhaps giving an idea to William Shakespeare, and enjoying the appreciative patronage of the Queen. It is true his career might have ended under the headsman's axe in the Tower of London, and it would have been a life of startling contrast in light and shadow. His architectural creations, houses, gardens, towns, would have come into English history books, and his exploring genius would certainly have given the name of Lever to a substantial

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portion of the overseas commonwealth. Cabot, Hakluyt, Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh and all those adventurous wool merchants who planted oak trees and endowed colleges and who now lie beneath their carved effigies in the parish churches of England, the men who roved the seas, built up Parliament, those are Lever's real contemporaries.

But his fate was to live not in the age of Shakespeare, but in the age of Charles Dickens, and to be, not the admired performer of dazzling achievements, but a 'type', an aberration from the conventional norm and accepted for gifts which he shared with others rather than for his own singular qualities. Whenever we draw near the essential spirit of Lever we are hampered by the smell of soap. Even more subtle and overpowering, something that seems to go with cleanliness, is his conformity to the manners of his time which makes him seem the typical Victorian manufacturer, instead of the Elizabethan adventurer he was intended to be.

Lever lived on into the time when business leaders were no longer statesmen, but 'executives', and although he himself could always magnetize shareholders like a conjurer entertaining an audience of boys, he could not entirely escape the new theory that a business man was the servant of capitalism rather than the creator of new values. The great individualist Lever wore the conventional clothes of a director of companies, and people trusted him blindly with their money and ignored the visionary dreamer who was always gambling upon the future with a prophetic certainty that makes the dangerous paths of his commercial life appear so easy.

Underneath these superficial excellences of this solid business man, there runs the perpetual conflict of personality that makes him, in the same sense as Woodrow Wilson and Andrew Carnegie, a Man of Stress.

## CHAPTER II

### SOAP THE LODESTAR

AT the age of twenty-one William Hesketh Lever was a flourishing 'outside man', a commercial traveller for his father's wholesale grocery business in the bare industrial district around the town of Bolton, Lancashire. He has recently married a wife, with whom he had played hide-and-seek fifteen years before in Miss Aspinwall's dame school, and has settled down comfortably in a house of his own. Lever never had to struggle for his living, suffered even less than the average share of childhood unhappiness. The most successful lives come out of a tranquil balance struck in childhood between stress and satisfaction. A happy childhood, like a happy country, has no history. The secret of Lever's persistent, unflinching energy throughout life lies in this.

With broad shoulders and an aggressive quiff of hair, young Mr. Lever drives a handsome turn-out from one Lancashire village to another, and his spanking grey horse knows when to pull up at every shop selling butter, cheese, eggs and soap, while the whiskered representative, wearing a buttonhole, books his orders and collects his cash for what was bought last week. His goods are easy to sell because they are of rather a special quality. The firm has an agent at the village markets in Ireland who buys an excellent kind of butter, and superior eggs neatly graded into sizes. There are bars of brown soap, chopped off in lengths to the customer's requirements but remarkably irritating to the skin. Mr. Lever chats with his customers, exchanges humorous stories in broad Lancashire, and gets to know their wants and ideas — what today would be called their 'Psychology'. His blue eyes are wide open. Noticing that one rural client shambles into his store at eleven a.m. wearing carpet

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slippers, he decided that such a man cannot be given long credit for he will probably lose his business. Well does he understand the Lancashire people, their uncouth independence, racing dogs, their brass bands, love of football and cockfighting, and he learns that simple direct appeal which can persuade them to buy what Mr. Lever's firm has to sell. After a few years he has taken on more customers than the warehouse in Bolton can really handle, and he confronts his father with that situation familiar in every modest business: shall it expand and become a large business? For it cannot stand where it is. Mr. Lever senior has grave doubts. But his son gets his way, a branch warehouse is opened and he is given charge. That particular pattern of sudden opportunity and sudden expansion appears frequently throughout his life.

Old Mr. Lever was deeply disquieted. He was a diligent nonconformist who believed that his business had been given him to make an honest living for his family, but no more. His main thought was of security, for the fact was he had in all eight daughters to provide for, and much as he admires his forcible son, he cannot risk his capital because of the girls, and his whole business policy has become fixed and cautious.

James Lever, as a parent, embodied all the sternness, goodness and fixity of Victorian family life. His serene and serious face was framed in a halo of whiskers prematurely white, and he walked through his warehouse in a Prince Albert frock-coat, righteously superintending his twenty or so employees. He was an abstainer from card-playing, and of course, drank no wine, and attended chapel and Sunday school. As a young man he had taken a serious step, quite as characteristic of his mind as the decision his son was soon to make. The father had been born into the Church of England, but while an apprentice had migrated to the Congregational persuasion on account of theological qualms; for he really cared for things of the spirit. He was always amazed at the energy of his bustling practical son who, though as dutiful as any parent would wish, behaved

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as though this world's affairs really mattered. The father watched over his nice little business for the sake of his eight girls, and the pursuit of money was not an end in itself, but a means of feeding his lambs.

Lever's mother had indeed wished him to go to Owen's College, Manchester, to become a doctor. The boy himself had ideas of being an architect but the father vetoed both notions. William's clear duty was to inherit the family business and take over the responsibility for his eight sisters. So he had to stifle his ambition for architecture and his mother's dreams of a medical career. In the end he was to achieve much for both those professions.

William Hesketh Lever was eight years old when one of the great operative books of the Victorian age appeared — *Self-help* by Dr. Samuel Smiles — and at sixteen he was presented with a copy and absorbed its teachings. It all depended upon himself, said Dr. Smiles, with many examples of the prodigious things which average men had achieved by their own exertions. But he perceived very much more than that narrow gospel of self-improvement. He began to see that the world needed improvement also. The Lancashire he knew was a proliferating chaos of mean streets, smoke, dirt and toil, and the cotton mills arising around Bolton were long low barracks of transcending ugliness. Until he was thirty Lever absorbed this environment without comment. In the local church school the idea of town planning was never mentioned, and architecture was not included in the curriculum. Lever's discoveries in this line were personal, and like every other pioneer he was self-taught by unconscious antipathy to dirt, inconvenience and unmitigated toil which was the environment of his customers in those villages where bathrooms were less common than Bethels.

He was thirty-three years old when he began to feel a disgust for the distasteful routine he saw before him to the end of his life. He took a holiday by steamer from Liverpool up the west coast of Scotland, and in the halcyon quietness of

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mountains and the sea a longing to retire altogether from business came over him. A little place named Stornoway, a tiny fishing port on the island of Lewis, had left an unforgettable impression of mystery. Then he perceived that his own possibilities were limitless, like the irresistible Hebridean horizon. Back from that holiday William Lever informed his father that he had decided to go in for soap.

One day on his commercial round a woman in a shop near Bolton had asked whether he could supply 'some of that stinking soap', and when she produced some for his inspection Lever used it and realized that the soap of this dubious name gave a more plentiful lather than what he himself could supply. The stinking soap was made from vegetable oil whereas ordinary soap came from tallow. But for its smell this vegetable soap, because of its creamy lather, might become extremely popular — and moreover, since vegetable oils were cheaper than tallow it might be made a commercial success. Lever searched for something to remove, or mask, the nauseating odour, and stumbled across citronella oil which had a pleasant lemony perfume, and converted the stinking soap into a housewife's friend. There in embryo was the origin of a property worth sixty millions.

This secret of soap could have been found by anyone. But it was fated that this should have been Lever's path, and now he had decided what sort of soap he wanted the next problem was to get it made, and get over his father's objections.

Manufacturing soap indeed, thought James Lever, what will come next into the boy's head? (This boy is over thirty, but his father cannot be expected to take account of that.) There are soap makers in plenty, in fact soap manufacture is done to death, and James Lever asks William whether he has ever considered of the possibility of his eight sisters being reduced to poverty, their men at the warehouse dismissed, and the honoured name of Lever being smirched by bankruptcy. He quotes to his son that stultifying proverb about a cobbler



## SOAP THE LODESTAR

sticking to his last. But William is impervious to such melancholy forebodings.

He does not argue, he performs. The younger brother of five older girls has learned to be very sure of his masculine capacity. That masterful self-confidence which impressed everyone in William Lever, grew out of a little boy's self-protective reaction to the feminine dominance of five older sisters. Now at the age of thirty-three he faces his father with overwhelming arguments.

William Lever was a late beginner, and never in any sense a rebel against his family or the established order, and the old man agrees to become his son's sleeping partner. This late start points to slow gathered maturity. But for a psychological accident connected with soap Lever would have remained the Lancashire grocer, a big man in a small way, independent, but unrealized. Soap acted on him like one of those mysterious hormones which can make a dwarf develop into a giant.

When asked later why he chose soap rather than some other commodity, Lever used to say that it was pure accident, because soap was the first article he happened to pack as an apprentice in his father's warehouse. But that is altogether too shallow an explanation of a lifetime's passion. Was this adoption of soap an unquenchable thirst for physical cleanliness with which the grime of Bolton inspired him? Or perhaps it was the emblem of the harmony he desired to bring into the inchoate life of Victorian England?

To probe more deeply, but not more wildly, into Lever's personality, was soap the outward expression of a desire to cleanse away guilty thoughts? Guilt in the mind of such a man there must have been and he would not be the first idealist who drew energy for noble purposes from such inward compensations. This psychological marriage with soap is a mystery of soul, and the last person to explain it to us is William Hesketh Lever. We shall miss altogether its meaning in his life if we pretend it was merely accidental. Soap was the lodestar which made the Victorian youth an Elizabethan adventurer.

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THE crude soap of the nineteenth century, responsible for the fabled cleanliness of English homes, was a disagreeable brown mass, containing remnants of raw alkali that irritated the skin. It was hand-made by a rule-of-thumb process of mixing in cauldrons like the pans of a witch's kitchen, and reached the customer as a dun-coloured bar which was chopped into lengths and sold by weight.

William Lever named his own first experiment, made from vegetable fats, 'Pure honey soap', though the honey dripped not sweetness but rancid oil. None the less, it did fulfil the office of cleansing, it gave a good creamy lather, and soon it was much in demand around Bolton. Then the old-fashioned makers who produced Mr. Lever's honey soap on his behalf put up their prices, and caught between the wheels of an irresistibly increasing demand, and an expensively inadequate supply, he was obliged to take over a half-derelict factory and begin to manufacture soap on his own. He never regarded this place as anything but a temporary makeshift, and ingeniously he placed his boiling pans on wooden boards so that they need not become part of the fixtures. As soon as possible he was determined to move. Old Mr. Lever demurred and trembled for the security of his daughters, but by now he was more than three-quarters committed to follow his fearless son, and he became a nervously somnolent partner in the new enterprise.

'Pure honey soap' was becoming a household word in those parts, but by the accident of being born in Lancashire William Lever inherited the imperial idea which made him look upon the whole world as his parish. Was not Lancashire the birth-place of free trade? In Lever's boyhood John Bright and

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Richard Cobden were still alive, pouring out their mellifluous thunder, and Lancashire performed the perpetual miracle of importing its raw bales three thousand miles from Alabama, and transporting them, made into cotton cloth, nine thousand miles to Bombay. It was taken for granted that England was the workshop of the world, and by light of nature Lever applied this idea to soap. His easy ascendancy around his own headquarters was a prelude to trade with the whole world. By pure good luck, or rather by recognizing the inspired word when it came, he had chosen his trademark — 'Sunlight' and that wonderful symbol for the sort of sweetness and order he was ready to bring into every household. 'Sunlight' became his password all over the globe.

He looked around for a place to build a factory of his own, and with seemingly effortless good fortune he found the perfect site on the banks of the River Mersey. It was a marshy stretch of ground cut in two by a wretched inlet from the river, an unprepossessing property between waterfront and railway. No one else saw any possibilities there, but Lever recognized in a flash that it was just what he needed, and he baptized the place 'Port Sunlight'. The local world laughed at such a pretentious title for a miserable creek which at low tide was a basin of mud. But Lever pictured his soap being made there in a novel way, he saw that creek full of ships to carry it to the end of the earth, his eye pictured that unpromising piece of land studded with handsome houses. While the knowing world watched Mr. Lever throwing away his money, he laughed heartily at the limited horizons of those who smiled at Port Sunlight.

There is no mistaking the visionary eye with which William Lever could see a piece of country taken to full development, as though he had traced it prophetically from an aeroplane. His vision travelled over the contours of the ground, measuring it intuitively, and his imagination covered it with buildings and trees and wide roads. This power of analysing country and grasping what could be done with it, a sort of landscape

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gardener's gift on a large scale, made him impatient to get to work. He never saw a house but he discerned chances which the builder had missed: an English town seemed to him a chaos of lost opportunities, while the countryside was there waiting to be moulded to his will as though it had been a child's model in plastic clay. The architect in him which his father ignored never accepted frustration, but developed each year. Lever does not, like Andrew Carnegie and Cecil Rhodes, write down in secret his plans of what he will do when he has made his money: he draws upon his architect's board, and each year some instalment of the scheme will be carried out. His vision is always immediate, and translated into palpable reality.

Around the muddy creek leading from the River Mersey he planned a new town, with a soap works at one end, rows of pleasant houses and a generous allowance of blank open spaces reserved for future purposes. The houses themselves, intended for his own workmen, were in advance of anything then in existence, and they were surrounded by shrubberies and avenues of trees. The brothers Cadbury, chocolate makers, had just started their garden village of Bournville, near Birmingham, and the notion that the wage earner should live in healthy surroundings was beginning to dawn upon a few advanced idealists.

Even in these early days Lever's vision soared beyond Port Sunlight. He would cheerfully have reconstructed the whole of England if he could have done it in his own way. He saw his soap going all over the world, and good environment pursuing it, as trade follows the flag. To him harmonious surroundings, cleanliness and beauty had become a mania, but he took no complacent satisfaction merely as a provider of good houses. He was possessed by a constructive vision, he was mad with his dreams dominated by that form of true artistic fury which does not create for the pleasure thereby accidentally given to others, but to satisfy a demand of its own nature. In all Lever's enterprises an impatient, tumultuous, raging energy took hold of him

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at ever-increasing tempo to the end of his life, and which generally scared everyone around him. The parallel is not in the brisk habits of the keen business man, but the furore of a Michelangelo attacking a piece of marble so that sparks flew from his hammer and chisel, and scorning food, until in the evening he was compelled to sink exhausted at the foot of his unfinished statue.

The earliest sketches of the soap village have been lost, but their true fulfilment is best seen on a morning in June when leaves and blossom half cover the houses, and the open spaces are edged with flowers. It was characteristic of Lever to draw first of all the roads, making them wider than roads had ever been created since the Romans, and the individual units were all subordinate to general harmony. The tradition had existed in England for centuries. Many a nobleman had designed a model village to set off the gates of his park; but generally on a small scale.

In designing the houses Lever avoided the fatal mistake made by most planners, that of having them uniform. Each group of six or eight houses was of a distinct and original type, and leading architects were called in to create fragments of this harmonious mosaic. The result is that Port Sunlight never looks monotonous, never out of date. If all the houses had been built the same it would now appear as out-moded as a late Victorian antique. But Lever's conception has kept it as fresh and charming as an old English village in which no two houses are alike. Port Sunlight today is the completion of the outline which Lever drew on his drawing-board in the eighteenth-eighties, when he was about forty years old, and it has the dateless permanence of a work of art.

There are blocks of Tudor half-timbered houses, groups in Elizabethan red brick with tall chimneys, there are houses in the colonial farmhouse style of North America, with open pillared porches and ironwork scrolls, there are South African Dutch cottages with elaborate gables. There is a miniature

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which suggests Sir Christopher Wren's great English mansions, and the pleasing design never lacks unity. There are never more than seven houses to the acre — this was one of Lever's most sacred rules, and the rest of the space is filled with gardens, open spaces and lawns unfenced in the American style. Each roadway is lined by trees, and the fronts of the houses are half revealed and then fully disclosed in a series of pleasant glimpses. Details are forgotten; there is unity without monotony, and the width of the streets gives spaciousness to the village.

All this was planned in one man's head before the present century began, and this man was an amateur, and the science of town planning was unknown. There seemed a vacant piece of ground there ready in the plan for everything, library, museum and later the memorial to the first World War. In the church made of dark red sandstone Lever achieved not only an amalgam of styles but a blend of ritual. He did not believe in theological warfare, and to complete the unorthodoxy of his church-chapel at Port Sunlight, he placed in charge of it a well-known radical clergyman who was a member of the Independent Labour party at a time when that meant to be a revolutionary. Lever had found his sermons exciting, and he was quite content to have this stormy petrel nesting inside his village.

Lever was rather inclined to 'temperance' views, and he only permitted a licensed 'Public House' to be established in the village when demanded by a plebiscite of eighty per cent of residents, but the pub steadily lost money, a fact which seemed to prove that good housing is an antidote to excessive drinking.

The whole village was his investment in welfare and efficiency, and when Mr. Gladstone dedicated the Assembly Hall in 1891 he quoted Port Sunlight as the living proof that cash payment was not the only bond between man and man. After the dreary teaching of the nineteenth-century economists, that principle of industrial welfare was indeed a revolution. Such things had

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existed in the smaller family firms, where a paternal relation existed between worker and employer, but they were absent in the factories created after the Industrial Revolution. No wonder that for hours after hearing Gladstone's speech, Lever walked up and down his garden with the Grand Old Man's organ tones ringing in his ear. The first industrial century was nearly at an end: he himself was preparing a way for a still newer industrial age.

These houses were occupied by those who toiled day by day in the soap works, hidden away at one end of the village. The casual visitor to Port Sunlight might never see them but he could never escape the all-pervading smell there at all times, a faint, not unpleasant, but perpetual reminder of the prime source of all that harmony and dignity. That inescapable chemical perfume of acids and alkalis and citronella oil, carrying out their perpetual union in the soap vats. Those idyllic surroundings never forgot that beauty depended upon chemistry, and upon the demand of millions for a common necessity of civilized life.

## THE WORLD IS MY PARISH

WILLIAM LEVER had discovered in his rounds among the squalid villages near Bolton that people had a natural desire for cleanliness, yet paradoxically they had to be made aware of it. Those housewives who scrubbed the grime of Lancashire off their steps, and hung out their sheets to dry in backyards, were practically interested in soap, yet they had to have its full potentialities brought before them. Once a woman had been persuaded to buy soap she cared no longer to pound her curtains on a washing-board and make them half clean merely by friction. Sunlight had come into her life. Lever's days as a commercial traveller had steeped him in the whims and prejudices of his customers. The problem was to reveal to them the demand which already existed. In his methods of creating an artificial monopoly through advertising Lever was the pioneer and his immense profits were quite as much the result of ingenious publicity as of the original excellence of the soap itself. Most English manufacturers behaved as though good wine needed no bush, but Lever believed that it needed a whole shrubbery of bushes. The advertiser had to be an instinctive psychologist who, having first gauged the public understanding, must declare in picturesque terms what he found there. The first cautious expenditure on advertising was two hundred and fifty pounds. It grew to millions.

Lever liked Royal Academy pictures and he found that they could help him to create an interest in soap, and his first adventures in advertising were in buying a well-known picture and reproducing it (with the label Sunlight attached), for the benefit of millions who would never visit Burlington House. Some artists took fierce objections to this vulgarizing of their





MR. AND MRS. W. H. LEVER AND THEIR SON,  
1905



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works, but other painters supported him and the controversy was good for business.

Each packet of Sunlight now contained the copy of a solemn legal document in which Lever bound himself to pay a thousand pounds to any person who could prove there was anything impure in Sunlight soap. Occasionally this solemn piece of bluff inspired some innocent to attempt the impossible. A woman would develop a rash on her hands which she ascribed to the harmful influence of the soap. But it was easy for lawyers to turn the tables on that sort of claim by demonstrating that the rash was an idiosyncrasy of her own skin, and no one ever charmed that magic thousand pounds out of Mr. Lever's pocket. Yet his printed guarantee in each packet showed that self-assertion and the repetition even of what cannot be proved, are the soul of advertising. That art required an absence of squeamishness. Lever's poster slogans acquired an awful familiarity, and gradually the whole of Britain became used to the word Sunlight in crude designs which the creator of the beautiful would never have allowed in Port Sunlight. It was well for Lever's commercial progress that there were blind spots in his aesthetic faculties. To an extraordinary and uncommon degree he was himself the common man, and his shameless advertising made Sunlight almost cease to be the word for the emanation from the heavenly body.

Thousands of tons of vegetable oil, brown and sticky, crushed from millions of small palm nuts, were poured into deep soap vats to await the coming of the bridal caustic soda, and with the stimulus of live steam the chemical partners performed their nuptials under the eye of the soap boiler who knew the exact moment when to bring this marriage of oil and soda to rest. For soap making was now scientific, having deserted the gloomy kitchens and rule-of-thumb methods where it was born, and the modern yellow soap was very different from that brown evil-smelling mass which the young commercial traveller had taken as his model. In blocks hardened in well-tempered drying

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rooms, embossed with the magic name Sunlight, and packed inside an attractive label that soap would go into some kitchen there to achieve a further chemical miracle of catching dirt and holding it fast. Lever had indeed given impetus to domestic revolution.

The only limit to the number of people who could benefit from using that soap was the population of the entire globe wherever there was human skin — white, black and brown, Lever's product could favour health and comfort. Soap was an international coinage, and though the people of other countries might differ from the people of Lancashire, Mr. Lever was convinced they had the same basic need of cleanliness if only he could bring it to them. The environment of Bolton-le-Moors had been too small, Great Britain itself was too narrow a field, and he began to explore markets overseas.

He invaded them like a missionary preaching salvation, with Sunlight soap as his gospel. Soap was not merely a cleansing agent, it was an economic force, it was to William Lever what adventure was to Francis Drake, and salvation to John Wesley. Unless we think of Lever in the symbols and language of the merchant adventurer and the religious enthusiast, we shall never understand the peculiar mixture of fanaticism and daring which was the mark of this lost Elizabethan.

Lever was also a Victorian Liberal, and Richard Cobden's free trade was part of his Lancashire inheritance. He loved to say: 'A proprietary article is cosmopolitan', and he believed piously in his God-given right to invade every country in the world to sell his product from the vats of Port Sunlight. But alas, there were some benighted countries which had never accepted Cobden's free trade gospel, and which clung obstinately to their old economic theories, and they clapped a heavy duty on imported soap, not in the least prepared to accept Lever's civilizing mission. How was this fanatical free trader to get past those high tariff barriers? How was he to

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sell his Sunlight soap in Germany, Switzerland, France and America?

Lever now performed the trick which the Greeks used to penetrate the walls of Troy. He invented his own special model of the Trojan horse, and said jocularly: 'The proprietary article laughs at tariffs as love laughs at locksmiths.'

He was resourceful enough to see that a factory placed inside the tariff wall might turn out as good soap for that particular country as any which came from the model village itself. Lever had merely to export a few brains which passed into the country duty free. Sunlight soap could afford to laugh at the tariff locksmith once the Lever management had penetrated the keyhole.

In Germany, in Switzerland, Canada and the United States factories were established, and in each country a new set of foreign workmen taught the Lancashire idea — in terms of soap-boiling. At first progress was slower than he anticipated. The trouble was not in the quality of the soap but in the taste of the public. Lever's advertising spoke with a Lancashire accent, and the natives of Belgium and Switzerland were not ready to put aside their prejudices. Lever concluded that he must have local men to help him to understand local taste: 'It is not within the range of man's ability to train up in one country a staff capable of dealing perfectly with all the details of a business in another,' he told a Swiss audience, but once he had found Swiss commercial salesmen to do it he found that the magic word Sunlight was as international as the idea of cleanliness itself. One of his advertising men had an original idea. He announced that on a certain day a festival of washing would be held in various towns around the Lake of Geneva. Hundreds of women in their local caps and ribbons from each village took the specially chartered steamer and, after washing competitions had been held, there was a grand banquet and prizes. Every housewife on the Lake of Geneva remembered that day and the superior qualities of Sunlight soap which had

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enabled her neighbour to gain a prize in the *Fête des blanchisseuses*. That was the sort of publicity which Lever enjoyed: something more effective even than Royal Academy pictures. It was more like a folk play than advertising. Certainly Sunlight soap had found its place in the sun.

## CHAPTER V

### CAPITAL AND LABOUR

HANDSOME blocks of houses were rising at Port Sunlight to fill in those blank spaces on the master plan; the soap never ceasing to bubble in the vats gave off into the atmosphere that perpetual whiff that seemed to permeate the brain and mind of everyone who worked there. Soap and its making was the life of the model village and no one cared or dared escape its influence.

As the business entered its phase of active expansion the chairman began to be worried more on account of capital than chemistry. If the organization was to continue to grow both at home and abroad he needed money far beyond his immediate liquid resources. The infant business produced thousands of pounds each week, but these were not enough to finance development, and for a few anxious months in 1891 Lever even feared that the creation of Port Sunlight had been a mistake. His imagination functioned years ahead, but now he was 'rather scared' at the magnitude of his own plans.

There are always financial gentlemen ready to provide commercial gentleman with support for such an emergency — at a price — but the last moment to ask for money is when others know that you need it. One city adviser suggested that Lever Brothers should be turned into a public company with a capital of £600,000. The money would come from the shareholders, but the profits would go almost entirely to Mr. Lever.

Instinct warned him that he who accepts another's money becomes another's slave. Certainly a successful soap business would attract plenty of shareholders; but he knew that before long they would take it into their heads that they understood the secrets of soap making, and they would think they ought to

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manage the business themselves. Though he needed new capital he would not have it on terms which gave a group of other men control. Somehow he managed to carry on both with the business and with Port Sunlight, and two years later the crisis was over, a better opportunity came, and he was able to take in new money on his own terms. The private concern of Lever Brothers, consisting entirely of old James Lever, the forcible William and his less outstanding brother, was turned into a public company, with this difference from the average enterprise that none of the ordinary shares were offered on the Stock Exchange. Only the preference shares, with their fixed dividend and greater security, were available to the investor; all the ordinary shares possessing the power, the votes and the risk were kept by William Lever himself. Henceforth those solid Lever preference shares were a favourite investment for the saving community. The magic of Lever's prestige caused the widows, annuitants and clergymen to trust him with their money, and before the great mass of ordinary shares received a penny those preference holders had to have their full five, or five and a half per cent. They were not popular with speculators; no one in the world ever had a flutter in Lever's shares. They were the conservative vehicles of modest finance. Their one excitement was the privilege of hearing the chairman's speech at the annual meeting.

But the ordinary shares, they drew big dividends, and they took enormous risks. Whenever a new factory was needed in Canada the money came from them. The ordinary shareholders never raised their voices in protest when the company proposed to erect an expensive plant in New Zealand. They never suffered doubts as to whether the firm should grow oil palms in Africa, or catch whales in the Behring Sea. The ordinary shareholders were a loyal and unanimous body, endowed with the imagination, for apart from a few members of his family they consisted of one man, William Hesketh Lever. When the timid associates of his early years had baulked at his ambitious



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schemes he bought them out. From now onward the finances of Lever Brothers had no history except one of even, unruffled triumph. We hear of no disputes among the partners as between the Carnegie Associates.

Each worker in the soap-boiling parlours of Port Sunlight knew the chairman, for he was one of the sights of the village, and at half past eight each morning they might see him mounting energetically the steps of the main offices. Through large glass windows to the right and left, the chairman could see his hundreds of clerks stretching out in two long halls, conducting the gigantic business operations, and what was more important as a symbol, they could see him.

One of the basic ideas drunk in from the atmosphere of Lancashire was mutual responsiveness between employer and his workman and, also, workwoman, since long before the rest of England, Lancashire womankind had acquired the 'right' to spend long hours in a cotton mill in addition to having children and looking after her home. Generations of Lancashire folk had become expert craftsmen, and Lever exploited this instinct. Soap making was indeed a skilled craft, and part of his rapid success came from his skilled mixture of mechanized methods and the individual judgment of the trained man or woman.

Above all, Lancashire was the original home of shorter working hours and co-partnership, and once his own business was firmly established Lever adopted both these ideas.

Take profit sharing, or co-partnership, that a workman should have an interest in his employer's business and a share in its prosperity. Several firms had carried out this principle into practice, but their results had been depressing, and in most cases such businesses did not last for more than five years. Lever studied the question and, as usual, reached heterodox conclusions. He decided that those previous schemes of profit sharing had been based, not on business, but on sentiment; the employer had used the profit-sharing idea as a substitute for adequate wages. Lever believed that business should not

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be mixed up with philanthropy, and that it was better for the workman to have as his employer a sound business man rather than a benevolent patron devoid of commercial sense. He disliked 'paternalism', so when his own particular brand of co-partnership came to be instituted he named it 'prosperity sharing', which meant that the employers at Port Sunlight took a bonus out of profits, but suffered no part in any loss. In other words, the prosperity-sharing scheme placed the workers rather in the position of favoured ordinary shareholders, and before Lever himself, the owner of the ordinary capital, took a share of profits, the workers had their dividends which were, of course, additional to wages.

Several personalities were at work inside that majority partner. Although sympathetic towards the individual working man, he disagreed with Adam Smith's doctrine that labour is the source of all wealth, believing that without 'management' labour alone was a blundering ox. 'Capital', 'labour' and 'management' formed the holy trinity of commerce, and that they could never function separately. Previous co-partnership schemes failed because they ignored 'management' and reduced capital to the status of a fixed wage earner. Whereas Lever knew that 'capital' possessed an inherently feminine and unpredictable nature, and that it could work only when free to seek its own freedom. 'Labour' achieved prosperity when guided by 'management', and together they must woo and conquer that elusive witch 'capital'. He never would admit that 'labour' was superior to 'management', or that any good could come of having a so-called 'representative of labour' at the Board of Directors. If workers wished to have a share in management they must identify themselves with capital, and go through the mill of learning by experience this intricate technique of making and selling soap. He had no room for dreamers and amateurs. Yet he encouraged trade unionism, and during his whole life the only 'strike' at Port Sunlight was due to technical procedure rather than a genuine grievance.

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One interesting episode in labour relations did occur in connection with the Lever-prosperity scheme. Members of a certain trade union of carpentry workers had become holders of prosperity shares, and were drawing from them an income of between fifty and a hundred pounds a year per person. Their fellow trade unionists decided this was participation in a capitalist enterprise and contrary to socialist principles, and the offending carpenters who refused to give up their prosperity shares were expelled from the union. Whereupon they took the trade unions to law and the case went to the House of Lords, which judicially decided that even a trade union has no legal right to expel its members for such cause, and they were taken back and in future continued to be trade unionists and prosperity sharers at the same time.

The eight-hour day was adopted at Port Sunlight long before such an idea was even thought a possibility in other businesses, and presently Lever was talking of a seven-hour, and even a six-hour, day. 'In the reduction of the hours of labour,' he said, 'you have one of the secrets of the well-being of a country. If you have a country devoting the whole of her time to work so that her people go home to bed weary, you will never produce a physically desirable class of men and women.' Pensions at the age of sixty-five and holidays with pay had become regular features of Lever's system a quarter of a century before they were generally thought practicable in industry. No Ruskinian idealist could have put the case better, yet the difference between the social theorist and Lever was that he had the power to put his ideal into practice. He believed in sweating the machine rather than the man, and agreed with Henry Ford that provided goods were actually produced at an increasing tempo there is no limit to what wages may reach.

Lever was one of those dynamic human forces who reach conclusions out of their own experience. He used to say that while the nineteenth century had seen the conquest of power, the problem of the twentieth century was that of human

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relations. To him it was self-evident that workers should desire good houses, high wages and shorter hours. That needed no proof and no argument. Why not then carry the idea into practice? Many enlightened thinkers had the same notions, but were lacking in ability to carry them out. Lever's mind was that of the creative artist, and there was no break, as with most people, between his will and his dexterity, and his life story from now on becomes a recurring conquest of the impossible, because with him an idea carried within itself the seeds of its own growth.

Early in his career as a manufacturer he achieved what to many individualists was difficult or impossible, namely a sound understanding with his own labour forces.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PALM OF AFRICA

THE lather from Sunlight soap was pouring into the rivers of each country in the world. The handsome product which came forth in bars from the model village was very different from that crude composition which Lever had parcelled as a boy in his father's warehouse. The change was due to the chemical transformation achieved by the intelligent use of vegetable oils, and now the muddy creek which had raised the village to the dignity of a port, was a harbourage by which ships from all over the world brought tropical cargoes to the soap vats. Vegetable oils were needed in prodigiously increasing amounts and at the beginning of this century William Lever began to feel a vague uneasiness over the food supply for the monster he had created. Suppose the supply of oils were to be cornered by some rival soap maker who might temporarily acquire control of this market for raw material. A few shillings more per ton on the price of raw vegetable oils, and what would then become of his splendid imperial plans?

Lever himself was by nature essentially a monopolist, and the mere possibility that a rival could create a monopoly against him roused his determination to make himself absolutely independent. Soap manufacture on his scale was unthinkable without abundant, ever-increasing rivers of vegetable oil.

His first plan was to develop the cultivation of copra which is the gelatinous flesh of the coconut palm and grows richly all over the South Seas. Lever made a trip there, sailing from San Francisco to Honolulu and on to New Zealand, and filling his notebook with clear-cut impressions of that vestige of the early world which had fascinated Robert Louis Stevenson.

On every island grew the coconut palm, and where it flour-

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ished the more important oil palm could be planted later. Lever planned large estates in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands from which he would have an increasing export of copra. Before that could be achieved the palm had to be civilized. First, a mass of tangled bush had to be cleared away from the virgin lands and the trees planted in rows: and at least six years would elapse before they could produce copra. Palms were at hand and so were the inhabitants, but it proved very hard to bring them together with regularity. The Melanesian and Polynesian native was used to treating the palm tree as his intimate friend, to be turned to for food and refreshment; but he did not care for the idea of working for wages in a huge palm tree estate.

'Labour troubles' became frequent. There is irony in that term, for Pacific employment problems were very different from anything Lever had experienced in Port Sunlight, and they were outside his comprehension. The natives of the Pacific could not understand this white man who demanded from them what appeared a totally unnecessary amount of work, and Lever never fathomed the native mind. Impossible for him to realize that a people could not want regular wages to spend on more goods. He sensed that there were parts of the human race where such economic notions had no meaning. These Polynesians lived as happily as they wished, but they had no desire whatever for progress. Security, a home, provision for old age — they possessed them all, with the minimum of work. Education for their children — why they had it from their songs and dances and a little crude religion from the missionaries. Their wealth was a few pigs and a little land, and with it they were millionaires. Why then worry to strive for more?

Lever proposed to import Indian labourers from that sub-continent already groaning with over-population, but the British Colonial Office which was responsible for the Solomon Islands, refused permission. For the first time William Lever had against him a combination of native prejudice and official

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obstruction, and he was distressed by it, because for all his genuine desire for human welfare he could not sympathize with the motive. When Lever asked for a long lease of land to develop oil palm estates he was offered seven years as though he were an impecunious tenant in some English suburb. Lever pointed out that the oil palm does not start to bear fruit for seven years, during which the cultivator puts in all the work and carries all the risk. A longer lease was eventually allowed him, but the ban on Indian immigration remained.

Here, it seemed to him, was the British Government acting arbitrarily, supporting a worn out idea of civilization for the primitive man. Under natural conditions the population of Polynesia was diminishing each year. Why not give these natives the incentive of wealth and a new ideal of self-help? Soap, the symbol of the modern way of living, was Lever's faith, and commercial progress could wean the Solomon Islander from his primitive life and bring western standards into that lazy existence only half a century away from head hunting. Lever found in the warm bracing air of the Pacific the natural counterpart of his own eager self. The trees were there in luxuriance, the estates well managed. Red Poll cattle grazed in the manager's compound, fowls provided eggs equal to any in Lancashire, and pineapples, oranges, bananas and breadfruit made these flower-covered islands a paradise. But there was something in the spirit of the place almost too perfect which corrupted the energy of those who lived there, and with sadness Lever realized that no single lifetime was long enough to make his ideas prevail in those longitudes of sloth and natural favours. He was obliged to look elsewhere for his tropical palms.

The oil palm grows luxuriantly throughout the tropical belt in every quarter of the globe. It grows best, vast forests, in Africa right across the heart of the dark continent in the sleepy hinterland of those huge rivers, the Congo and the Niger.

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In the light of the history of two world wars, and the yet unwritten chapters of what is likely to come, the story of the land piracy in Africa is a sinister tale. The great powers of Europe awoke to the large productivity of tropical soil and the resources of native labour, and whole sections of the map were hastily marked off with lines denoting protectorates, colonies and concessions. The meridional zone of the earth's surface had become the white man's trophy. Livingstone, H. M. Stanley and Cecil Rhodes had broken through Africa's dark mystery, and now the fruits were to be gathered.

Lever took a leading share in this race for soil. Several times he moved round the world, inspecting possible palm-bearing lands and engaging in palaver with native chiefs. Once he had these enterprises started he meant to follow with model villages, pensions and welfare; Lever never intended to deal less humanely with the black man than with his people at Port Sunlight. Now, as the South Sea Islands faded from the commercial horizon into their own mirage of a lost paradise, he turned to West Africa. Here were dense virgin forests of palm, stretching as far as eye could see, and he could travel miles on a stern paddle steamer up one of those broad rivers without ever coming to the end of that green profusion. In the British colonies of Nigeria and the Gold Coast lay potentially all the palm oil he could need, but when he began to go for his palm trees near the equator where the fruit is richest, once again the British Empire raised a warning hand and repulsed her daring adventurer.

The colonial governments declined to grant Lever any sort of freehold land tenure. The land, they said, belonged to the people, that is to the African native, and no private capitalist could be allowed absolute right over this primary source of wealth. Those who criticize the British Commonwealth should notice this, that her most successful colonial developer was denied privileges which the colonial governments, composed of men of British birth, considered contrary to the interests of



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men of African birth, although those colonies were then British possessions absolutely.

William Lever developed a profound sense of grievance. Why should those dawdling councils of colonial officials be allowed to keep back commercial developments because of some doctrinaire theory of native rights? Why should the savage ruler of some Hausa tribe be permitted to sit on his acres of land, holding it to ransom, in a way that no English duke would ever be allowed to do? The British Parliament would soon put an end to any such sterilizing theory of hereditary omnipotence if any landowner in England refused legitimate facilities for trade and land development, yet here in the British colonies the governments were behaving as arbitrarily as they might have done in the sixteenth century. Lever was prepared to lease the lands, paying favourable terms to the native peoples. He was ready to give guarantees that native welfare would be safeguarded, and his past record as an employer confirmed that he had the will to do this.

The force of Lever's will had encountered a form of resistance that was to haunt him for years, and only at the end of his life did he finally allow himself to be turned aside, when the Hebridean crofters behaved rather like these African natives, and were abetted by governments and civil servants totally unsympathetic to Lever's economic gospel, in much the same way as now these colonial legislative councils held back his developments along Africa's west coast.

But if the British Colonial Empire was disinclined to favour Lever's commercial talents there was another empire which was not quite so squeamish. Through the very heart of Africa the River Congo curves like a gigantic artery in some of the most luxuriant lands in the world. When the explorer H. M. Stanley, after finding Dr. Livingstone, had opened up this territory, the only European ruler to be interested in its possibilities was King Leopold the Second of Belgium, and the river and its enormously wide valley, much larger than any

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country in Europe, became virtually the King's private estate. The old monarch was a man of business, who looked after his property only too efficiently, and shocking stories of cruelty and exploitation filtered back to Europe. In 1911 the Congo basin came into the possession of the Belgian people, and Albert the First came to the throne, a different sort of ruler with a higher conception of European duty towards the African. Years before, he had actually paid a visit to Port Sunlight, travelling incognito, and had seen Lever's ideas of industrial welfare carried out into practice, and now King Albert invited Lever to stake out a claim in the Congo.

So might Queen Elizabeth of England have put a finger upon the map and granted untold wealth to the adventurer who had the courage to go and take it. The transaction was approved by the Belgian Parliament, expressed in the form of a limited liability enterprise under the control of Lever Brothers. But to gain a proper conception of the magnitude of this concession which the Belgian Government now made to a private English citizen, we must go back in terms of the imagination to the day when Ferdinand and Isabella created a certain obscure merchant adventurer from Genoa Lord of the Indies. Christopher Columbus had never seen the lands of which he was made overlord; nor had William Lever. Both of them were of the type which stubbornly creates a reality out of brain fantasies which others dismiss as unprofitable dreaming. Lever had searched for an estate where he could grow the oil palm unhampered. He was given something like a private empire.

No religion moved Lever so deeply as a sense of the potential, and as he looked at the immense curve of that mighty river, saw towns which had more letters in their names than streets in themselves, his leaping imagination covered these empty spaces with a network of commercial organization. But for the present it was more a liability than an asset.

He opened five centres placed at strategic sites along the

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great river, and erected machinery for crushing palm kernels. From this modest beginning Lever had the right to choose a million acres of land, first leased at a nominal rental and after twenty-five years passing into his possession. Inside the territory Lever's company had the status of a sub-government. It could build roads and railways, organize river steamers and telegraphs and it was obliged to set up schools and medical services. Over this wide principality of the river and its tributaries Lever Brothers became an economic *imperium*, second only to the Belgian State itself, and it must often have seemed to the natives even more powerful. Lever's reputation as a social organizer was secure and he was granted these enormous powers almost without question. King Albert had measured the idealism behind Port Sunlight, and even Vanderwelde, the leader of the Belgian Socialist party, approved this exercise in tropical capitalism.

The company entered into possession of its empire of forest and water. As soon as possible Lever sailed to visit his empire, taking with him his wife. Far into the centre of the continent the paddle boat trundled noisily through the waste of glistening waters, and as he passed the evergreen forest he noted the faces of its strange shy inhabitants as they crowded the piers, wondering and chattering at each river port. He planned where villages were to become townships, and how each area would be cleared and planted, and exactly where the mills were to be located to send the oil from the palm fruit six thousand miles to that other port of his on the muddy creek inside his model village. He wrote in a diary his impressions of this new land. He counted the fruit upon palm trees and made mental calculations of the possibilities of his estate-to-be. Against the advice of his expert in tropical medicine he went out to visit native villages after dark when the mosquitoes are savage, and with an electric torch he peered into the straw huts and caught a glimpse of the squalor and mystery of African life.

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The palm area in a place named Leverville seemed the grandest sight he had ever seen, whole valleys and hillsides covered with dense green. These palm trees growing in this immense natural profusion were the native's banking account, and so long as he had his bread and his salt and a few pieces of cloth he was content to leave its wealth ready to be drawn upon at his whim. He saw the bush natives selling their baskets of palm fruit in exchange for salt and a few brass rods, and he decided that he could never rely upon receiving adequate supplies through this casual form of marketing. To achieve success he must have estates which could be developed by the company, and send a regular supply of palm nuts to the oil-extracting centres.

But Lever's eye saw other aspects of the Congo besides its abundance. He saw not merely the ungathered spread of palms, but the native forms emaciated with malaria, the miserable crops of hand-crushed corn, the scanty diet and general demoralization that lurked behind the rotting smells of those native villages. Behind Africa's magnificent sheen he saw the decay. Lever the organizer looked upon these naked savages, and on this naked virgin wilderness, and the primitive was doomed.

Did he understand what he was doing? Did he know that he had taken the responsibility of meddling with the primeval? Did he know what it meant to substitute for that innocence of native life his own idea of ordered effort and exploitation? He was exorcising a dark spirit, he was curbing the cruel majesty of a life which had existed ever since humans appeared on the earth, and he was doing it all in the way of business. His practical mind wished to bring order and civilization, and though he sympathized with those colonizing Jesuit Fathers, he felt inwardly that his own economic gospel could make those black faces respond even more readily with a sense of human privilege.

No hint of this appears in the published extracts from his

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Congo diary. He might have been setting up a new factory near Manchester, or booking an order in the hamlet of Checkabent, Lancashire.

I think Lever was able to face the terror of the primitive which would have overwhelmed a more sensitive nature, only because he had been accustomed to facing the surge of aggression inside himself. It was a relief to him to contemplate the cruelty of Africa. Those calm appraisals, shrewd calculations and his splendid dreams were his means of escape. Prosaically, he wrote, facing that ocean of palm fronds: 'There has never been a moment when I have had doubts as to the success of our Congo enterprise, and today my confidence is greater than ever.'

That confidence was not merely his commercial optimism. It was not the complacency of a man who hoped to make millions out of Africa. It was more like the immense sigh of relief a man gives when waking out of a malignant dream, to find that even the sordid world of reality is less terrible than the wild fantasy of his sleep.

Back home in Port Sunlight Lever studied maps and plans, and hardly a fresh palm tree in the Congo was planted without his knowing. He designed the buildings and chose the personnel, and no more than three months after the plant was delivered at the Congo mouth palm oil was being sent home to Europe and turned into soap. But this, as Lever knew, was merely a conjuring trick of organization, the real battle with the Congo river had yet to come. Many a European life had been extinguished in the sunlit cruelty of that valley, and many an adventure had perished from insects, disease or despair. No white man ever turned out of the friendly Atlantic into the sinister stillness of that river without staking his health, his reason, his very existence, upon a gamble with nature, and what was true of every official under the company, was true of Lever's Company itself. *La Société Anonyme des Huileries du Congo Belge*, that was its impersonal name, and in it Lever had

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invested a million pounds of his money, but much more than that; he had staked his energy, his peace of mind, his business reputation. It was well for him that he was sole master of Lever Brothers Limited, and that there were no cautious guinea-pigs to point out what this African folly might cost the company. He was a man possessed, and a man alone. He heard no voice but his own, and it was telling him that he could overcome the diabolical sunshine, the rotting damp, the deadly mosquito, and civilize that primeval forest, above all it told him he could bring a new way of life to those black people crouching in their grass huts. He could show them the white man's vision of the world, he could lead them through the manufacture of palm oil, into the world family which since the beginning of creation had hardly known of their existence. Those doctrinaires of the British Colonial Service might dispute his right to further the welfare of the natives. British imperialism might keep him out of the Empire. Well, now he would show them what he could do, and in a few years he would have laid the foundations in the Congo of a new civilization based upon enlightened self-interest.

He was corrupting the natives, people might say?

But was it wrong to drain their land, free their villages from the anophelene mosquito and the tsetse fly? Could any reasonable person say it was wrong to set them free from fear, disease, malnutrition?

Never, I think, did Lever show his essential qualities so majestically as when he signed his name upon the document and made his compact with devilish Africa that he would tame the Congo valley. Lever followed capitalism beyond the profit stage, into the realm of welfare. 'We hold all the winning cards if only we play them rightly,' he said, on leaving the river, and his only regret was that he would not be able to go back that same year. The sights, sounds and smells he never forgot.

We may smile cynically and say he was doing it all for his

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own profit. If so, he was the only commercial man who thought so. Most of those old hands who knew Africa shook their heads, and predicted that Lever's grandiose dream would come to nothing in that wilderness of sunshine, moisture and flies.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HUMAN DYNAMO

THIS visionary Lever's creative power came from a dynamo of energy inside, and however benevolent his intentions towards his fellow men his own restlessness pervaded the whole business. Sacrifice of the individual in the sacred cause of commerce was not to be escaped under a man who never allowed himself a moment's peace.

Success was founded upon Lever's travelling salesmen who were perpetually on campaign, like missionaries among the heathen. For inspiration they carried with them a little pamphlet sent out quarterly from headquarters and known as *Square Deals*, and if they failed to produce results they had no excuse. Those silk-hatted travellers might read words of wisdom from the chairman himself, for in each issue the pocket guide contained a message over his signature, given an inspirational title, such as Motive Power, Opportunity, The Happiness of Work. Those commercial sermons represent the teaching which Lever inherited from Samuel Smiles, and now each salesman might receive flashes of the same inspiration which guided him in the days when he drove his spanking horse through the Lancashire villages. Lever told his men that the world had no use for shirkers and dreamers. It was not genius they needed, just hard work and his own example seemed to bear him out. They went about the business of selling Sunlight soap as though it were indeed a sacred trust, and if they got into difficulties there were lighter pages of the little magazine to help them. 'What to do when kicked out' was a feature that gladdened the heart of every novice on the road, and if of an ingenious and resourceful turn of mind, he might



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try to win a prize in one of the competitions which sought the best answer of what to do in a Tight Corner. These little pamphlets — *Square Deals* — represent the unremitting search for self-improvement that the chairman tried to inspire in his disciples. But their exuberant optimism hides the other side of that relentless system which ground the raw material of human life as the mills ground the palm kernels.

The whole of Britain was mapped out into territories which became as fiercely competitive as the nations of the Saxon heptarchy.

The Lever salesman was not merely expected to produce a certain proportion of conversions among those indifferent to the firm's products, but he was also required to use the technique of a government department in counting his gains. Each evening he must spend hours at filling in forms, analysing his sales, proving and reproving for the inexorable eye of the head office that geometrical progression was the law of his existence. At any moment the district sales manager might descend upon him, or the advertising manager would demand to know his reactions, and when the much-harassed traveller had contemplated with satisfaction the result of a quiet week-end spent on statistical returns showing a week's labour, he might find the demonstration manager waiting for him on Monday morning, ready with some new scheme for adding one hundred per cent to previous records.

Meanwhile, the salesman's own life was slipping away, as ephemeral as the lather of Sunlight soap. Those who belonged to this unrelenting machine were obliged to go on improving upon their utmost, and no failure was tolerated. The strong, blazing eyes of the chief were focused upon every wheel in the inexorable machine he had created. It was honest, but remorseless. Around the existence of every Man of Stress there is a vacuum where no independent life can exist.

William Lever never asked of any of his salesmen what he was unable to do himself, but that was the trouble: he was

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capable of doing so much. When not abroad travelling in one of his commercial dominions his routine was fixed. He would begin the day early — in later years as early as 4.30 in the morning — and throw himself upon a mass of reports, balance sheets, statistics. Before breakfast he would ride horseback, and later drive to his office at Port Sunlight, where a tremor of energy swept through the building from that glass-walled tower in the centre. The imperious ringing of the chairman's bell made his chief executives leave whatever they were doing and fly like mesmerized men into his presence. In his sanctum he dictated to two secretaries in the high penetrating voice of a deaf man, without pause, and what one secretary missed the other would take down. He seemed to function with several minds, and while giving forth the answer to one problem the solution to the next difficulty would be forming in his unconscious, ready to be produced when it was needed. He was human and approachable, with a homely way of speaking and an anecdote for every occasion. But once he had made up his mind those eyes would blaze and his lips close tight in resolve no human power could break. The caller who tried to over-persuade him, or the manager who wasted his time, received summary justice. In business he was impatient and inexorable: yet what a different person those same executives would meet in the evening.

At the end of the day he might entertain a large party of guests, and laugh with them at a performance of the *Pirates of Penzance*, given by the Port Sunlight amateur operatic society. The chairman would probably have to leave before the end in order to catch the night train to London, where before reaching his office he would look in early at the sale-room to inspect a Chippendale cabinet and arrange to make an offer at the auction which would take place while he was otherwise engaged.

To keep up this incessant activity he disciplined his body. He performed daily exercises, ate little and slept in the open

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air. This, the most surprising of his ingenuities, explains his mental freshness at the start of each day. In each of his houses Lever had a specially contrived bedroom, merely a space protected from the rain where his bed was placed, so that he could breathe all night through that life-giving oxygen which others missed in their closed rooms.

What was the mainspring of this abnormal, this monstrous activity in William Lever? The observer might suspect a touch of madness in this restless megalomania, yet as the years went on his mind and judgment seemed to grow more perfect. In his private life there were no scandals connected with wine and women.

Yet the obsession of this daily schedule suggests some deep conflict, something he was trying to forget, and fortunately we have one supremely illuminating letter. 'I ask myself', he wrote, 'what has caused me to begin work at 4.30 in the morning for the last two or three years and to work laborious hours, and to have only one absorbing thought, namely my own efficiency and the maintenance of the task I have to perform; I am bound to confess it has not been the attraction of dividends, but fear, cowardly fear — the growing fear that I have placed myself in the position of accepting money from all classes of investors, including widows, spinsters, clergymen and others who might possibly have to forgo their dividends which would mean the probable curtailment of what they depended on for their day to day food, clothing, rent, etc. Candidly, this has been my great fear: this has caused me to get up at 4.30 in the morning.'

What a strange, ingenuous and unexpected confession from the commercial emperor. He is afraid, and he tells us that fear makes him do the work of half a dozen men. He expects us to believe that fear compels him to risk life and health in the deadly Congo, that fear causes him to open new and unremunerative factories all over the world! Fear, then, impels him to build model villages, fear is the motive power of his hyper-

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active existence on trains and steamships. What can he be afraid of, this man who is so energetic and capable? To say that he feared Lever Brothers might have to pass dividends on their preference shares tells us much less than half the truth. Men do not work at such diabolical intensity merely so that spinsters, widows and clergymen may pay their rent. Fear by itself is paralysing. Any prudent business man could have shown Lever dozens of ways of reducing the risks to his preference shareholders. The average director of the average company would have advised him to stop philanthropy, and to give up such pastimes as the Congo enterprise, and extending his garden village. If Lever had ever in his life suffered from fear of worldly consequences he would never have broken away from his father's excellent business, under his father's eye and caring for the welfare of his older sisters.

Nor did those powerful stimuli of the average man — fear of disgrace or failure — ever influence Lever, for such words did not exist in his vocabulary; and as for obstacles, difficulties, he swept them out of his way, and the notion that any possible combination of circumstances could defeat him was never allowed serious consideration. When he said he was afraid of failing to pay dividends Lever was misleading himself.

This same revealing letter goes on to say: 'Whilst it is fear that has been the operating cause, it has been the gradual removal of fear that has produced the satisfactory result. This sounds contradictory, but I am satisfied it is the fact.'

Here, perhaps, is the psychological scent which leads us nearer to the clue. It is not fear which gives him his power, but the sudden release of fear like the letting go of tension, once the paralysing inhibition has gone the soul springs forward with a blessed renewal of hope, and in a torrent of energy it can then perform a miracle which would have been beyond the scope of an average man who had never known the challenge of sudden emancipation. His energy came not from fear, but through the conquest of fear.

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Still we have not solved the problem. What was the nature of this fear which so dominated the mind of this extraordinary man?

Lever I think was afraid of himself. He knew that he was possessed of a devil which if allowed control would have caused disaster; his whole life was spent in taming that terrible power within; like the man who rides a tiger he could not dismount. A single pause, a false step, a relaxation of hold over the beast would involve him in psychological ruin. He must go on riding his tiger.

In Lever there was no ordinary power, but an exceptional and very primitive sort of energy. In Elizabethan times his fantastic schemes could have been carried out with freedom, but William Lever had been born in a Puritan home, and he suffered the restraints of the Victorian middle class. His awareness of his own demon was strong, and his control over it achieved only through unsleeping watchfulness.

I am sure that awareness of this inward danger in himself was what gave Lever the faculty to understand the risks of the Congo. Fear of himself enabled him to master that green wilderness as he had conquered the jungle of his own fears.

But then, suddenly, the fear is gone. He knows he is in secure control of his tiger, and now he can permit himself to achieve harmony and beauty, and the result appears in handsome streets, shorter hours, an ennobling passion for art. The demon has been conquered by a spell such as the world can never know; the fear has been neutralized, and the mind is free to devote itself to peaceful accomplishment. How better can we interpret Lever's enigmatical nature, or explain the torrent of light in those intense eyes?

The outward personality of Lever seemed to draw perpetual confidence and balance from his success in dealing with the internal man. But at private moments he would come abruptly face to face with the self within. One of these moments of self-realization forms, I think, a simple explanation of his quarrel with Augustus John, the artist.

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This painter, as everyone knows, is no delineator of insipid generalities. His portraits abound in vigorous drama and powerful light and shadow, and subjects move and writhe on the canvas. Certainly Augustus John was the man to tackle a Man of Stress, and at the height of his powers he painted Lever. The portrait was finished and delivered at Lever's house.

But when the subject saw himself there in John's portrait he was enraged. Something terrible had been recorded in lines and colours, as though the painter had overheard him thinking aloud and had captured the secret of his uninhibited motives. When Lever saw that this man of genius had perceived his other tempestuous self he acted as he was accustomed to do—promptly and ruthlessly. He took a knife and cut away from the canvas that square containing the features of the man he was determined to conceal from the world, and locked the guilty portion away in his safe. From that day no one outside has ever seen the picture of William Lever which Augustus John painted.

The world, and certainly the artist, would never have known any more about it. Lever could have had no possible motive for informing Augustus John of the mutilation of the canvas, but the fates, always on the watch for these Men of Stress, ordained that a freakish accident should betray what had taken place. The canvas of the picture, with the gaping hole to show where Lever had decapitated the man he wished to conceal, was packed up for tidiness in the wooden box in which the picture had been delivered from Augustus John, and an innocent housekeeper, who knew nothing of the surgical operation which Lever had performed, saw on the empty box the name and address of the artist, and back to his studio she dispatched this incriminating canvas.

Not unnaturally the painter on receiving his canvas with the vacant hole slashed in the centre, and no explanation, concluded that Lever intended to insult him; he informed the Press, whereupon controversy broke out as to whether the

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man who owned a picture had the right to mutilate what he had paid for.

This was not the real point of this curious episode. Lever could never have argued the absurd proposition that anyone had the right to destroy a work of art, and he was not the man to affront Augustus John. The interesting point to the observer who would attempt to understand the mystery of Lever's character lies in that sudden impulse of self-condemnation which made him take the knife into his hand and wreak a sort of psychological suicide upon that canvas. But for the house-keeper's mistake, like a whim on the part of ironic destiny, the secret would have been locked in Lever's safe. As we have noted in the case of Andrew Carnegie, these Men of Stress are fond of putting their trust in steel safes as a means to keep their secrets.

Lever's reputation is secure and it would not have been disturbed by the most unflattering portrait. It is a pity that his features survive today only in conventional paintings which reveal the successful Lever, but never that more heroic character, the Man of Stress who daily grappled with himself.

The world saw a thickset, dynamic figure passing imperiously along, swinging his arms and speaking in the loud toneless voice of a deaf man. The white comb of hair towered aggressively erect, and those blue eyes, set wide apart and the colour of one of his own Nanking vases, blazed like searchlights, sweeping out of their way the prejudices and resistances of other people, and giving an air of irresistible force.

No Elizabethan ever lived with more splendour, but Lever's way was to combine the greatest distinction in his houses with the utmost simplicity in his personal habits. Each of the thirteen houses he occupied was an opportunity for perpetual alteration. His house near Port Sunlight had been a solid Victorian mansion, but it threw out wings and became a Tudor residence. Near Bolton he built a small wooden bungalow which he much improved, until it fell a victim to the fury of the

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suffragette incendiaries just before the first World War. Lever tightened his mouth and said he would now build something they could not burn. A new and most original house arose, this time in solid stone, with a circular ballroom and minstrel's gallery, whilst its grounds were full of novelties such as Japanese waterfalls, stone lanterns, grottoes and terraces.

His most palatial home was on Hampstead Hill, a mansion of brick and stone overlooking London which, though he bought it as a finished residence, was duly moulded by his will, and enlarged by the addition of two wings, surrounded by formal gardens. He turned the lawn into a terrace with two levels, here, when he was over seventy and the dancing craze of the twenties had made him its enthusiastic devotee; he built a large ballroom, the full length of the house, but at underground level.

In making houses and gardens he gloried in the difficult achievement. He loved to surprise the eye by a judicious alteration of nature as when he removed a hill which spoiled the view from his garden in Harris, and created hillocks to subserve the perspective near his bungalow in the Japanese garden. The builder's drawing was to Lever as exciting as a balance sheet, and in this form of creativeness he poured that thwarted talent which, but for the gloomy forebodings of his father, might have made him an architect.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PUBLIC MAN

THIS character of the energetic soap maker, combining business with welfare in quite an original way yet sensitive to profit, was created by Lever himself, and the world did not see his more visionary side, for he was essentially a modest, almost a shy man. The success of Port Sunlight marked him out as a practical reformer, and inevitably so intuitive a master of the art of popular appeal was drawn into party politics. He was, of course, a Liberal-Radical like Cobden, Bright and Gladstone, those heroes of the Victorian manufacturer.

He threw himself into the excitement of speech-making, polling days and counting the votes, enjoying it all, much as another man might like a bottle of champagne. He was quite lacking in platform nerves, possessed a sense of humour and in debate he could hit back very hard. In vain did the prudent partner in that syndicate of personalities which made up William Lever plead business cares. The other impetuous Lever was always to be found sneaking away to address a meeting. He might have bought his way into a safe Liberal seat of the Left persuasion in the days when the Labour party was hardly born, and the real reformers were a group of revolutionary Liberals called Radicals; but he preferred a forlorn hope in a constituency which always returned a Tory. Lever threw himself at his Conservative opponent like a terrier attacking a mastiff, and was three times defeated. For his fourth attempt to enter Parliament he chose the division in which Port Sunlight is situated, but even there he made no real headway against innate conservatism. In those days public opinion was not used to the idea of a rich man wanting to change things. Millionaire reformers were unknown. Until at last, in the great landslide of 1906, the Liberals came into power with a

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huge majority, and, to his embarrassment, Lever was returned. He was over fifty, and his strong will had become set in its inflexible cause. Among those six hundred politicians at Westminster he was rather like an eagle invited to the parliament of the rooks.

He sat there on the Liberal benches, in the middle of King Edward's reign much as some English conquistador, fresh from his estates in colonial Virginia must have sat in the parliament of James the First, and wondered why, when the world was so large, the business of the House seemed so small. Lever threw himself into the procedure of the House of Commons and strove to master it, but he did not find the atmosphere congenial. Often, as he listened to those inconclusive debates, he wished to act like Cromwell, and while other members were busy with catching the Speaker's eye Lever's mind was busy, as usual, with definite and realizable schemes. While the Commons debated Chinese slavery, labour exchanges and reform of the House of Lords, Lever was thinking of the actual home of parliament itself.

He could not interest himself in the function that belonged to a building without thinking of its architectural form. He was irked at the way rain often spoiled the hours of relaxation on the terrace which runs along the River Thames, and he proposed that a second veranda should be built on top of the first. He had plans drawn, and his architectural eye was completely satisfied that the change would be an improvement. Probably, if he had been longer in Parliament, he would have wanted to reform the building as a whole. But Lever's building instinct could be fully gratified only in spheres where he was alone and supreme. In Port Sunlight he could build a whole street of handsome houses at a wave of the hand, but at Westminster those hands were tied by procedure. Nothing came of his idea of a two-storeyed terrace along the river.

He was in too much of a hurry, and Westminster does not care for impatient new-comers. Perhaps because of personal

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shyness, or because he did not really possess any vestige of the gift of ease, he was never at home in the club atmosphere of the Commons, though he was a good People's representative.

But although Lever's was not a really great parliamentary career, he did have one piece of luck, and with his usual skill in seizing an opportunity he used it well. He drew a place in the ballot, and became entitled to the rare privilege of introducing a Private Member's Bill. For his theme he chose 'The Old Age Pension'.

Retiring allowances for workers were already the rule at Port Sunlight, so that Lever could speak with the authority of the practical reformer. His proposal was to pay the old age pension to everyone on reaching the age of 75, for a beginning, and later at 70 and then 65. He focused attention on the advantages of the idea, and his bill reached a second reading. It was so obvious the House was sympathetic that the Liberal ministers stole Lever's thunder and introduced a government measure which eventually passed into law.

In due course the old age pension became known to some of its recipients as 'the Lloyd George', after the famous politician who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. Perhaps this is another case of a Vespucci acquiring honours due to Columbus, and if due credit is to be given, those certificates for the pension now paid to old people in thousands of post offices each week should be called 'Levers'.

One other proposal which he brought before Parliament shows the same pragmatism of his mind. He suggested that members of the House of Commons be paid salaries, and even produced evidence that this had been the custom before the seventeenth century. Once more Lever's idea startled the House, and his particular service was not to bring it to pass, but to prepare the way for others. In due course the Government took up the proposal and it became law. Perhaps, since he did not receive credit for the old age pension, it would be

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correct historical tradition for an M.P.'s salary to be called a 'Lever'.

Lever sat in the House of Commons for only four years: some members stay there a lifetime with much less achievement to their names. The imperial voice was calling him. Lever would have been more at ease in the sixteenth-century Parliament, among members who rode horseback into Palace Yard, fresh from their estates. He was not made for a modern deliberative assembly since he took little pleasure in the processes of collective thought. His gifts flowered best in the quick decision, the stresses of a fluctuating market and in great schemes which could be carried out only in his own way. This ordinary shareholder was not a willing collaborator with six hundred leisurely legislators.

No English public man is really accepted as a popular legend until he has won one of the classic horse races or been triumphant in a great law suit. The sporting instinct was strong in William Lever, though he never went to the races and never made a bet in his life. For that, the puritan influence of his boyhood under the sober eye of James Lever was always too powerful. But Lever enjoyed a public contest, and his pugnacious personality, his good-humoured face, were easily remembered; and now, as his antagonist in this national sport of going to law, he had a foeman of his own size, a rising newspaper proprietor, Alfred Harmsworth, who had just been made Lord Northcliffe.

Their quarrel arose over soap. Costs had been rising, both the cost of production and the crescendo of advertising. Although Lever Brothers was a powerful firm, it had many competitors, but now in the face of rising markets nine of these rival soap makers formed a pool. They decided to stand together and raise their prices: and to give themselves more solidarity they planned to exchange shares, to form indeed a sort of mutual trust, as self-protection against adverse economic conditions. Soap was by no means the only business in which such a thing

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has been done, and we can leave to others the decision as to whether combination between individual capitalists supposed to be in competition with one another is really in the interests of commerce. In this case what the soap makers were proposing to do was perfectly legal and above board. But Fleet Street's Napoleon had noticed these plans. He, too, was a champion of public morality.

Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail*, then just over ten years old, was as original a product of the century as Port Sunlight itself. Its novelty lay in expressing not only what the readers thought with their heads, but what they hoped, dreamed and feared in their hearts. The paper would make a discovery and suddenly it would become supremely important. On the second day it would be a sensation: on the third day it was a national phenomenon, and then for a longer or shorter period, according to Northcliffe's reading of the emotional thermometer, this particular fever would pulsate on the front page. Now he diagnosed an outbreak of this popular distemper over soap. The *Daily Mail* announced that England was concerned, alarmed, nay appalled, at what was going on among the soap makers. Day after day the symptoms of indignation grew. And soon it was obvious that the causal organism, the true promoter of this sinister affair, was William Lever, not perhaps the only wicked soap maker, but certainly the leader of their conspiracy. Lord Northcliffe had created a gigantic spectre, and soon the public became afraid of its own fear.

People began to buy less soap. That was the practical consequence of reading the *Daily Mail*. A sort of minor hysteria developed, and those eager buyers who had been persuaded by Lever's clever advertising that cleanliness was next to godliness, now behaved as though there were something unclean about Lever's soap, and the holders of two million preference shares (those clergymen, spinsters and widows whom Lever guarded day and night) saw their shares go down a pound apiece, while the firm's profits declined by forty thou-

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sand. The sole ordinary shareholder was a poorer man, and his prestige was threatened. That was the measure of the power of the *Daily Mail*, and also of the vulnerability of the business which Lever had created. Northcliffe, the arch-exponent of suggestion, now faced Lever, the arch-master of material.

The soap makers were obliged to act. They could not help themselves. The weight of a threepenny tablet of Sunlight soap was reduced by one ounce — with due warning to the customer. The competing firms took fright and the proposed exchange of shares was called off. Lawyers were called in and begged to find a method of protection against Lord Northcliffe's poisoned arrows. But the lawyers were not helpful. They shook their heads, and as much as said that Northcliffe could not be touched. But Lever had his monkey up. He called in further opinion, and in due course one of the sharpest legal brains of the century considered the brief as an abstract problem in the law of personal injury.

The barrister who now gave his mind to the serious predicament of the soap makers was F. E. Smith, afterwards to sit on the Woolsack as Lord Birkenhead, a dashing brilliant figure. He greatly enjoyed the mass of affidavits, newspaper cuttings and balance sheets. The bunch of documents was so formidable that Mr. F. E. Smith fortified himself with a bottle of champagne and two dozen oysters before sitting up all night to measure the injury which Northcliffe had done. When morning dawned in the windows of the Temple, Mr. F. E. Smith had made up his mind. The laconic opinion he wrote on the brief has become famous: 'There is no answer to this action and the damages must be enormous.'

With that laconic reassurance ringing in his ears, Lever promptly issued a writ suing Lord Northcliffe for libel, and the case came up at Liverpool. Port Sunlight was only across the River Mersey, and in those regions Lever was a well-known personality, so that everyone prepared to watch the contest. Sir Edward Carson, the Irish politician whose long hawk face,

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Hibernian brogue and prominent jaw had become much feared in the English Law Courts, was leading for Lever, who sat in the well of the court.

The *Daily Mail* was represented by the great commercial advocate Rufus Isaacs, afterwards Lord Reading, who was greatly respected as a most subtle and deadly cross-examiner of witnesses. But on this occasion he had not the advantage of having his client in court. Northcliffe preferred to use his personal power behind the scenes, rather than in the public eye, and in this case his absence told against him. William Lever the jury could see for themselves, no one could fail to note his bristling quiff of white hair and feel the vibrations of his personality as he answered questions with a perky yes and no, exuding self-confidence. He was quite unshaken by the suave probing of Rufus Isaacs who worked for hours to establish his case that this pool among the soap makers was really a conspiracy against the British public.

It was hard for the jury to see this stocky individualist Lever, with the strong Lancashire accent and open face, in the light of a dangerous conspirator, and as the case went on they heard Carson's jeering tones asking why Lord Northcliffe himself was not there in the witness box to be cross-examined about his motives as Lever had been; they began to make up their minds, which was an incorrect thing for a jury to do before they had heard the whole case, but a very natural result of Lever's cocksure answers. Members of the jury were not the only ones in court to form the impression that Lever had the best of the argument. One other, and very unexpected, person had reached the same conclusion.

Rufus Isaacs shared with Lever the habit of early rising, and next morning, several hours before the court was due to open, he was at work, and the more he considered his own client's chances the less he thought of them. This most adroit barrister had seen very clearly, during his cross-examination of Lever, the weakness of the *Daily Mail's* case.

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When the court was ready to open Rufus Isaacs met Carson on the steps outside, and the two counsel had an earnest conversation. Then, as the third day of the trial of *Lever v. the Daily Mail* opened in court, Rufus Isaacs asked permission to speak to his learned friend on the other side. Members of the jury held their breath. A sort of auction began in the well of the court. Rufus Isaacs would say something which Carson passed on to Lever who resolutely shook his head.

Rufus Isaacs had, in fact, advised Lord Northcliffe that he ought to settle the case by admitting the libel, and now the advocate was trying to fix as low as possible the inevitable damages which the *Daily Mail* would have to pay. The whispering continued between counsel while judge and jury looked on spellbound. The figure which Isaacs offered on behalf of Lord Northcliffe went up and up, and each extra ten thousand pounds was rejected with contempt by Lever.

For months he had smarted under the libels. His business prestige had been attacked, and even his shareholders had temporarily weakened their confidence in him. He had lost profits and had spent anxious hours in preparing this unnecessary case. Northcliffe was rich and powerful, and now he could well afford to pay the expenses of his little joust with the soap makers.

At last, after much bargaining from Rufus Isaacs, Lever heard a figure mentioned that was some recompense for all he had gone through at the hands of those light-hearted columnists in the *Daily Mail*. It was the largest sum of money ever to be awarded for a libel action in an English Court of Law. That was the sort of scale on which Lever felt entitled to be judged. On behalf of the defendants, Mr. Rufus Isaacs then formally apologized for the libels, and said the *Daily Mail* was ready to pay Mr. Lever fifty thousand pounds in consideration for the damage he had suffered.

The fact had beaten the fantasy, and Mr. F. E. Smith's prophecy had been perfectly correct. There was never such



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a victory at law. This action in Liverpool was followed by several others which nearly doubled the amount of damages that came to Lever. In all, Lord Northcliffe forfeited a quarter of a million pounds; there were dark days in Fleet Street. But the chairman of Port Sunlight was fêted in his own village, and even more remarkable received a round of cheers from all sides of the House of Commons when next he walked to his seat.

Lever took a further revenge upon Lord Northcliffe. Instead of using the money received in damages to recoup himself for loss of profit, he presented it to Liverpool University to endow a School of Tropical Medicine and a School of Russian Studies.

Clearly William Lever was a dangerous man to meddle with.

## CHAPTER IX

### PATRON OF ART

IN a previous chapter the culture of Andrew Carnegie was presented as having grown out of a very simple prompting — the desire of an uneducated man to fit himself for superior society. Carnegie forged and remade himself and achieved in the end a remarkable culture. But the course of Lever's development is entirely different. The chief object of his cultivation was not himself, but his world. He was an externalist, and his struggles were always directed to achieving a perfect outward form. To him, 'the good life' meant the good environment. His emotional hunger was not for learning within, but for harmony without. He had no ambitions to be fit for superior society, because he carried his own society about with him, and was entirely devoid of any sense either of superiority or inferiority. To him the physical surroundings of existence were so much plastic material to be moulded by his own singular art. He could not see a building without planning how it could be improved. As for the social arrangements of his time, work, wages and leisure, he would have liked to prune them ruthlessly, and refashion the parts into a more harmonious and better-designed whole. The most important manifestation of Lever's passion is found in his love of painting, sculpture and the artistic crafts.

In a corner of one of the galleries of the Lady Lever Memorial at Port Sunlight, stands under its glass dome a china shepherd, with, at his side, a charming shepherdess, a delicate pair of figures in smooth white porcelain. Just the sort of object seen upon many an overcrowded Victorian overmantel, and there indeed, beside the figures, is a photograph of such a fireplace in the cosy parlour, with its marble surround and gilt mirror, his

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own fireside in the small house in Wigan where William Lever went for comfort when his day of travelling salesmanship was over. This group of figures was Lever's first artistic purchase back in the Lancashire days when he was still working as his father's outside man. Today, in the company of the magnificent objects around them, those wonderful Oriental jars and Wedgwood plaques, this china shepherd and his fragile mate, seem intruders from an age of innocence into one of artistic opulence. Representing tender feeling rather than large passion they show a delicacy of perception which surprises us when found hidden away beneath Lever's obvious qualities. Lever took his natural faculty in hand, and it grew up, the young shepherds of the age of innocence became mature. The age of artistic simplicity changed to one of richness.

He pottered around antique shops, picking up china and furniture, and learned to follow the inscrutable verdicts of good taste. Besides, his business acumen told him that a collection based merely on personal idiosyncrasy would have no value: whereas the whole world of art was open to be conquered. It is easy for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Christie's sale-room, but not so easy for him to retain his judgment there. To understand Lever's achievement we must follow its course beyond the stage of mere 'collecting', to the moment when his fetish — love for objects — began to call up a corresponding passion for environment. He had learned to distinguish Sheraton from Chippendale, but it was less easy to place each object in its own individual surroundings, with an appropriate water-colour on the wall, or a carpet suitably placed, and such experiments made it imperative to alter the room itself. He must call in a builder and change the shape of the window; or deeply dissatisfied with the deal wood flooring he had to install a handsome stretch of oak parquet. Soon he was obliged to move to another house for his collections had burst out of his own home. His natural eye for elegance of form made him impatient with the sordid commonplace and tasteless sur-

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roundings of provincial England, and early in her married life Mrs. Lever became used to a noise which was to be the permanent ground bass in their perpetual removal from one house to another — the sound of builders altering walls and adding rooms. The peace of a finally completed home was something she never knew.

When he had larger rooms his collections grew more systematic. He had passed beyond the kingdom of a single piece to the continent of a whole period. He fell in love with the taste of that great Englishman Josiah Wedgwood, who more than a hundred years before had combined skill in manufacturing with passion for beauty, rather in the same proportions as Lever himself, and had given to English parlours a blend of utility and elegance. Lord Tweedmouth died, and his collection of Wedgwood plates, urns and bowls included also the original Graeco-Roman designs from John Flaxman. Lever could not resist that superb hoard of porcelain, those classical figures in endless procession of white silhouette against a rich background of duck-egg blue, those urns and elegant festoons appealed to his eye, and he purchased the whole of the Wedgwood collection.

It was the English schools of painting and craftsmanship that attracted him most, and soon his walls flowered with landscapes by that great English artist who showed the French impressionists their technique John Constable, the portrayer of April moods in trees and the sky. Lever gave rooms to the early sketches of J. M. W. Turner and Thomas Girtin, Turner's friend, and to de Windt. Perhaps Lever thought of Constables rather like raw materials, and his artistic scouts would report of the presence of a canvas for sale in the same spirit of mastery as news of a new palm oil estate. Yet with all this efficiency those pictures made their appeal to his eye and to his heart.

'Art,' he said, 'has always been to me a stimulating influence: it has taught me without upbraiding me, elevated me without humbling me.'

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He had never himself tried to paint, or to model clay, or to make a chair. In Lever's make-up there was nothing *arty-crafty*, and though he appreciated craftsmanship he had a royal indifference to the second-rate and dilettante products of inferior studios. He loved to arrange objects, to build up masses of form, to shade the colour of the walls to the shape of the contents, and as soon as he had produced a design to his own inward satisfaction his mind moved away. It has been said that he had no personal interest in paintings but always bought on the advice of experts. I think this to be a misjudgment of Lever. His habit of arranging different rooms in a house in contrasting styles challenged the fixed formula of his artistic advisers, but Lever took the functional point of view that in the course of centuries civilized man had gradually gained experience of the type of architecture suitable for the particular function of each room; he liked the Georgian style for large dinners, but for small and intimate gatherings he preferred the Tudor style. For a large music room he would choose the mode which he called 'Inigo Jones Renaissance', and in each of these rooms the furniture was in perfect harmony.

In the back of Lever's mind as his collections grew lay the plan that one day he would place them in a gallery where the public could come to enjoy the sort of influence which in his own case had stimulated without humiliation, and in the centre of Port Sunlight, on a large, grassy plot where several roads meet, he placed the gallery which holds his finest treasures.

It was named after the little girl with whom the robust Master Lever had played in Miss Aspinwall's Academy in Bolton. She had become Mrs. Lever when her husband was only twenty-one, and from those early days there had never been anyone else in his heart. It cannot be known how much her feminine nature had been the source of his abounding self-confidence ever since the years when they were children. He used to refer to the energy which this quiet and unassuming woman had given him, and he never lost his boyish desire to

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stand well in her eyes. His wife sympathized with his incredible visions that presently grew to sober realities, and she had gone with him on his journeys, even up the dangerous valleys of the Congo where no white woman ever penetrated before. She had borne patiently the loss of several children, and had been willing to move from house to house, from country to country, at the side of this implacable force her husband, the only person in the world to remain undisturbed by its restlessness.

Just before the first World War, Lever was left a widower, with an only son, and like the famous widower who created the *Taj Mahal* he summed up all his resources — of taste and possessions — to create a memorial that would endure beyond the life of man. He built his consolation in the Lady Lever Gallery which stands in a vacant space on the original plan that William Lever outlined on his drawing-board at the beginning of Port Sunlight.

The memorial contains five large galleries and sixteen smaller rooms, all crammed with pictures, chairs, quaint clocks, sideboards, tapestries, commodes and glass cases of porcelain. In the centre is a room hung with Gobelin tapestries, and at each end are marble peristyles where sculptured figures are posed between columns. One intimate apartment of this unusual museum is a perfect reproduction of a tiny music salon at Harewood House, Yorkshire, with a rich plaster filigree branching over the Wedgwood blue walls, after the design of the Adam brothers, and the perfect embodiment of eighteenth-century elegance.

There is a large group of pre-Raphaelite pictures which were being painted during the period of Lever's active life by Millais, Madox Brown, Rossetti and their friends. Holman Hunt's angelic choir boys chant against the dappled dawn on the roof of Magdalen College tower, while at the end of the largest gallery Lord Leighton's 'Daphnephoria' fills an entire wall, and seems to symbolize the pagan enjoyment Lever found in his pictures.

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The most original feature of the gallery is the set of Oriental porcelain, probably the finest anywhere in the world. Those massive jars designed in *famille-Noir* and *famille-Rose* were being manufactured by village craftsmen in China four hundred years ago, under the Ming and Kang-He emperors, and their cherry blossom, their pagodas and dragons speak of a vanished age in the ageless language of art.

One misses on these walls the talent of the French masters who were also painting while Lever was a young man, and whose work he must often have seen at exhibitions. The only regret that can be felt over Lever's taste is that in the years when Manet, Cézanne and Degas were the finest flower of European art, he purchased only Burne-Jones, Millais and Holman Hunt, perhaps through some determination to specialize in English works, or more likely through a particular limitation of his usually catholic taste. The eye is distracted too by pictures by academicians famous in the late Victorian age, but forgotten today, and their works look incongruous on these walls until we reflect that one day the wheel of fashion will revolve and some of Lever's choices may come to have a certain 'period' flavour.

The gallery is not all good, and some of its contents are poor.

Perhaps in choosing a picture Lever was too 'literary' and preferred a subject with an anecdote attached to it rather than one that was great in the appeal of its craftsmanship. That was the fault of his age. The wonder is that he chose so few indifferent pictures.

A fault in the arrangement of this magnificent collection is that it has proved too large even for those ample rooms whose dimensions were governed in turn by the ground plan of the village. That display of Chippendale, Sheraton and Hepplewhite, to say nothing of the china and pictures, demands twice the space, and those canvases on the walls could be seen better if one were able to take in their beauty in isolation.

The creator of this gallery often came to his treasures, and

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would give private interviews, sitting at a mahogany table against a background of tapestries, like a Renaissance duke. Visitors to the gallery might see his dynamic figure striding past, followed by a party of collaborators who listened for the deaf man's instructions ringing out in that quiet place full of the silent masterpieces which he could hear speaking to him more clearly than the voices of those who took from his strident tones the shape of his will. His eye took in quickly the tone of a porcelain jar, and henceforth if it pleased him, he would never rest until he had found for it the perfect situation. He was a most discriminating collector, and his picture galleries were the only spheres of his life where he obtained pure enjoyment, unalloyed with any sense of effort. We may regret that such a sumptuous array of artistic wealth is not placed where more people are likely to see it.

In Hertford House, London, a man of very different mould had made a collection which is as much representative of the eighteenth-century taste as Lever's is true to the nineteenth. The worldly Marquis of Hertford was magnificent in his pleasures and grand in his vices, but he had a most unerring judgment in art, and a strange likeness, a paradox of nature and psychology, appears between the aristocrat who was wicked to the very end, and the masterful nonconformist manufacturer.

Both knew the appeal of artistic creations, and how quickly beautiful things can be lost, and both strove to find in them defences against the commonplace and misery of life. The Marquis lived and died alone, a recluse among his private collection which no one ever saw. Lever threw his treasures open to the world. But each of the two men, so dissimilar in every other way, had captured the authentic thrill open only to those who have enlarged the imagination and schooled their taste.



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To William Lever, public aesthetics was just as important as public hygiene. Impatient with anything ugly or inconvenient, he was the systematic opponent of his own countrymen's tradition of makeshift, and their neglect of physical surroundings. This made for him more enemies than all the rest of his public work. People had to tolerate his masterful ways when applied to his own business, but when it came to the places where they lived they disliked having good done to them by force. An Englishman's home was his castle, but Lever wished to pull down the walls and make it more habitable.

England is rich in the loveliest towns and incomparable villages. Cambridge, Cirencester, Burford, Rye and countless others, they have grown up out of native instinct. That great architect Tradition has done his work and the effects are more pleasing than if a dozen planners had made their blue-prints.

Intuitive good taste had kept them safe — until the railway came. Then, what a violent contrast. Railways and factories were allowed to grow up independent of good design. Look at the railway station at Oxford if you want the counterpart of her colleges, or at a nineteenth-century factory in Derbyshire as a contrast to Chatsworth House. The chaos produced by this breach in traditional design is seen in those great cities which grew after the railway age — Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds — and the absence of any sense of form has become responsible for half the congestion and misery of our country today. True, the great civic builders of these Victorian cities started out with fine conceptions. The centre of Liverpool, for instance, has some grand public buildings conceived like Greek temples, and surrounded by space and dignity. But how quickly

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this instinct of grandeur seems to have died out. A few streets from this splendid heart of the city begin the slums, stretching their way towards acres of disillusionment.

The Victorian theory was, of course, that the things of the soul were more important than any worldly habitation made of bricks and mortar. But fate has ordained that the spirit of Victorianism should pass away, whilst the squalor and shabbiness and gloom of those slums should remain.

To Lever, the soul of the country was located in its public buildings, and if these were not beautiful and harmonious then the soul would die. Quite early in his life, and without teaching, he acquired a distaste for his surroundings, while keeping a strong affection for the people who lived there, and fighting for principles, he was high-handed and uncompromising. He began to preach town planning with that persistence which had pushed Sunlight soap. Lever thought that the sad failure of English towns to live up to their reputation was lack of aesthetic vision. The people who dwelled in these mean streets, and especially those they elected to serve them on public bodies, had no artistic initiative, no real desire for space and beauty, that harmony which to Lever was so important a part of civic pride. His plan was that every town should buy land on its outskirts and thus be able to expand itself with opportunities for fresh air and correct balance between buildings and open spaces.

Certainly Lever was no aesthetic dreamer, and once his private village was complete, he turned his attention to other towns and gave them practical demonstrations in the art of civic development. There was his birthplace, Bolton, whose ancient Norman-French name of Bolton-le-Moors became incorporated later in his own baronial title. Though not so formless as most Lancashire cities, Bolton was sadly lacking in distinction. A new civic centre was being discussed, and when he saw the plans he felt that a grand opportunity was being missed. Bolton ought to have a real civic centre, an art gallery, library,

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museum and elegant set of public buildings approached by a causeway. He had a much more ambitious plan drawn and offered himself to pay part of the cost. The complete design was both bold and expensive, the sort of thing which Lever in his own business would have carried into execution by giving a few orders. But to the citizens of his birthplace it seemed grandiose. They recoiled from its largeness, and in the end the full scheme was not carried out, though perhaps Lever's impetus did not entirely fail, for the town hall did finally have a certain originality.

Lever's skirmish with the City of Liverpool on the subject of civic planning shows how divergent his ideas were from those of his time. He owned a large estate of moorland so situated near the city boundary that one day Liverpool would be obliged to take more of its water supply from there. Even before he had purchased the estate Lever had pressed the Liverpool Corporation to buy it, but the response had been negative.

But then the civic rulers changed their minds, and woke up to the fact of what they had missed in this stretch of land so appropriately situated. The corporation actually promoted in Parliament a private bill to enable them to take Lever's estate by compulsion. But he was not the sort of man to be compelled to do anything. Lever sent his lawyers to Westminster, and put stiff opposition to the bill. It was one thing to make a generous offer of a piece of land, but entirely different to have the gift wrested from him by force.

However, the Liverpool Bill was passed, and the immediate result was victory for the corporation. But Lever was to have his revenge. Parliament not only allowed him to keep for his own use the private portion of the estate, but decreed that another part of it was to be named the 'Lever Park', and Liverpool was made to pay him in compensation for the land they took by force, double the amount at which Lever had offered it to them in the first instance.

He had thus not only compelled the city to own boundary

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land necessary for the city's welfare, but he had received more money than ever he asked, and the Lever Park as well. Such triumph did not make him any the more popular in the City of Liverpool. No wonder Lever's donations to a town were as much feared as the Trojan horse. As Lord Northcliffe had found, he was a dangerous person to meddle with. When the Liverpool affair was over Lever created a freakish memento to the conflict. He erected in the Lever Park a scale model, in stone, of the mediæval Liverpool castle which had been removed to make way for modern improvements.

His next practical demonstration in the proper use of land values was given to his neighbour at Port Sunlight, the town of Birkenhead, which had three times rejected him as a candidate for Parliament. Birkenhead was itself the creature of town planning; its rectangles, straight streets, had been laid out in the 1840s rather like an American city, but here as in other English towns the first civic inspiration had died out. Now Lever proposed that the town should make up for past mistakes by developing as a satellite town a large rural estate which lay at its backdoor. Not able to contain his patience he first bought the land himself and to show the way in which the replanning should be tackled he began to develop the area according to the best modern theories. Like the Romans, he first built the roads.

His architect had traced a series of winding lanes over the map, but Lever rubbed them out, and ruling a number of straight lines said peremptorily: 'That is how I want the roads.' And so it was done.

Lever's Roman roads across this rural property were heaped with ridicule. People enjoyed the joke of the wide carriage way in the centre, bordered by two rows of leafy trees, and then two outer strips intended for horse traffic, while at either end were pillars with handsome wrought-iron gates such as English gentlemen in the seventeenth century placed at the entrance to their parks. As usual, Lever's imagination bounded ahead, and

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he saw that roads of the future must be made straight to save time, and wide enough to accommodate streams of the new age of the automobile. His grasp of the future was not merely a theoretical design on paper, it was a complete materialization, miles of an ultra-modern road system made in 1913 when the motor car was hardly more than an expensive toy.

Alas, the offer to acquire this blue print of a future age was rejected. The great iron gates were closed, and Lever's magnificent carriage avenue became as grass-grown as the fosse-way. Its only passenger was himself and the iron portals were opened each day to let his car pass. For years those roads remained a monument to unappreciated vision. But the passage of time brings its vindication, and today that triple ribbon of road that was so much scoffed at in 1913 is no more than adequate for modern traffic.

It was not to be expected that such opportunities in the form of gifts from Lever should be welcome. In a history of a thousand years, English communities have learned to resist the local magnate — whether he was bishop or feudal lord who attempted to dictate how they should plan their lives. The very essence of that 'civic' spirit which Lever wished to develop was communal and organic, and it could hardly be imposed from outside. English towns might have come round to Lever's ideas but they were touchy about his methods, and the fact that he was generally correct aroused a storm of protest.

Lever possessing both the conception and the means of execution saw England being conquered by her ribbon developer and her speculative builders, and her old towns being throttled by their collars of uncontrolled suburbia and he felt called to act as an aesthetic Oliver Cromwell taking the law of good taste into his own hands. Port Sunlight had been a work of art because it was the fruit of his own guiding will, and to him the prospect of public planning was just as vivid, so that he never bothered to be conciliatory with public bodies. He could not conceive how hard it was for average men to follow his own

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difficult road, and they in their turn did not have any realization of his own inward necessity to ride his demon of power in a spirit of constructiveness. In theory, planners like Lever ought not to exist, but if they were not sometimes to spring up and force their will on their times, we should have to pray for them.

Even after the Boer War he said: 'We have spent £280 millions on the fighting; less than a quarter of that sum would solve for ever the burning question of housing.'

Another and greater war took place, and in 1918, this was his comment on the phrase 'a land fit for heroes to live in': 'Before we talk of capturing German trade, let us compare the condition under which the German and the American lives with the conditions prevailing in Lancashire towns and villages.' Lever's comparison was very unfavourable to his own country, and it made little impression upon his fellow countrymen.

Now, after an even greater war, we are still seeking a real solution of the housing problem.

Who can measure the material loss to England that Lever's notions of town planning were not applied a generation earlier? Only today, fifty years after he began his work, have we come to realize the meaning of the Green Belt that should encircle every city, when slowly the colour of England is changing from green to brick-red.

What a tragedy Lever's gifts were so fettered to private business when his real vision was so communal, and that his white-hot energy could not have been used to build a Platonic city in our midst.

Whatever Lever accomplished was only a fragment of what he conceived in his ideal of a cleaner and more harmonious environment. The two previous Men of Stress in this book realized themselves in speculative ends, Woodrow Wilson in an ideal of perfect government, Andrew Carnegie in his dream of enlightenment. But William Lever's aim was more concrete and tangible. To him, beautiful environment was part of the obligation of business.

## THE PLATONIC CITY

Of course, he never realized his platonic city in bricks and roads and public squares: but certainly he lived a faithful citizen of that city, and of no other, and if he was unappreciated at home he could always turn to the dark continent. Who on the banks of the Congo would oppose him with doctrinaire theories? His enemies there were sunlight and damp, tropical storms and entangling vegetation, snakes and mosquitoes. He must have turned with relief away from those petty disputations with English town councils, to the plans of his new settlement at Leverville on the great river, to the designs for those stern-wheelers, and his medical and maternity services among thousands of people who had never known a health authority. There, at any rate, was the inexhaustible opportunity for his resourceful will.

Lever's outstanding public gift was Stafford House, London, situated between two royal residences and a famous headquarters of social life in the nineteenth century, visiting which Queen Victoria said to her hostess the Duchess of Sutherland: 'I come from my house to your palace.' Its garden borders on the Mall and St. James's Park, and its grand staircases with frescoes after Tiepolo had witnessed the great events of Victoria's reign. And now it was to be pulled down to make way for some enormity of incongruous brick. Lever purchased the building and presented Stafford House to the nation.

Once more, alas, there was canker in the apple. Lever decided that the name be changed to Lancaster House, and he conducted a forcible correspondence with the Government Department which equally insisted upon looking this gift-horse in the mouth. In the end he had his way, and the grand staircase of Lancaster House saw another great rejuvenation when King George the Fifth opened it as the headquarters of the London Museum and the centre for Government hospitality and official conferences. When this opening ceremony was being arranged, it is said that King George looked over the list of guests and pertinently inquired why the man who had

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presented this munificent gift was not included among those who were to be presented. The ire aroused in official quarters by this high-handed man from Lancashire had been very great, and they had tried keeping him in the background at the inaugural ceremony. Only the King's expressed command secured recognition for one of the most generous of his subjects.

Never, it seemed, was a gift from this man to be received without resistance.



## BUSINESS MAN

THE ambitious wholesale grocer who had borrowed a few thousand from his father to manufacture soap had, before the first World War, built up an independent economic sovereignty in two hemispheres. It was founded impregnably upon a habit that would never go out of date or out of fashion, the simple act of washing. Each increase of civilization spread the cult of hygienic godliness. Soap was the first protection against communicable disease, it was indispensable for intimate association between numbers of human beings. In fact, the more the peoples of the world crowded into cities, the more they needed cheap soap. Only the primitive savage could afford to be without it and presently even he would fall for the propaganda of Sunlight.

To make this international trade possible Lever invented the 'daughter' company, and later the 'associated' company, outwardly independent, yet controlled from Port Sunlight. They were situated overseas — in Belgium, the United States, Germany, New Zealand and elsewhere — but their direction came from leaders who had been chosen by Lever personally, and sent out with clear-cut instructions and a large measure of his own faith. His business methods he summed up in the saying: 'Organize, deputize, criticize.' Whatever they did, it was certain to become known to the chairman; if they failed, he would judge between negligence and undeserved ill luck, and if they produced success, they were rewarded handsomely with directorships.

Sir Angus Watson in his young days had been a salesman of soap, and he had experienced the terrible power which that organization possessed over its human instruments. He left Lever Brothers to begin business on his own account, but Lever

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bore him no ill will, and when later on a factory was to be opened in California, he made an offer to this independent young man that he should come back as manager. Lever was about to go abroad as he made this proposal. He said:

‘Think it over, and send me a cable of acceptance. One word will be enough, ACCEPTSON.’

‘But what if I decline?’ inquired Angus Watson.

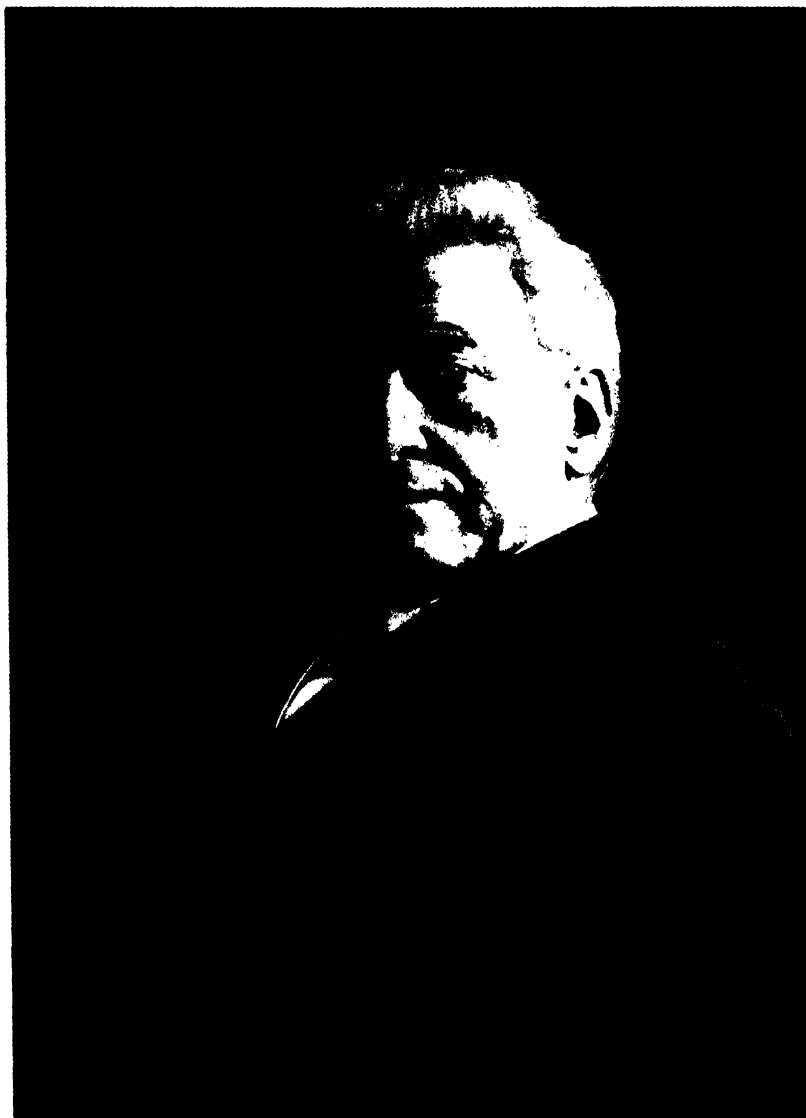
‘Then make it REJECTSON. But I think you will accept.’

Lever went on his journey, and in due course received the message that showed that one young man preferred independence to the splendid servitude as head of Lever’s Californian Company.

In time, Angus Watson created a large business of his own, and during the first World War, when there was difficulty in moving money across the world, he went to Lever for advice. By an irony of chance Angus Watson needed a million pounds to be credited at once in San Francisco, California, to finance an order for the British Government.

Without a moment’s hesitation Lever called on his bank, and one million sterling was placed immediately to the credit of the man who had declined to become his collaborator. The promptness and simplicity of this gesture obscured its size, and all Lever’s affairs were now conducted in terms of that magnitude, as the greater became his organization, the more imperious his desire to make it still vaster. His brain seemed an experiment in perpetual motion, and of recreation, sport, relaxation, or repose he understood nothing. ‘What astonishes me about men,’ Lever said, ‘is their complacency, the quickness with which they reach the saturation point.’ But his astonishment was nothing to perpetual surprise of others as they watched the almost faultless operations of his mind and his incredible energy that seemed like a force of nature.

Lever was proficient in handling money, and he could outwit adroit financiers, more as a mental exercise than as a serious occupation.



VISCOUNT LEVERHULME



## BUSINESS MAN

One day Mr. Ernest Terah Hooley called at Port Sunlight with a business proposition. His rocket was then at the height of its parabola of prosperity. He financed huge companies which handled anything from bicycles to real estate, and millions of paper values and inflated profits passed through his hands and grew larger still. And now Hooley calmly asked Mr. Lever to sell Lever Brothers to him as a going concern.

Another man who had dedicated his life to building up such a personal organization would have been annoyed at such impertinence, but Lever invited Hooley to discuss the matter over lunch. The adroit company promoter put his cards on the table, announced he was determined to take on a big thing; if Lever were to decline to sell Lever Brothers, Hooley said he would go ahead in another direction, by Jove, he would snap up the Bovril Company. This ingenious Irishman who handled companies as though they were aces and spades, found Lever very sympathetic. After lunch the host said that it was his custom to take a rest in the afternoon. He would think over the proposition while he rested. Would Mr. Hooley stay and look round the garden? Certainly, Mr. Hooley was delighted, and he inspected the artificial lagoon, dotted with small islands which Lever had made in his grounds, and sauntered among the rhododendrons. Later on Lever appeared once more, looking fresh after his rest; he told Hooley that, on reflection, he had decided not to sell his business after all. The financier returned to London. Soon it became rumoured that the magician was interested in Bovril, and shares began to soar, but even Hooley himself must have felt a shock of surprise on discovering that a large block of those same Bovril shares were held by no other person than Mr. W. H. Lever.

While Hooley was viewing the lagoon and the rhododendrons during the hour supposedly dedicated by his host to rest, Lever had been on the telephone to his brokers, instructing them to buy every Bovril share they could lay their hands on. All that came out of that visit of Hooley's to Port Sunlight was a nice

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little profit for Lever, which was presently invested in Chippendale sideboards and further improvements in that garden.

The man who could do such things — was he the same being as he who could spend hours arranging Wedgwood urns? It was difficult to see the hard business executive in that genial man with the loud laugh who, hard of hearing, sat on the front row to enjoy a performance of the *Pirates of Penzance*, given by the amateur actors of Port Sunlight, or the sprightly waltzer who exhausted every partner. Or was he the same individual as the Lever who loved to address the lads of a Bolton Sunday school?

The preference shareholders of Lever Brothers, and the co-partners whom it was his humour to call his 'fellow partners', always enjoyed the chairman's annual address. He told them of the palm forests they owned in Africa, of their fleet of tankers carrying oil all over the world. He set them laughing with a homely Lancashire joke, and somehow gave them the idea that they were doing all the work. The shareholders went away from the annual meeting well satisfied, and with the feeling they managed their soap business extremely well, with a splendid chairman to serve their interests. Sir William Lever indeed was not one man, but rather a syndicate of men.

What a revolution his methodizing talent had produced in soap manufacture! We speak with awe of the social changes introduced by the cinema and the petrol engine; but surely the influence of cheap soap upon the domestic arts has been the greatest service of chemistry to ordinary life. It was indeed no accident that Lever should have been interested in town planning while the private side of his life — his open-air bedroom and his morning cold bath — symbolize his commercial success that was founded on this very simple change in social habits. Even Port Sunlight was too small, and he must chase five times round the world to discover new fulcrums in which to Lever up the universe. Certainly, had Dr. Samuel Smiles been spared to

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publish another edition of his book *Self-help*, he would have devoted a whole chapter to this man who told the Sunday school that 'he would never believe in a deity who would treat his children so unfairly and unjustly as to make money making possible to some and impossible to others'.

That was Lever's solid Victorian faith, the truly democratic and Protestant conception of the deity. For him, the only difference between William Lever and the rest of the world was the act of free will that determined him to devote his talents to creating a prodigious business.

When he was past seventy he paid a visit to John D. Rockefeller who was over eighty, and two monarchs of nineteenth-century capitalism exchanged civilities like wary lions. The American was tall and dessicated, with a slow manner hiding his great shrewdness. His vegetarian diet, his paper suit and his daily game of golf formed the regime that was carrying him on towards the century of his years. Beside him, the stocky active soap maker seemed an obstreperous boy, and to prove his youthfulness Rockefeller threw his leg, both legs alternately, several times over the back of a chair.

Someone had remarked in introducing them that the two men must have very much in common, and Leverhulme promptly brought up the subject dear to the heart of millionaires, by saying that the difference was that Mr. Rockefeller had been able to make money in business, whereas he himself never could.

But Mr. Rockefeller was not ready to allow to pass without comment the assertion that he had ever made money, and in a flash replied that he was sorry to hear what Lord Leverhulme said because he was just about to ask if he could lend him some. After these preliminaries the millionaires discussed life on more realistic terms.

What Leverhulme said in jest, that he never could make money, was true in the ulterior sense which jokes have. He possessed the true knack of making money, but also the gift

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of spending. It was of no interest to Leverhulme to accumulate a great treasure. He was by nature a craftsman and a manufacturer, rather than a financier, and the money which passed through his hands went to feed his constructiveness. Rockefeller never explored the heart of darkness in Africa, and the spending of his prodigious fortune was done by others.

In due course, Sir William Lever, Bt., became ennobled. The thought of such a conventional honour coming to such an unorthodox man, is incongruous. Yet Lever as a lord was no different, and his public responsibilities were no greater. Perhaps the only real change was the way in which he signed his name. He took as his motto a saying of the Lancashire Levers and a plain statement of the leading motive of his life: '*I scorn to change or fear*', and he chose as the title of his barony a combination of his own name with that of his departed wife who had not lived to see him enter the House of Lords.

The new dignity made no change in his style of living. Over sixty, Leverhulme had become an elder statesman of commerce, but he never slowed down. Living still in four or five houses, journeying without pause, looking after his sisters and buying those few works of John Constable which had hitherto eluded him, this strenuous life was more interesting than repose, and he would never go without that large bowl of tea which came to him in the early morning or late afternoon. That tea was the sole indulgence of his abstemious life. A good, homely drink, it symbolized his favourite form of entertainment, the party of business friends he delighted to have around him, exchanging stories, or watching a cinema film. He was more than ever in demand at Sunday schools and banquets, where business men would leave off eating to applaud his speech, and while everyone around him was hilarious upon champagne, Lord Leverhulme was the most entertaining speaker on the programme, though he had taken only a mouthful. There, as in the Commons where he had sat only for four years, he insisted on practical issues. When the decimal system came up Lever-



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hulme made a speech proposing that the rule of ten be applied to the British coinage.

Their lordships on their scarlet benches, hearing this forcible speaker expound his well-considered idea, must have shuddered at his denigration of the sacred pound sterling. If that hallowed symbol of twenty shillings value were to disappear, what was to be done with those hoary measurements the rod, pole and perch? Landowners, as so many of them were, must have feared for the safety of their acres. Were these to be transformed into foreign *hectares*? How would the working man take the disappearance of his pint in favour of the half litre? When the decimal system is mentioned every prejudice comes out into the open.

Before the astonished members of the Upper House, he explained his own favourite plan for reforming the coinage. Beginning with the halfpenny, he proposed to work the change in an upward direction, making one hundred halfpennies equal to an entirely new coin — to be named the 'royal' — which would be the rough equivalent of the American dollar, while five royals would make up a 'guinea'.

But the bankers and economists wished to do the thing from the opposite end, that is beginning at the top, with the pound of a thousand units, and working downwards to the penny consisting of five units. Leverhulme argued from the retail point of view, based on his instinctive knowledge of the spending habits of British housewives. He wished to leave the halfpenny alone, for that humble coin made all the difference between profit and loss in the sale of a bar of Sunlight soap. To him, world commerce was nothing but a gigantic aggregation of small individual sales in retail shops, and manufacture was merely a means to supply these millions of petty demands. He knew well the tiny margin upon which the average household budget keeps its equilibrium. He was out of sympathy with the bankers' mind, which meditates upon gold, loans, credit, exchange and other high conceptions.

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Any reasonable decimal system would surely be of supreme advantage today to Great Britain in her struggle for her share of the world's markets. Would it not, in the present system, be of supreme advantage to possess a coin which could be quoted easily in terms of dollars and cents? On this occasion Leverhulme's advocacy did not have the effect upon the House of Lords which Mr. Lever had exercised upon the House of Commons in respect of old age pensions. The decimal coinage has never passed into law; it received only that sentence of oblivion — a Royal Commission. Leverhulme produced a second minority report advocating his royal and his guinea, but he was a minority of one. The commercial life of Great Britain continues in twelves, when her customers abroad still have an invincible preference for counting in tens.

At the end of the first World War their Lordships debated the dangerous subject of labour unrest, and on this Leverhulme's speech was like a powerful blast of fresh air let in to an overheated room. He scouted the idea, which some nervous speakers had put forward, that the British worker was a Russian Bolshevik, and he assured them that what was called 'labour unrest' was really a healthy sign, because it meant higher aspirations and a genuine desire for progress. As for strikes — he said that deplorable though they might be, they had been the means of advancing wages. Workers had been obliged to protect their interests in this way, nevertheless, workers tended to over-estimate the size of industrial profits. If an arrangement had been made at the beginning of the war between employers and workers, that instead of wage increases the workers should have all the increased profits made from war contracts, they would have made a very bad bargain. In fact, the rise in war-time wages had been five times the increase in profits. He spoke of co-partnership; the one criticism which Lever co-partners made was that their dividends were not great enough, they had an inflated idea of the firm's surplus at the end of the year. British workmen were welcomed, he said, in

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the United States, at double the rate of pay received in Britain. It was worth while for employers and employed to get together to increase wages and shorten hours. 'We shall then find that a strike will be merely a prelude to a consideration of the question, and that quickly and readily we shall not only raise ourselves as a producing nation so that our goods are more welcome in every country in the world than they were before the war . . . and in this process we shall have taken the only course that will enable us to discharge our heavy load of debt.' Leverhulme was saying in 1918 the same things which industrial leaders have said after the second World War.

Leverhulme's understanding of industrial problems was far in advance of the experience of most members of the Upper House, because he himself had solved those problems. In such affairs it is always the practical man who is the optimist, and there are no pessimists so great as the frustrated philosophers who see all the difficulties but never felt in themselves the creative power needed to overcome them. Leverhulme's extraordinary persistence in the face of industrial dilemmas made him go on until he had found the right way. His most characteristic contribution to social economics, next to co-partnership, is his idea of the six-hour day. Briefly summarized, his proposal came to this: let the machine do the work, and let it work longer. Arrange the working day differently, so that out of the twenty-four hours the machines are turning for at least eighteen, and they can give maximum service before they are worn out or obsolete. When machines are thus able to take the load, the man may work shorter hours, at higher wages, and the real production of goods will be greater than ever.

Leverhulme believed in more leisure for the workers, and he thought that part of this should, in the case of the young, be filled with some sort of extra education. Only education, both academic and practical, during the adolescent years would produce the supply of foremen, managers and technical men

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necessary for commerce. But more than that, education would create a leisure-enjoying people. Perfectly true, he never himself enjoyed repose and relaxation as most of his workers conceived them. His own form of leisure was dynamic and kinetic, consisting of art, planning and travelling, but it was nevertheless as much the consequences of his business activity as the wages of each factory worker at Port Sunlight were the result of hours at the machine. To Leverhulme leisure to create what he wished was the supreme goal of a busy life.

But that was not the way the workers saw it. To the average view, Leverhulme was an irrepressible machine, driving onward to more profits. If he advocated the six-hour day, it must be to interfere with the recreation of his employees, and cause them to grow even more like machines. A six-hour day meant trespassing on the week-end, reorganizing evening social life, and the workers of Port Sunlight preferred to work longer, thereby keeping their programme of leisure to what it always had been.

The capital of the Lever companies was nearing fifty million pounds, or two hundred million dollars, and the number of affiliated and associated enterprises was over fifty, with Leverhulme inspirer of them all. This gigantic international machine was producing hundreds of different articles, but they depended upon the fruit of that tropical oil palm, and the simple chemical process which occurs when vegetable oil is attacked by caustic soda. And now Leverhulme was over sixty-five, but his power to ride the tiger never faltered. It seemed as though he was infallible and, in spite of his seeming impetuosity, incapable of making a mistake.

The moment of triumph is full of danger. The instant of supreme achievement is the point of greatest weakness. When the faculties are most ripely adjusted to their task, when the material world shows itself most obedient to the will, and destiny has yielded completely to the embrace of the strong, that is the point when a sudden shifting of circumstances, one

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of those utterly unforeseeable changes of fate cause the temporary blindness that presages ruin. Leverhulme's life had been one of hard work and monotonous success. Can that be considered in the proper sense a really great or full life? If we wish to see him at his greatest, we demand to watch how he behaved in adversity.

A Man of Stress does not possess the ordinary measure of time; he must always act as though he held the secret of immortality. In the year 1917, at the age of sixty-six, Leverhulme was still acting as though he had twenty years to complete his plans. The challenge to his triumph came unexpectedly from the most isolated, sparsely populated and industrially negligible part of Great Britain.

## CHAPTER XII

### ISLE OF LEWIS

ONE day during the darkest period of the first World War, when Lord Leverhulme opened *The Times*, he saw an advertisement of an unusual property for sale. This time, it was not a palm-oil plantation; it was merely a sporting estate, in fact a whole island in the Scottish Hebrides dedicated to shooting for deer and fishing for salmon. At once a responsive string vibrated in Leverhulme. Surely, this was the island he had visited with his wife, far away back at the end of the 'seventies, before he had even begun to make soap. A picture came back. A small fishing port crowded with boats, superb stretches of moorland, a sombre, yet irresistible melancholy which had never faded throughout those years.

The very name and memory of this island appealed to the elemental part of him, and summoned all his forces to conquer its primitive resistance. How did the man who made a fortune through modern commercial organization come to fall in love with this inaccessible remoteness? What was the connection between the eye that loved Wedgwood vases, oriental porcelain, and the mind drawn towards the inarticulate mystery of Lewis? Ever since his wife's death he was a lonely, deaf man, self-absorbed in his huge schemes, bereaved of her understanding, and striving unconsciously to make each enterprise a memorial to her. At sixty-five he was youthful still in body, and vigorous in mind, and he fell a victim to the strange spell of this remote loneliness. On impulse he decided to inspect this estate which nobody else seemed to want. It was his fateful year, when everything seemed still to turn to success.

Across a submarine-infested strait he sailed to take a look

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at his new prospect. There rising above the small fishing port of Stornoway was a gaunt Victorian castle surrounded by trees, but elsewhere the island was bare, a mere shell of hard rock, covered by a chameleon integument of heather turning purple, grey or fawn, and often shrouded in mist. That treeless landscape possessed an archaic appeal, the aspect of a place which has known human life long before civilization. It was full of remnants of early temples and altars, and on its west coast, overlooking the Atlantic, was a stone circle as complete and mysterious as Stonehenge. Around its rocky coasts on the edge of the sea lived thirty thousand people in their small, almost Neolithic houses thatched like beehives, and they spoke their impenetrable thoughts in an almost incomprehensible language. These people made their living by 'crofting', that is a simple method of sowing corn on a few acres of scanty soil, grazing sheep and cows on the hillside, cutting squares of peaty turf for fuel, with occasional fishing, and now, at the end of the first World War, thousands of men flocked back from the Navy with no aim of any way of life except that primitive crofting existence between a stony soil and inhospitable sea.

There was that large, gloomy castle which an early Victorian proprietor had built overlooking the harbour. In a local shop Leverhulme came across a book of interiors, priced ninepence, and he began to plan how that old house could benefit by some wise reconstruction. There were a dozen copies of the picture book left over, old stock which the proprietor never expected to sell; Leverhulme bought them all, but cannily he paid a wholesale price of sixpence each.

Then on impulse he bought the property.

The world waited to hear what Leverhulme meant to do with his new possession. His purpose could not be to kill the deer, grouse and salmon, so of course the world concluded that he meant to squeeze out some new kind of profit, probably connected with the making of soap.

Lewis had been the theme of endless official reports, and

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many a scheme based on them had perished under the wind and the rain. The laird who bought the place eighty years before had been, like Leverhulme, a successful business man, but the estate was an insatiable rent roll which produced demands instead of dividends; while government departments had reached the sombre conclusion that Lewis had better be left to its own archaic devices, since no expenditure of public money ever seemed to satisfy its bottomless needs. Yet this island that was so little favoured by nature produced large families of the finest human stock.

The man who took on such a burden of proprietorship was indeed gambling with nature. Leverhulme never doubted that he would be successful. The austerity of the place was a challenge to his constructive power, and now, surrounded by business advisers, visionaries and Hebridean flatterers, he began his work of regeneration.

What was his aim?

Leverhulme never concealed his objective behind words and now before an attentive audience of Lewis people he explained that he intended to set up in the island itself modern industries based on the richest fishing grounds of Western Europe. He showed them a new sort of map, with concentric circles drawn around the port of Stornoway, and stretching away into the distance of seas as far as Iceland. Lord Leverhulme's new tenants listened absorbed to his plans for a canning factory with a fleet of ships bringing in fish to their town in quantities greater than ever imagined, and they pictured it going forth in tins all over the globe. Living there on the sea they had not fully understood what a plenteous harvest it was capable of giving once the master organizer of soap had gone to work upon it.

The well-practised technique of commercial organization now began. The maxim — Organize, Deputize, Criticize — was felt in countless ways, and the tempo of change such as followed Leverhulme everywhere invaded the lethargic affairs of the



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island like a tornado. The canning factory where the wasted surplus of the fishing grounds was to be turned into wealth rose from concrete foundations; a fish-preserving expert from Norway was there to demonstrate the most modern way of preserving herrings and mackerel; new subsidiary companies, all with surprising names ending in the word 'Limited', were started seemingly for every purpose under the sun, and the headquarters of the Chamberlain of the Lews, that dignified personage who collected rents from the crofters, now became their registered office, with a row of brass plates on the door. 'We shall work on business lines,' said the new proprietor, 'and have nothing to do with philanthropy.' It was all very good. The ancient despair of these Gaels was charmed away whenever they saw this grey-haired man of seventy driving through their streets in one of his fleet of gamboge-painted cars.

With new methods of fishing, the proprietor told them, their catch would be multiplied into a miracle of the fishes. Well-equipped boats would bring it to Stornoway, fast carrier ships would convey it to the railway in which he had taken shares in order to secure swift priority. There was no limit to the haul of fish, but an outlet was needed to bring them to the customer throughout Britain. In an instant Leverhulme's ingenious mind called into being an entirely new organization of three hundred and sixty retail shops, and a fresh hybrid was added to the roll of highland names. He called it Mac Fisheries.

One stately window of the Lews Castle held a surprising object, and frequently the proprietor was seen to glance at it from different angles. Inside that window was a round tin bearing the words LEWIS CANNED FISH, and after many trials Leverhulme had discovered the most effective printing of those words which would presently go forth into the windows of every shopping street throughout Britain. While others were thinking of scenery and salmon fishing, the Laird of Lewis was dreaming of corner shops: well did he understand the magic of the label on a tin.

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Then there was the tweed industry, a poorly remunerated sideline of the crofters who sheared their sheep, dyed the wool, and wove on old handlooms a blanket material renowned for its pungent smell. Lever began to persuade the Lewis people to buy their thread from factories instead of spinning it themselves on the old hand wheels, and he organized the marketing of the finished cloth.

Schemes spawned, they grew precociously, they became limited companies overnight; schemes for reclaiming barren peat by draining and fertilizing; better harbours for the small villages; planting fir trees and cultivating osiers to make baskets, there was no end to the resourcefulness of the master mind. The island was explored by geologists searching for hidden wealth, aeroplanes were talked of as an aid to the fishermen by spotting the shoals of herring. There was no limit to the business that could be made to prosper in this barren island where, since the dawn of history, nothing had flourished save a few sheep. Each time the old magician returned for one of his brief energetic visits the people gave him a Highland welcome, not merely as loyal tenants of their chief, but as co-partners in a wonderful enterprise, and the outside world, well accustomed to reckoning on success from the very name of Lever, got ready to eat the fish and wear the tweeds. Each summer of those gay years of expansion Leverhulme entertained large parties at his castle; while his guests followed the salmon and sea trout, he worked in his study, but then he would join them at dinner, and his superabundant vitality never exhausted, he danced throughout each evening with the youngest partners.

Meanwhile, having arranged for an inflow of wealth, the proprietor turned to replanning the environment. An architect's plan was exhibited to show how the old fishing town would appear when the grand design was complete. Each inhabitant could see for himself rows of well-spaced houses, with public library and art gallery. Their eyes were wide with surprise at a structure marked 'railway station', although hitherto the island had

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never seen the vestige of a train. Certainly the place illustrated on that plan was not the place they knew, but his Lordship had named it 'the Venice of the North' and the fantasm of a novel Port Sunlight floated above these Hebridean seas.

Lord Leverhulme had become proprietor of Lewis to carry out his favourite combination of commerce and welfare and he had made a good start. He was worth many millions and it counted for more as a hobby than as a commercial speculation. At rare moments this man of seventy even played with the idea of semi-retirement in which he could indulge his passion for improving upon what nature had made of the Hebrides. It was surpassingly strange that this great manufacturer should have chosen for his last social experiment the only part of Britain in which a genuine peasant culture had survived. His whole success had been in twentieth-century organization, and now he was trying to adapt it to the primitive conditions of the Isle of Lewis. He was like an expert in steel architecture, who should take on the rebuilding of Stonehenge.

Suddenly he was compelled to halt. In a tone which no business man could ever mistake, there sounded a note of alarm from his dominions in the southern hemisphere. Africa was calling him, no, Africa was warning. He must quit this Hebridean pipe dream and face the greatest crisis of his career.

Three thousand miles through the great westerly bulge of the African continent curves the River Niger, and along its banks were trading posts to which the natives bring their copra, ground nuts, hides, skins and cotton; on its ocean-like stretches paddle boats churn the muddy waters, and whole negro republics flourished upon the trade that flowed along that tremendous artery towards its delta into the Bight of Benin. The Niger 'Company' which was the commercial overlord of these regions was for sale, and in 1920 Leverhulme picked it up for eight million pounds. It was a stiff price, but who at the end of a world war cares what anything costs? Leverhulme was proud of his new acquisition. There

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were endless possibilities for commercial development and social betterment.

This purchase of the Niger Company took place at the time when Leverhulme was deeply absorbed in his schemes in Lewis. Never before had his life so many complexities, or such numerous ventures. At dark moments when he was quite alone he had many glimpses of that old paralysing fear, that the preference shareholders might lose what he had promised them: and as the dread gradually passed he experienced that bracing freedom which gave him new energy.

Suddenly the whole African affair shivered to its foundations, as though a tropical hurricane had swept over the territories of the Niger Company. The great slump had come; values were collapsing all over the world. When Leverhulme took over the Niger Company in 1920 it was worth much less than he had paid for it in the optimistic negotiations: worse still, it was waterlogged by an accumulation of raw material now valued at one-third of what it would have fetched before the slump. As barrels of palm nut oil oozed in the coast warehouses, their value oozed away also, and everything in the company's posts seemed to be affected with paralysis. This time it was a crisis indeed, and eight millions were at stake. The slump was felt not only in Africa. Every part of the Lever soap empire, worth over fifty million pounds, was threatened. If people could not afford to wash themselves, where was the hope of producing dividends? This time, said the city of London, the impatient autocrat of soap had gone too far.

Since difficulties never come one at a time, it was fated that just at this moment the only strike which ever occurred at Port Sunlight should add to Lever's responsibilities. Anything concerned with the daily life of his workers and his relations with them touched his sense of duty, but this time there was no remedy. The quarrel lay between rival trade unions, and it lasted three weeks before work was resumed in the model village.

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Leverhulme decided to give the stimulus of his own presence to his overseas businesses. He hurried off on another trip round the world and everywhere he made a speech. His commanding energy seemed to prove that the optimist is greater than the pessimist, and during that period trade grew better and sales revived, and under the new management even the Niger Company began to show profits. Once again the critics were disconcerted, all the Lever enterprises seemed as flourishing as ever; all except one, that quixotic scheme in the Isle of Lewis.

Whenever he could spare time from his new London headquarters now established on the bank of the Thames, Leverhulme would make the tedious journey to Stornoway, and there he would throw himself once again like a boy into his island schemes that were the relaxation of a too-active man. He was as optimistic as ever, but a new factor had begun to take control of the situation. Leverhulme was in a hurry. The full development of his ideas would need time, and time he was not able to give. Money — yes. He could still pour out his hundreds of thousands to overcome resistance which the housewife might have to buying fish out of a tin. Leverhulme possessed every technical device and a lifetime's experience. But he was over seventy. There is sadness in that simple statement which explains everything, not because it implies any failure of judgment, but on account of the disproportion between Leverhulme's long objectives and the short years of life now at his disposal.

Leverhulme suddenly stumbled across one of the oldest of human obsessions. The island was full of ex-service men and they had only one idea, and that was land. The Lewisman put all his hereditary passion into that one word, which represented for him the loftiest worldly pride — land: that is, a few stony acres of the soil of Lewis, a house of his own and independence. The Celt is a land-hungry animal, these men would put up with anything if only they could own small crofts in the island of their forefathers. This illogical and paradoxical

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emotion had nothing to do with economic reality. Land-possession was the islander's passion. These men and he were talking different languages: he spoke of welfare, they could dream of nothing but land.

He explained the great advantages of his commercial schemes: regular employment for as many who wished it, and seasonal work for others. A rich market was waiting for every ton of fish caught, and a fortune in wages was ready to bring prosperity such as they had never known.

The Lewismen listened to these strange words expressed in a language that was as foreign to them as the thought it contained. English was only the secondary tongue, and the way of life which placed work and wages higher than land ownership was to them as incomprehensible as though the proprietor had spoken in mathematical symbols. A chasm of misunderstanding had come between this energetic benefactor and the shrewd and archaic-minded Lewisman who heard nothing but the magic word land.

In the midst of square miles of heather-covered peat there were a few isolated farms, and these would be required to supply milk and vegetables for the factory workers. These farms were coveted by the greedy eyes of hundreds of crofters who had come back from the war without any hope of acquiring crofts of their own. The proprietor said the farms must be kept intact to provide milk for factory workers. But those crofters decided otherwise. The simple crofter possessed one weapon which had been a terror to his lairds for a century. This was known as 'land raiding', or, in other words, taking forcible and illegal possession of the proprietor's estate and now, a few miles from Stornoway, highland history repeated itself.

Leverhulme's farms were raided overnight and divided up by the crofters themselves. It was not trespassing, it was a kind of revolution. Yet even if every farm in the island were so divided up it could appease the land-hunger of only one in ten of those who suffered its pangs.

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Leverhulme appealed to the law, he appealed to the Government. Here were a few misguided law-breakers ready to jeopardize his plans and destroy all he meant to do for the island and its people. No industrial town could be created without farms. The very act of raiding was a vote of no-confidence in all he proposed to achieve in Lewis.

To his arguments the raiders answered in Gaelic: *'To you, law and order evidently means liberty to starve us and our children by withholding from us the means created, not by yourself, but by a greater Lord, for the use of His people.'*

Boldly, Leverhulme paid a visit to a village which was the centre of the most turbulent crofters, and without a moment's hesitation or nervousness addressed an open-air meeting. The men could not help but admire this vigorous lord whose Lancashire voice possessed such eloquence. Over again he told them of what he planned to do for the people, pictured boats heavy with herrings, and comfortable houses in place of their stone cabins. They came under his spell, and loud applause rang into the peat-laden air.

Then, in Gaelic, another voice asked leave to speak, and the crofters heard a man of the village pour forth in that impassioned language the cry that surged in each of their hearts. *'This honey-mouthed man would persuade us that black is white. But what we want is the land.'*

These men did not want work, they wanted the old-world rhythm of seed time and harvest, with cattle and sheep, in a land where each man was a patriarch and not a wage-earner. What did they care for wages and regular work? In sonorous Gaelic images, these men expressed their Old Testament thoughts. But the proprietor could not understand.

Opposition and clear-cut argument he enjoyed; but in the waters of the Lewisman's psychology he was out of his depth. These courteous Celts showed appreciation of his ideas, too intelligent not to understand their obvious benefits: but those benefits left them quite unmoved.

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Leverhulme departed from that village convinced that he was making headway, and that the opposition of Lewis could be overcome like the sales resistance of his customers. He appealed to the Government that the law be put in motion against these trespassing raiders. Once again he met what previously he had found in West Africa: the Government took the side of the people against him. There was no sympathy for his point of view in those official places.

Leverhulme had struck against a prejudice as hard and implacable as the earth's crust lying beneath the shallow peat of Lewis: geologists could advise him that the rocky gneiss is the most ancient formation in Britain, but no one had warned him of its counterpart in the human heart, this passionate hunger for land. It would have been better strategy to give way on these few farms, but at seventy he had lost the art of compromise.

He continued his schemes, but the temperature of their reception began to change. The townsmen of Stornoway examined more closely that handsome drawing which Leverhulme's town-planning expert had prepared, and they liked it less and less. One citizen would find that his own house had disappeared, and was replaced by an ornamental square. Another resident who was proud of his garden found it had been eliminated to make room for a picture gallery. This grand new town which their proprietor offered them was not the place they loved, and deep passive resistance began to weaken their enthusiasm for the lord's industrial plans.

When Leverhulme was raised from the rank of a Baron to the higher dignity of being a Viscount, he added to his title a formula denoting his new ownership of Lewis and Harris, and became 'Leverhulme of the Western Isles'. Immediately there was a howl of indignation. He possessed no drop of Scottish, island or Celtic blood, and he had taken a name which was almost sacred in Hebridean poetry and legend. Lord of the Western Isles: this was almost as bad an affront as his miscon-



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ception of the crofter's psychology. Leverhulme was as much entitled to call himself by that name as the previous proprietor, a stranger to Lewis, had been eighty years before. Certainly his sober enthusiasm for the welfare of his tenants in those romantic islands had never been equalled by any other laird. But the reproach of being an alien outsider had now been fixed upon him. They had found him out. He had committed the crime of presuming to seek for change.

He may have felt a certain coldness in the welcome he received when he landed at Stornoway harbour at the end of 1923. A respectful crowd thronged the wharf, but I remember there was no cheering, no enthusiasm, and the thickset grey-combed figure moved up the gangway and drove away between silent throngs. He knew, as they did not, that he had come to Stornoway for the last time.

Lord Leverhulme had realized that his half-finished plans needed more time. He was sure that, given ten years of his industries, the Lewis crofters would come flocking into his new garden city. But ten years — that was too long a gamble with nature. He was on a fair way to solving the problem of catching the fish. No one had warned him that in order to be a success with a Celtic people he had first to catch their souls.

That mock-feudal castle overlooking the Stornoway harbour was the only one of Leverhulme's residences which remained unaltered, except in one detail. Leading from the main staircase was a secret doorway which opened on an extraordinary room. Its flooring was of asphalt, and the windows were without glass; through the tiles of the roof daylight could be seen, and the Hebridean wind never ceased to whistle freely in each corner. In one corner of this singular apartment stood a bed and, opposite, a large bath. This monastic cell was the place where the Lord of the Western Isles slept, a prisoner of hygiene. Here, each morning at four-thirty, as summer sunrise filled the Hebridean air, he would rise impatiently from bed, have his bath with the minimum of fuss, and perform his exercises. Indomit-

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ably, this man of seventy-two who was the head of the greatest business in the British Empire followed this routine each morning, and by five o'clock he had reached the room he called his sanctum, and was supping his bowl of tea, while before him lay a mass of letters and reports which he would devour like prey. On such a quiet morning, alone facing the unawakened seaport, he wound up his schemes in Lewis.

Over banks of cream and scarlet rhododendrons and the fir trees around the castle he could look across the harbour towards Stornoway. Before him he saw the fishing fleet crowding the piers, and the lighthouse at the edge of the sea. Over the roofs thick white smoke came from the kippering sheds, and beyond were his new canning factory and oil works. There in that centre of the fishery was everything needed for the perfect industrial community, and he alone had the power to create it.

The grim archaic island still possessed its spell over his mind, generally so cool and practical, and he had deceived himself into thinking that those crofters would renounce their age-long traditions in order to help him to help them. But now he had awakened, and distant anxieties were calling him away from Lewis. He resolved to cut his Gordian Knots by a bold sweep of his sword. He wrote out a speech as carefully as for a general meeting of Lever Brothers and, later that day, he unfolded his revised scheme to the representatives of that stiff-necked people. He quietly abandoned his commercial schemes, and the opportunities for welfare he now handed over to the Lews people themselves.

The astonished inhabitants heard that they themselves were to become proprietors of their island. The Lews castle itself was to be their town hall, and every road, gas works and canning factory were to become public property; and among those peat-girt villages every crofter might be his own landlord. He had bettered their resistance with a challenge, and given the means of an experiment in democracy. If they would not follow his commercial schemes they must now create plans

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for themselves. This was Leverhulme's way of making terms with a mental force even more relentless than his own. Having made his offer, before the people had recovered from their surprise he said goodbye to Lewis.

Many regretted that their island was to lose this chance of becoming a prosperous industrial community. The logic of those schemes for exploiting the harvest of the sea contrasted sadly with the poverty of the Lewis crofts. Yet it is very doubtful whether a modern routine of manufacture could ever have been maintained among the people of that island when Leverhulme's own energy was no longer there to give it life.

He had allowed the spirit of the place to defeat him, but his Hebridean adventure was not quite over. Lewis had rejected him, but the people of Harris, forty miles to the south of the same island, had proved more sympathetic. They had changed the name of their tiny port from Obbe to Leverburgh, and professed interest when he showed a desire to lavish upon them some of the good he was prepared to do to Lewis.

The miniature harbourage of Leverburgh was now to inherit the interest which Stornoway had spurned. In Harris Leverhulme found compensation for his disappointment and here, on the loveliest bay in Scotland, he made a garden beside the simplest and most charming of all his earthly homes. From his windows he could see miles and miles of white sands, with herds of deer swimming through the jade-green water, and to the north a row of hills the colour of dark blue grapes. Here he built a high wall to keep the wind and salt spray from his flowers, and here he found consolation for the rebuffs of Lewis where he had never been able to make a garden of his own.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE HEART OF THE DARKNESS

AWAY from the rocky garden and sea thistles of Harris, the Congo was calling him back to its turbulent waters, beside which in thirteen years his business had been growing. Would it now justify his faith? Leverhulme was impatient to see those palm estates, to measure how trading posts had grown into civilized settlements, to inspect schools and hospitals. Leverburgh in Harris where his engineers were blasting away rocks to create a harbour for the herring boats — Lilliputian Leverburgh might cause him anxiety; but Leverville in the steamy forest clearing on the Congo was now a flourishing town, which he longed to see with his own eyes.

Leverhulme's genius for life lay in immediate palpable realization. He desired his schemes to materialize in a way he could see and feel. Where another business man at the head of such a world-wide organization would have been content to read a balance sheet at his London office, Leverhulme was content with nothing but direct experience. Indeed it may be called his gigantic limitation that he was unable to see through others, but must witness everything with those eyes of his which possessed a faculty of extra long sight, stretching ten years into the future, and now, towards the end of his life, this fanatical vision of the potential excluded much that was going on around him.

A few weeks after his dramatic goodbye to the isle of Lewis, he set out on a southern journey for the two rivers, the Congo and the Niger, which had never ceased to flow through his mind, carrying with their echo of cataracts and steamy gorges, cargoes of dreams and anxiety, and he knew that in their immense valleys lay the best justification of his life. Leverhulme went

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to Africa by sea, using every minute of the day for business and enjoyment, which to him were the same. Never had he been more vigorous or more optimistic.

Yet such a journey for a man of seventy-three was in itself a piece of madness, as Sir Ronald Ross, the specialist in malaria, told him. In the year 1924 the Congo valley was more perilous to the European than today. But Leverhulme in his intellectual deafness to all but the secret roaring of his inward cataract, never heard these warnings and pleadings, and dosing himself doubly with quinine against a danger which he despised, he set out gaily, and for a time his offices at home knew peace.

Slowly the ship drew towards the equator, and in place of the cool soft air of the Hebrides he felt the languorous breath of Africa, and the misty rose- and fawn-coloured lines of Lewis moorland were exchanged for dark green and dense shadows.

On the ocean he heard that the people of Stornoway had accepted his gift of the castle, factories and roads, and would in future control the destiny of their town. That was what he intended though the great individualist knew that there would never exist in Lewis a great industry based on fish, and that his garden village there would remain a dream. The gaunt Lews castle, now a town hall, would be his only memorial. Everything else, his plans, his enthusiasm and his two and a half million pounds, were gone. All that was to be seen for them was an empty canning factory, some companies that never opened their books, magnificent empty roads which lead to the edge of the sea. Those crofters in the rural hinterland whom he had hoped to benefit by regular work turned their backs upon him a second time, and now unanimously declined the privilege of being their own landlords. The people of that island of paradoxes had discovered that it was more advantageous after all to remain mere tenants paying an infinitesimal rent, rather than a peasant proprietor responsible for mountainous parish rates.

The Lewisman's theory of life had depressed Leverhulme

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because he believed it was founded upon error. But as he drew nearer to the mouth of the great river and that fiery throat down which he must pass to enter the belly of Africa, his spirits revived. Now he would see whether his plans of thirteen years before had been well and truly laid. He disembarked into one of those clumsy stern-wheelers which churned through large provinces of Belgian allegiance, *Elizabetha*, *Flandria*, *Brabanta* and one named *Leverville* which he had chosen thirteen years before. Everywhere he saw evidence of prodigious growth, such as only a tropical land could give, masses of palms covering thousands of acres, every one cleared from jungle. It had all been planned on a generous scale, beyond imaginable needs of soap as far as Leverhulme's mind could foresee. Seven crushing mills were at work extracting from the kernels one sort of oil, and teasing out the fleshy fibres for a different kind of product. Five times more Africans were at work and new villages of brick houses had been created, with ten hospitals and several schools. The oil palms were coming into regular fruit, and likewise the social arrangements were beginning to repay inspiration. In 1913 it had seemed the wildest folly, but now the Lever executives were congratulating themselves upon this tremendous treasure of raw material. The company had built roads through jungle and swamps and over fifty miles of railway. Quite apart from the profits which might be counted on henceforth, the organization had been created on lines that were new in the African jungle. Leverhulme exhausted those who were used to the slow tempo of the tropics. He took levels, pointed out where new roads and buildings should go, vigorously rebuked a manager who had put up 'back-to-front' houses. Leverhulme was the first European exploiter of Africa's wealth to insist upon European standards of welfare. He was the most dynamic force seen in that sleepy valley for a long while. To those natives he was 'chief of the Palm Tree Company' and they followed him about like children, shouting and clapping their hands. In that moist heat he insisted on visiting each station

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systematically, counted the herds of goats, and savoured the young bull meat which the Jesuit Fathers had grown at their Mission. He partook of a good Lancashire tea with the Mother Superior and Sisters of the Convent, and wrote each night a further instalment in that journal which mirrored everything. He watched the barefooted Africans playing football so vigorously that they burst the ball, and when the Coast natives refused to go to the Baptist Mission Chapel in company with the Congo natives, he asked in his diary: 'What will heaven be like?'

We may put the question, was all this modern organization for the good of the African? Would he have been happier to remain a bush native, with his grass hut and wooden plough, hunting with arrows, and making great magic with his priests and medicine men? Or was it better in the end that he should be taught to live in a brick house, work for wages in the service of the *Huileries du Congo Belge*, play football and learn to imitate at a long distance the white man's standards?

Such a question today is futile, because it was answered long ago, and the debate is now closed. The matter was settled for ever when David Livingstone penetrated into the heart of Africa. It was answered by H. M. Stanley and by Cecil Rhodes. The pioneers of the white man's mission had set in motion an irreversible process, to which the primitive must inevitably succumb. Leverhulme was carrying on that exchange between Africa's wealth and Europe's experience, and the only question which can be asked now is whether he did his work honestly, according to the highest standards. He wished to give the black man responsibility to work out his own salvation, just as those missionaries desired to give him a different sort of responsibility. About this there can be no doubt. He gave to every part of the Lever organization, and he never tried to carry out in this heart of darkness practices which would shun the European day. Sunlight indeed is Leverhulme's symbol. He had brought it even to the darkness of the tropical forest.

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When this fascinating journey came to an end Leverhulme was like a child at the close of a party, wishing it could begin all over again. He promised himself further visits to the Congo in 1926 and 1928, and reluctantly began the return voyage, creeping up the west coast of the continent, calling at Nigeria and the Gold Coast, and making a trip up as far as Kano at the fringe of the Saharan Desert. In these British colonies he was back in a new climate of thought, where the commercial leader was mistrusted, and African rights were supreme. To Leverhulme the methods of British Colonial Government were as bureaucratic and autocratic as the town planning was defective. He spoke out his mind. Governors answered. The whole essence of the colonial controversy came up in the news. Once again, as in the Hebrides, Leverhulme touched down to one of the deepest official theories, that connected with the possession of land. That divergence never shall be ended, but it can be summarized in this way: the average human being looked upon land as something which gave him security and status, which enabled his family to grow up around him, with his animals and his crops. His conception of land was bound up with his own individuality and his stake in the civilized world.

To Leverhulme, land was nothing but an instrument to create wealth. The older ideas permitted land to remain dull and comparatively sterile; but by his own methods land could produce more and more, it could support splendid buildings, it could nourish machinery, it could be made to increase human welfare. He was impatient with those ancient peasant-like notions, and in fact his ideas led to an ideal of collectivized society which was repugnant to his outlook as a twentieth-century leader of commerce. But that is only one of many paradoxes which meet us in Leverhulme.

The journey of fifteen thousand miles was ended, and Lord Leverhulme was unusually tired. But now he must make his report, for his shareholders in various companies were waiting to hear all that he had to tell them, demanding to be reassured



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that these African adventures were profitable. He hurried over to Brussels to lecture to scientific societies about that great tropical river. He returned to England for further board meetings.

The modest investment of the Lancashire wholesale grocer had grown to fifty million pounds and the various Lever enterprises were now managed by a thousand directors. Two hundred and fifty associated companies carried on almost every kind of commercial activity, from catching whales in the Antarctic to the manufacture of ladies' cosmetics.

In biology there is a moment in the evolution of each species when it becomes successful through complete adaptation to environment. In this instant of great success changes were taking place in his business which even Leverhulme cannot have foreseen.

His lifelong concern lest his raw material oil should be cornered against him had produced one altogether paradoxical result. Through trying to protect himself against scarcity he had produced embarrassing abundance. Supplies of palm oil and whale oil had become so large that they were too much even for his enormous soap manufacture, and sidelines had to be found to absorb them. The invention of artificial butter or margarine opened up a new way of using oil from those palm kernels and the blubber from the whales handled in Lever's factory in the Isle of Harris and elsewhere. The Congo and the Niger produced cocoa beans, and this necessitated a new chocolate-manufacturing plant which was added to the soap making machine. The Leverhulme organizations interested in margarine were now associated with a union of commercial interests, interested in edible oils and wider than the soap trade. In the end a vast amalgamation of capital was formed bearing the name Unilever. Could this super-trust be the culmination of Lever's lifelong activity? Was this the final consequence of competition?

Leverhulme himself remained an unrepentant believer in the

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dogmas of free trade, free enterprise, freedom of capital, and he never doubted for a moment that the gospel of individualism was the permanent law of human progress. He never divined that the world he had done so much to create was changing, and that in Britain, Australia, Canada and Africa the children of his workers would abandon, one by one, those values that seemed to him unchangeable and unchallengeable. Leverhulme was indeed one of the last Napoleons of business.

He told his shareholders to take large views and to see their business not as a parochial affair, made by a few soap-boilers at Port Sunlight, but as a world-wide affair of eighty thousand men, white, brown and black skinned, and out of all the profits these workers had to receive twenty shillings in wages before the co-partners, including himself, took sevenpence halfpenny as their share of prosperity. The city columns and financial correspondents duly reported the chairman's speech, and a few may have comprehended the full passion of his power to externalize his ideas in countries which they knew only through the poetry of dividends.

The day of the pioneers, the Carnegies and Leverhulmes, seems over, and their successors are 'executives', that is, men who are not the inventors of their own purpose, but mere instruments to carry out a 'policy', the generalized will of a group of financial masters. Leverhulme was never an executive, or even a financier. He was a craftsman and a creator of values.

As the admiring shareholders of Lever Brothers and associated companies listened to their chairman's confident speech in the homely Lancashire accent that had never changed, few would have believed that this man was still possessed by the stimulus of fear. 'I have so many cakes in the oven,' he said, 'and I am afraid they may be burned.' That was how he expressed his raging hunger for accomplishment, but he never could look back, or attempt for a single instant to dismount from his tiger. He could not stop, or change, or relax.

The journey to the tropics had been fatiguing, and on the

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way home Leverhulme may have felt glimmerings of the need to slow down. But once again in the familiar surroundings the old activities returned, his energy came back, and his mind was planning the future, ten years ahead, with designs and purposes so far crowded out of his too active life. Locked in their perpetual antagonism, the two selves inside him allowed him no rest, and he found relief only in still greater activity: rearranging Chippendale chairs, enlarging the terraces of his new house overlooking London from Hampstead Heath, or hearing of the progress made in blasting away rocks in that treacherous little harbour of Leverburgh. But leisure, which he believed every worker should possess, was something he never achieved or even desired.

Quite unaware of his destiny he entered the last phase. After coming home from Brussels Leverhulme addressed a Sunday school meeting at Bolton; full of faith and optimism, he told Angus Watson that he would have felt hopeless for the future if he had not known that God was beside him, helping him in all his work. He took the train for London, and on this familiar journey, much more civilized than travelling on the Congo, he took a chill, and on arriving was with difficulty persuaded to rest in bed.

Early one morning, as his stern spirit prepared to preside once more over that daily conflict of mind, he faced the demon which he had overcome so often, that implacable power inside, and he was suddenly afraid. This time there was no recuperation.

The first Viscount Leverhulme died of pneumonia at the very height of his worldly success, undisturbed by old age, never doubting the future, living powerfully in the present. Though he was tired after a journey through the tropics such as few men of his age could have survived, his body was undiseased, and there was no reason why he should not have enjoyed many more years of external achievement. That equable father of his, James Lever of Bolton, who had been so nervous about expand-

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ing the soap business, had died at the age of eighty-eight, without understanding his forcible son, and there was no reason why Leverhulme should not have turned eighty in good health. But he died at seventy-four, and I do not doubt that if we could have known more of the inward man, and the background of the lonely agony of those last few days, we should have watched with wonder and terror the final contest in that lifelong epic, and we should have known more of the secrets of this dynamic man's achievement.

'He died as he would have wished, in the plenitude of his powers, his energy unabated and his courage unimpaired.' These words of his son tell us all we can really know.

Angus Watson says there was about Leverhulme an inborn sensitiveness and culture, and it was surely this faculty, rather than his commercial shrewdness, which makes him great. He had built himself from ordinary talents, and put into life more than he took out. If his faults were those of capitalism, his virtues were certainly his own.

The world, knowing only of his tireless energy, could not believe he was gone. The workers in Port Sunlight crowded to the lying-in-state. Under the large canvas of Lord Leighton, the 'Daphnephoria', picturing the procession of Greek Temple worshippers, they moved to pay their last respect, and all around were those objects of art which represented the pagan, sensuous side of his nature which hungered to touch and possess beautiful things as compensations for his life of stress. There, under the picture of Greeks walking to the Temple, lay the man who had made his own sanctuary for the Arts. His spirit had achieved immortality in the village where he finally rested, near the many-styled groups of houses. The church had mellowed, the war memorial group merged into the background of thick trees, but the air had not lost that perpetual reminder of the basis of existence there, a faint scent of soap.

He was buried at the west end of the village church, beneath a stone canopy beside his wife, like some enterprising merchant.

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of the seventeenth century recumbent with his lady in a Cotswold side chapel. Today, a generation afterwards, the curious visitor to Port Sunlight may lay a finger upon that bronze effigy, and try to reconstruct from the lines of that straight and powerful face, that firm mouth, and small graceful hands, the real William Lever who created the surrounding village out of a swamp. We shall not understand him properly unless we judge him by the Elizabethan scale, as one of the last merchant adventurers,



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